

THE BELIEVER

AT HOME

**Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands.
Husbands, love your wives and be gentle with them.
Children, obey your parents in all things.**
Colossians 3:18-20

PURITY

Purity of heart and body is to be in the life of every follower of the true God. In every way we are to keep ourselves pure.

The Word of God tells us that **The body is not for sexual sin but for the Lord, and the Lord is for the body** [I Cor. 6:13]. A man must not touch a woman's body in any way that might arouse unholy desires for sexual relations [I Cor.7:1]. Neither are we to look at others and want to do sexual things with them in our hearts.

The Lord Jesus said this, **If anyone looks at a woman and wants to sin sexually with her, in his mind he has already done that sin with the woman** [Mt.5:28].

The living God tells us these things many times in the Holy Bible. Listen again to His Word, **God wants you to be holy and to stay away from sexual sins. He wants each of you to learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable. Do not use your body for sexual sin like the people who do not know God** [I Thess.4:3-5].

Strong warnings are spoken by the Lord against all who disobey His Word. Hear well what He says, **Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral** [Heb.13:4].

CHOOSING A MARRIAGE PARTNER

Choosing a marriage partner is not a matter of wanting to have sexual activity with another person. No, these desires are only proper between a man and his own wife after they are married.

The first and most important reason for choosing a person for marriage is that he/she is a genuine believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. No other person should ever be considered for marriage by a Christian. This is what God's Word says:

You are not the same as those who do not believe. So do not join yourselves to them. Good and bad do not belong together. Light and darkness cannot share together [2 Cor.6:14].

The God of heaven forbids His believers to marry unbelievers. **Do not marry any of them, or let your daughters marry their sons, or let your sons marry their daughters. If you do, those people will turn your children away from Me, to begin serving other gods. The Lord will be very angry with you, and He will quickly destroy you** [Deut.7:3,4].

The person chosen to marry must not only be a believer, but a godly obedient follower of the Lord Jesus. It is what the Bible tells us: **If some people do not obey what we tell you in this letter, have nothing to do with them so that they will feel ashamed. But do not treat them as enemies. Warn them as fellow believers** [2 Thess.3:14,15].

Godly qualities of life are to be sought for in a marriage partner. **Charm is deceptive, and beauty disappears, but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised** [Prov.31:30]. A good wife is like a crown for her husband, but a disgraceful wife is like a disease in his bones [Prov.12:4].

So, careful consideration is to be taken in this life-long decision before any proposal is made. **He who hurries his footsteps, sins. People's own foolishness ruins their lives, but in their minds they blame the Lord** [Prov.19:2,3].

Do not rely on prophets, dreams, or impulsive desires. These are uncertain and unstable bases to make this most important decision of human life. God never says that a pastor or even the person himself must receive a vision from God before a Christian man and woman can marry.

Rather, seek the Lord patiently in prayer. **Trust in the Lord with all your heart. Never rely on your own understanding. Remember the Lord in everything you do, and He will show you the right way** [Prov.3:5,6].

The Lord is good to everyone who trusts in Him, so it is best for us to wait in patience – to wait for Him to save us – and it is best to learn this patience in our youth [Lam.3:25-27].

As children seeking to do the will of God, parents' approval and blessing must be obtained long before marriage plans are made. **Honor your father and mother. This is the first commandment that has a promise with it – then everything will be well with you, and you will have a long life on the earth** [Eph.6:2,3].

A wise son makes his father happy, but a foolish son disrespects his mother [Prov.15:20]. In some tribes, the parents even choose husbands or wives for their children. Some of the marriages in the Bible were done in this way.

Abraham sent his servant to find a bride for his son, Isaac. He said, **Don't get a wife for my son from the Canaanite girls who live around here. Instead, go back to my country, to the land of my relatives, and get a wife for my son Isaac** [Gen.24:3,4].

After the dowry was paid to them, her father and senior brother said, **Rebekah is yours. Take her and go. Let her marry your master's son as the Lord has commanded** [Gen.24:51]. They asked the girl if she was willing to be Isaac's wife as they had arranged for her. **Rebekah's brother and mother said, "We will call Rebekah and ask her what she wants to do."** They called her and asked her, **"Do you want to go with this man now?"** She said, **"Yes, I do"** [Gen.24:57,58].

They traveled back to Abraham's land. **Then Isaac brought Rebekah into the tent and she became his wife. Isaac loved her very much** [Gen.24:67].

