



MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND REMARRIAGE

They are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate ([Matt. 19:6](#)).

God designed marriage to reflect the beauty and permanence of Christ's loving relationship with His bride, the church ([Eph. 5:22-33](#); [Rev. 19:7](#)). Therefore, he established marriage to be a life-long, exclusive covenant relationship between one man and one woman ([Gen. 2:24](#); [Mal. 2:14](#); [Matt. 19:4-6](#)). God also designed marriage to provide mutual companionship through life's joys and difficulties, to create stability for raising and nurturing children, and to give strength and cohesiveness to society in general.

In our society, marriages fail under a wide range of circumstances. Many people have gone through a divorce before having a relationship with Christ and have found repentance and forgiveness in coming to Christ. Others have experienced divorce through no desire or decision of their own. Still others, even after professing faith in Christ, may have divorced because of their own wrongful choices, but have since repented and received the forgiveness offered through our Lord Jesus. Whatever the circumstances, we welcome everyone to Crossgate Church—single, married, and divorced.

Because our church recognizes both the divine origin of marriage and the devastating effects of divorce, we are deeply committed to preserving marriages and preventing divorce. Toward this end, we devote regular teaching and significant ministry resources to strengthening marriages and families. We require and provide premarital counseling to help couples enter marriage advisedly and be well-prepared for its many challenges.

We also encourage couples to nurture their marriages by participating in our LifeGroup ministry and marriage discipleship opportunities where they can grow together in their love for God and for one another ([Heb. 10:24-25](#)). As relationships deepen within these groups, we expect husbands to spur each other on in loving and cherishing their wives, and wives to encourage one another in respecting and loving their husbands ([Eph. 5:33](#)).

Our leaders are committed to helping individuals and couples receive biblical counsel and support when they face marital difficulties. We will discourage couples from using divorce as a way to run away from issues that instead can be resolved through Spirit-guided counseling, repentance, forgiveness, and ongoing discipleship.

The individual Elders of Crossgate Church may hold somewhat differing positions about what the Bible teaches concerning the legitimate grounds for divorce and remarriage. For example, some Elders believe that death is the only means of breaking the marriage covenant, that no one should initiate divorce under any circumstances, and that re-marriage is only an option if one's spouse dies. Other Elders believe that Scripture permits (though does not mandate) divorce under limited circumstances and that, in those limited circumstances, the believer is free to remarry. Ultimately, while the church's leaders and other members have different convictions on how to interpret and apply what the Bible teaches regarding divorce and remarriage, we are united in our commitment to upholding a high view of the marriage covenant along these lines:

1. All people should abstain from sexual activity and co-habitation prior to marriage. A believer and unbeliever should not marry ([1 Cor. 7:39](#); [2 Cor. 6:14-15](#)).
2. Since death breaks the marriage bond ([Rom. 7:2-3](#); [1 Cor. 7:39](#)), remarriage is permissible for a believing widow or widower.

3. Divorce may be permitted when a spouse commits covenant-breaking sexual immorality by engaging in adultery, homosexual sex, pedophilia, or polygamy (Matt. 19:9). Divorce may also be permitted when an unbelieving spouse commits covenant-breaking abandonment by physically deserting a believing spouse (1 Cor. 7:15).
4. Spouses involved in divorce under these limited circumstances defined in #3 above may remarry another believer (1 Cor. 7:39; 2 Cor. 6:14-15).
5. Aggrieved spouses in a divorce should guard against bitterness and be willing to forgive the offending spouse (Eph. 4:31-32). Both spouses should pursue restoration of the broken marriage if neither party has remarried.
6. The spouse who has broken the marriage covenant by committing sexual immorality, by abandoning their spouse, or who has divorced without biblical grounds should repent and be reconciled to God and, if possible, to their spouse (1 Cor. 7:11; 1 John 1:9).
7. In cases where emotional, psychological, physical, or sexual abuse exists, physical separation accompanied by Elder and Pastoral support is necessary. The hope in separation is to provide space for healing and seeking reconciliation.
8. Crossgate Church Elders and Pastors will conduct marriage ceremonies, on campus or off campus, in accordance with this document.

While some believe that the Bible may permit divorce under the limited circumstances described in #3 above, all believe that the circumstances do not require divorce and that God desires to restore broken marriages. We believe that even when human marriages fail as an earthly symbol of the union of Christ and his church, the heavenly reality of Christ's unbreakable covenant-keeping love for his people endures. We believe that God patiently bears with our sins, repeatedly calls us to repentance, and freely forgives us when we turn back to Him (Ps. 103:8-12; Isa. 55:7).

When divorce seems inevitable, an offended spouse can imitate God's love by offering a straying spouse these same evidences of grace (Eph. 5:1-2). This may include lovingly confronting serious sin and providing the offending spouse ample opportunity to repent (Col. 3:12-14; Gal. 6:1). In some situations, love may require asking the church to initiate formal discipline to rescue a spouse and a marriage from the devastating effects of unrepentant sin (Matt. 18:12-20).

Just as church leaders are involved in the beginning of a marriage, they should also be involved when it is threatened with potential dissolution. Therefore, when a member of Crossgate Church is considering divorce, he or she should seek Elder and Pastoral support in an effort to pursue reconciliation and restoration if at all possible and to determine if biblical grounds for divorce exist.

Separated spouses who are moving toward divorce, but are still legally married, should refrain from dating or any other activity that is inconsistent with being married.

Recognizing ultimately that God's amazing grace meets people in the difficult circumstances of life, we rejoice that His love and mercy are available realities to anyone who has experienced the pain and heartache of divorce. God's love moves Him (and us) to call men and women to reconciliation and restoration whenever possible and especially to a life built upon God's Word going forward.