

APPENDIX IV.

Statement on Divorce and Remarriage

Divorce is a sad reality in our society and in the church at large. While God has, from the beginning, intended that marriage be lifelong¹ and glorify God by reflecting the relationship of Christ to his church,² there are times when our Lord permits a believer to seek a divorce without sinning against God or a spouse. The conditions under which this may happen are only two:

- when a spouse commits sins that involve sexual contact with another person;³
- when an unbelieving spouse abandons a marriage.⁴

It is important to note that God permits divorce in such cases. Divorce is not required, nor will the church encourage a spouse to divorce when he or she has faith toward God for the marriage to be restored—even when the situations listed above exist.

For the church to condone a divorce in these cases, the spouse must submit the facts of his or her marital situation to the elders to determine before God in Scripture what he would permit. If a spouse who is a member of the church seeks a divorce from another member due to abandonment, he or she must first wait for the church to follow its practice of church discipline to the end of treating the sinning spouse as an unbeliever before divorce may become a biblically allowable option.

Separated spouses awaiting a pending divorce should consider themselves married until the day a civil court declares the divorce final and legally recognized. They should thus conduct themselves in the church as a married person.

If a divorced person becomes a member of the church, he or she should understand that remarriage will only be condoned by the church when the circumstances prior to the divorce, or following after the divorce, fall under the two conditions listed above. If the circumstances of the divorce do not conform to what Scripture deems acceptable, the divorced person should consider before God whether he or she should seek reconciliation with his or her former spouse. He or she should also seek to confess to God and to his or her former spouse any sins committed in the seeking of a divorce that did not comply with the teaching of Scripture.

However, the situations in which people find themselves vary greatly, especially as it relates to divorce and remarriage. If you have questions about how the Bible speaks to your situation, please speak with an elder. We would be happy to discuss your situation and hope with you in the grace of God that can redeem any situation, no matter how painful or challenging.

Lastly, in applying the Bible to situations related to divorce it should also be noted that there are situations in which a spouse finds himself or herself in some physical danger as they relate

to their spouse. We would urge an appropriate physical separation for the protection of a spouse in such a situation, and we would encourage the involvement of the civil authorities whenever or wherever appropriate for that situation. The goal of such a separation should be protection, with the ultimate goal of reconciliation at an appropriate time. However, such a separation for one's physical protection is not in violation of the biblical principles described above.

-
1. Matthew 19:4-5; 1 Corinthians 7:10-11
 2. Ephesians 5:22-33
 3. Matthew 5:31-32
 4. 1 Corinthians 7:12-16