So, whether parents actually choose a husband or wife for their children, or if the children themselves choose a marriage partner, the parents' blessing is to be had on the proposed union.

WHEN ARE PEOPLE MARRIED?

Two things make a marriage according to the Word of God:

[1]

A culturally recognized ceremony which tells everyone that this man and woman are now husband and wife.

[2]

The sexual union of the husband and wife after the ceremony.

This is seen from the very first marriage at the time of creation. This is what the Word of God says: **The Lord God brought the woman to the man. And the man said, "This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one body** [Gen.2:22-24].

There is no one ceremony that God has given to all peoples in all places. The customs and ceremonies in your village may differ from others.

Yours may be similar to Isaac's marriage described before, or it may be like that of Boaz and Ruth's; a public testimony before witnesses.

Then Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, "You are witnesses today. I am taking Ruth as my wife." So all the people and elders said, "We are witnesses." So Boaz took Ruth home as his wife and had **sexual relations with her** [Ruth 4:9-11, 13].

Though the ceremonies may vary from tribe to tribe, each one makes it clear to everyone that this man and woman are now husband and wife. Each custom shows that they now have the exclusive right of sexual relations with each other and with no one else.

However, Christians should not and must not include traditional practices in their ceremonies that are against the Word of God. No traditional idolatrous elements should be allowed or practiced.

These are the things that make a man and woman to be married according to the Bible. Having a marriage ceremony in a church building is one way to become married, but it is not the only way that is accepted by God.

THE CHRISTIAN HUSBAND

The Christian home is to be like no other home. The believing man will love and care for his wife like Isaac did for Rebekah. The believing wife will submit to and help her husband like she was created to do from the beginning.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her. He died so that He could give the church to Himself like a bride in all her beauty. In the same way, husbands should love their wives as they love their own bodies.

The man who loves his wife loves himself. No one ever hates his own body, but feeds and takes care of it [Eph.5:25-29]. The husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the Head of the church [Eph.5:23].

The Christian husband is to love his wife by a self-sacrificing giving for her. He is the leader and head of the home. It is his responsibility to direct his family in the things of God.

Fathers, do not make your children angry, but raise them with the training and teaching of the Lord [Eph.6:4].

He is to answer his wife's spiritual questions at home as the Word of God says to. **As is true in all the churches of God's people, women should keep quiet in the church meetings. If they want to learn something, they should ask their own husbands at home [I Cor. 14:34,35].**

In addition to this spiritual provision for his wife and family, he is responsible to feed and clothe them as well. It is not the wife's responsibility to feed and clothe the man and children. The man must do this according to the Word of God.

If any man does not provide for his own, especially those of his own household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever [I Tim.5:8].

Even though he is the head and leader, he is to be kind and respectful, not harsh and cruel. The Bible commands him, **Husbands, love your wives and be gentle with them [Col.3:19].** The wife is not the property of the man as if she were some kind of goat purchased in the market. The following tells us how the Christian husband is to treat his wife.

His Christian Wife is:

[1] to be honored, understood, and not mistreated since she is weaker [I Pet.3:7].

[2] to be loved as one's own body, not treated as property [Eph.5:25,28,31].

[3] a helper, not an animal used as a sexual object for pleasure and to simply provide children [Gen.2:18-20].

[4] not a slave whose labor profits the man. The man is to provide for her [I Tim.5:8]. Man is not king [Gen.3:16].

[5] not to be divorced [Mal.2:16] and barrenness is no cause to do so [Lk.1:7; Gen.11:30; 18:10,11; I Sam.1:5-8].

[6] not under the authority of the extended family or clan. They have no rights over the wife of their male relation [Gen.2:23,24].

[7] not the one held responsible for the training of the children; the man is [Eph.6:4; Gen.18:19; Deut.11:18-21; Prov.4:1-4; Ps.78:3-8].

[8] not to be isolated and separate from the man and all that concerns him; no secrets covered up. All is freely shared [Gen.2:25].

[9] a fellow heir of the grace of life, not of lesser privilege [I Pet.3:7; Gal.3:28].

[10] not to be shared among other wives. Polygamy does not have God's approval [Gen.2:18-25; Mt.19:4-6; Deut.17:17].

If the man is not kind, gentle, and respectful; if he does not sacrificially give himself for her in genuine love, then prayers will be hindered. And if prayers are hindered, his belief in God has become a form of godliness only, but without power.

