

## THE BROKEN MARRIAGE BOND (GHH)

G H HAYHOE

It is important to recognise that 'married' signifies a position taken at a definite time and in a way that is recognised by the powers that be. Marriage is a legal matter.

But it is also true that when a man and a woman come together intimately they become one flesh in the sight of God. If a married person commits adultery he or she becomes one flesh with someone else—indeed, married in God's sight. If a man and woman are living together as man and wife they are one flesh and married in God's sight!

While the Word of God never speaks of anyone being 'free' to divorce or 'free' to remarry, God did allow it under certain circumstances. In fact, God allowed divorce for many reasons (Deuteronomy 24) and it must be remembered that marriage was instituted by God before sin entered the world.

It has been argued that Christ's love for the Church, His Bride should be the example for earthly marriage. But Divine love cannot possibly be compared to human love. The Lord Jesus is greater than anyone or anything we can comprehend.

In marriage, we may tend to look for love instead of showing it and to expect our partner to make the sacrifices, instead of making them ourselves. But there is one vital matter to consider. God has placed man as the head of the woman and calls upon her to submit to him just as Christ is the Head of the Church and it is the church's place to submit to Christ (Ephesians 5. 22ff). It is not that man has assumed the place of headship. He has been put into that place by God. A wise woman will help her partner fill his place and not try to take that place for herself.

The Lord Jesus came to fulfil the prophets and the Old Testament. As F B Hole says 'The Lord did not come to destroy or annul the prophets'. Therefore what the Old Testament teaches about divorce is still valid.

Since the Lord came to fulfil the law and the prophets, which includes Deuteronomy 24 quoted above, serious misconduct including adultery, fornication, cruelty and desertion breaks the marriage bond and divorce in such cases, while not required by God, is allowed by Him.

Of course, every case is different and must be examined before the Lord giving consideration as to what attempts were made at reconciliation, repentance and forgiveness.

As an example, a spouse who has deserted his or her partner has wilfully broken the marriage bond and, as J N Darby said, emotional desertion precedes physical desertion. In such cases the Bible permits divorce and remarriage not only in this case but in all cases where serious misconduct or shame has occurred.

---

Copyright © G H Hayhoe renewed 2010

This site acknowledges the kind permission to use this excellent article.