THE CHRISTIAN WIFE

The wife, as well, has specific ways to honor the Lord as a godly woman. These are the things that the Word of God says about the Christian wife.

Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands as to the Lord, because the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the Head of the church. And so wives must submit themselves completely to their husbands just as the church submits itself to Christ [Eph.5:22-24].

You wives should submit to your husbands. Then, if some husbands do not obey God's teaching, they will be persuaded to believe without anyone's saying a word to them. They will be persuaded by the way their wives live. Your husbands will see the pure lives you live with respect for God.

It is not fancy hair, gold jewelry, or fine clothes that should make you beautiful. No, your beauty should come within you – the beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit that will never be destroyed and is very precious to God.

In the same way the holy women who lived long ago and followed God made themselves beautiful, submitting to their own husbands. Sarah obeyed Abraham, her husband, and called him her master. And you women are true children of Sarah if you always do what is right and are not afraid [1 Pet.3:1-6].

Teach older women to be holy in their behavior, teaching what is good. Then they can teach the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be wise and pure, to be good workers at home, to be kind, and to be submissive to their husbands. Then no one will be able to speak evil of the teaching God gave us [Tit.2:3-5].

It is here, in her home, to her husband and children, that is her primary area of service unto God [1 Tim.5:14]. The Lord has neither called nor equipped her to teach men, have authority over them, or to lead in the church. This is what the Word of God says:

A woman must learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man, she must be silent [1 Tim.2:11,12].

ONENESS

As husband and wife, the man and woman are one. There cannot, however, be two leaders, two heads. Chaos would result. Yet they must not act independently from one another, each in their own isolated realms, or living apart in separate houses or villages.

Two become one in heart. As planned and commanded in the Bible, the home is harmonious. Each partner glorifies God in their appointed areas.

They share all. Nothing is secret between them. There is openness. Their private existence has ended as the two have become one with nothing hidden. Decisions are discussed between them.

And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed [Gen.2:25]. They share one purse, one dwelling, one bed, and are united in their instruction to their children.

TRAINING CHILDREN

Together, as one, they teach and train their children in the ways of the Lord in His Word. This godly training involves two main things: Discipline and Instruction. **The rod and reproof give wisdom, but a child left to himself, brings shame to his mother [Prov.29:15].**

The rod is a cane used for beating disobedient children on the buttocks. **Don't hesitate to discipline a child. A good spanking [beating] won't kill him. You shall beat him with a rod and deliver his soul from hell [Prov.23:13,14].**

The children are to hear the reproof and instructions of their parents and learn from their discipline. Any child who does not is a fool.

My son, keep your father's commands, and don't forget your mother's teaching. Keep their words in mind forever. They will guide you when you walk. They will guard you when you sleep. They will speak to you when you are awake.

These commands are like a lamp; this teaching is like a light. And reproofs for discipline are the way of life [Prov.6:20-23].

Believing parents are the ones who are to teach the truths of God's Word to their own families. It is no one else's responsibility. This is what God commands fathers and mothers.

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength. Always remember these commands I give you today. Teach them to your children, and talk about them when you sit at home and walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up [Deut.6:5-7].

It is not good for the fathers and mothers to leave their children alone. A father cannot train his children when they sit at home, walk by the way, or when they lie down and awaken if he is not present in the home. A mother cannot instruct her children if they are left to themselves. These are shameful ways [Prov.29:15].

AN OBEDIENT HOME

Obedied, the teaching of the Word of God brings great blessing to the entire family. This is what the believer's home is to be like:

Finally, all of you should be in harmony, understanding each other, loving each other as family, being kind and humble. Do not do wrong to repay a wrong, and do not insult to repay and insult.

But repay with a blessing, because you yourselves were called to do this so that you might receive a blessing. The Scripture says, "A person must do these things to enjoy life and have many happy days. He must not say evil things, and he must not tell lies. He must stop doing evil and do good. He must look for peace and work for it" [I Pet.3:8-11].

But not everyone obeys God. Not everything in the home is done according to the Word of the living God.

Instead of truth, there may be lying and deception. Cruelty, hatred, and abuse may chase love from the home. Purity might be spoiled by fornication and lust.

Money in the home might be wasted on the evils of palm wine and beer while the wife and children suffer for lack of food. Hear well these words of God:

Do not be drunk with wine, which will ruin you [Eph.5:18].

Quarreling and fighting, laziness and neglect, and other evils like these may be found in the home. It is not good. The Lord of heaven and earth is not happy with things like these found among His people. This is what He says:

Do not make the Holy Spirit sad, do not be bitter or angry or mad. Never shout angrily or say things to hurt others. Never do anything evil. Be kind and loving to each other, and forgive each other just as God forgave you in Christ [Eph.4:30-32].

DIVORCE

There are even times when a husband or wife wishes to divorce the other and end the marriage. This is a great sin which God hates. The Word of God is certain about this.

The Lord sees how you treated the wife you married when you were young. You broke your promise to her, even though she was your companion and your wife by covenant.

God made husbands and wives to become one body and one spirit for His purpose – so they would have children who are true to God. So be careful, and do not break your promise to the wife you married when you were young.

The Lord God of Israel says, "I hate divorce." [Mal.2:14-16].

Some people, even people in the churches, think they can divorce for any cause at all. It is not true. The godly man **always does what he promises, no matter how much it may cost [Ps.15:4].** Here is what the Lord God says about keeping your promises to God and to your husband or wife:

When you make a promise to God, do not be slow to keep it. God is not happy with fools, so do what you promised! It is better not to promise anything than to promise something and not do it.

Don't let your words cause you to sin, and don't say to the messenger of God that it was a mistake. If you do, God will become angry with your words and will destroy everything you have worked for [Eccl.5:4-6].

No, we may not divorce anyhow. The Lord Jesus made this very clear in the Word of God. He said, **So a man will leave his father and mother and be united with his wife, and the two will become one body. So they are not two, but one. God has joined them together, so no one should separate them [Mt.19:5,6].**

The Lord's command from the beginning of creation is that one man would be married to one woman for their lifetime. No one is to separate by divorce what God has joined together. To do so is a great evil which the Lord hates.

There is only one exception to this. There is only one reason that a husband or wife can divorce the other with God's approval. It is if the other marriage partner has been sexually unfaithful to his/her spouse. This is what the Word of God says:

I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery. The only reason for a man to divorce his wife is if his wife has sexual relations with another man [Mt.19:9].

But even if your marriage partner is sexually unfaithful against you, divorce is not the immediate thing to be pursued. Forgiveness and seeking to restore the sinning partner is the first thing to be done. It is what the Bible directs us to do. This very thing happened to Hosea, one of the prophets of the Lord.

The Lord said to me again, "Go show your love to a woman loved by someone else, who has been unfaithful to you." Then I told her, "You must not be a prostitute, and you must not have sexual relations with any other man. I will act the same way toward you" [Hos.3:1,3].

Hosea forgave her. He welcomed her back as his wife. But it was done so only if she would stop sinning in this evil sexual way.

A husband or wife who refuses to stop their adulterous acts, violates the holiest and most basic expression of the marriage covenant. It is this one that the Lord says may be divorced. This is the only reason that God allows for divorce.

Re-marriage is permitted in such situations where the husband or wife has been treated unfaithfully by their adulterous partner. This is what the Lord Jesus said:

And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery [Mt.19:9].

There are also situations in which one of the married partners becomes a believer in the Lord Jesus after they have been married. The believer should not divorce his/her unbelieving partner if the unbeliever is happy to live with this new belief in the true God. Here is what the Word of God says:

If a Christian man has a wife who is not a believer, and she is happy to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a Christian woman has a husband who is not a believer, and he is happy to live with her, she must not divorce him.

But if those who are not believers decide to leave, let them leave. When this happens, the Christian man or woman is free. God has called us to live in peace [I Cor.7:12,13,15].

This situation is the only other time that a Christian can remarry after a divorce without committing adultery. In any other case, a second marriage is committing an act of adultery. These are the only two exceptions in which re-marriage is permitted after divorce from the first partner.

All other reasons for divorce are sinful reasons. The Word of God tells us this:

Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman is guilty of adultery against her. And the woman who divorces her husband and marries another man is also guilty of adultery [Mk.10:11,12].

Some people invent their own wrong reasons for divorce out of their own minds. The living God does not approve of this at all. A palaver of angry argument is never a reason for divorce. It is a reason to repent of sin so that the husband loves his wife and the wife submits to him, but not for divorce.

Money problems are never a reason for divorce. They are reasons to pray together to the Lord that He might **give us the food we need each day [Mt.6:11]**. Money problems are a reason to follow the example of the godly men of the Bible, but not to divorce.

You yourselves know that you should live as we live. We were not lazy when we were with you. We worked very hard night and day so we would not be an expense to any of you [2 Thess.3:7,8].

BARRENNESS

Many people wrongly think that barrenness is a reason for divorce. Barrenness is never a reason for divorce. It is a sinful wicked act to divorce your wife because she has given you no child.

It is the Lord who opens the womb to conceive children as His Word tells us. **When the Lord saw that Leah was not loved, He opened her womb. But Rachel was barren [Gen.29:31].**

God is able to make the barren woman to give birth. This is what the Bible says. **Then God remembered Rachel. He listened to her and opened her womb. She became pregnant and gave birth to a son [Gen.30:22,23].**

The Lord is also able to make the fruitful women barren. Here is what the Word of God says: **The Lord had closed up every womb in Abimelech's household** [Gen.20:18].

We are given an example in the Bible of a godly man and woman who had no child. We should imitate their obedience to the Lord as they trusted in God for many years before the Lord gave them a child. Listen to what God says in His Word:

Year after year this man went up from his town to worship and sacrifice to the Lord Almighty. He gave to Hannah a double portion because he loved her, and the Lord had closed her womb [I Sam.1:3,5].

Note it well what we are told. It was for many years that they had no child. Yet all through those years the husband continued to worship the true God. All through those years he continued to love his barren wife and supply all her needs very well. He never even considered divorcing her because of his love for God and for his wife.

This is the godly way for a husband to live which makes the God of heaven glad.

This woman **was so sad that she cried and prayed to the Lord. She made a promise, saying, "O Lord Almighty, see how sad I am. Remember me and don't forget me. If You will give me a son, I will give him back to You all his life"** [I Sam.1:10,11].

Though barrenness makes us sad, it is a reason for us to pray to the Lord God. We may even need to pray for many years as this godly woman did.

The very same God who had closed her womb also made her able to give birth. But it was after many years of continued prayer and worship of the true and the living God that this happened. This is the record of the Word of God:

Elkannah's family got up and worshiped the Lord. Then they went back home to Ramah. Elkannah had sexual relations with his wife, Hannah, and the Lord remembered her. So Hannah became pregnant, and in time she gave birth to a son [I Sam.1:19,20].

POLYGAMY

But many are not willing to wait patiently for the Lord God to give children to their barren wives. Some genuine followers of the living God have not trusted the Lord in this. Even Abraham sinned against God and his wife by not waiting upon the Lord for a child. The Word of God tells us this about Abraham's disobedience:

Sarah was barren. She had no child. So Sarah said to Abraham, "Look, the Lord has not allowed me to have children, so have sexual relations with my slave girl. If she has a child, maybe I can have my own family through her. Abraham agreed to what Sarah said.

Sarah his wife took her Egyptian maidservant Hagar and gave her to her husband to be his wife. Abraham had sexual relations with Hagar, and she became pregnant [Gen.11:30; 16:24].

Here, Abraham committed a great sin against God and his wife. He took another woman to be his wife because his first wife was barren.

It is sin against the God of heaven to marry more than one wife. Even if the senior wife agrees and the husband agrees, God is not happy. The Lord never approves of marrying more than one wife for any reason.

The great king David also disobeyed God in this way. He married more than one wife as the Word of God tells us: **Abigail became his wife. David also had married Ahinoam. So they were both David's wives** [I Sam.25:42,43].

Yet he did this in direct disobedience to the Lord's command. The Bible says: **The king must not have many wives** [Deut.17:17].

Even though they had sinned by marrying more than one wife, it did not keep Abraham or David out of heaven. Even this sin could be forgiven by the mercy of God.

Though we sin in many ways, it is only the grace of God in Christ Jesus the Lord that saves anyone.

If a person has sinned by marrying more than one wife, he should confess this sin to God. He should ask the Lord to forgive him. It is what the Word of God tells us to do about any sin:

If we say we have no sin, we are fooling ourselves, and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, He will forgive our sins, because we can trust God to do what is right. He will cleanse us from all the wrongs we have done. If we say we have not sinned, we make God a liar, and we do not accept God's teaching [I Jn.1:8-10].

A man does not need to send his junior wives away in order to be forgiven. This should not be done. We have seen already what God's Word says about sending away his wife: **The Lord God of Israel says, "I hate divorce"** [Mal.2:16].

It is wrong for a man to send any of his wives away. There is not even one example anywhere in the Bible of a man sending his wives away so that he could be forgiven by God.

Abraham and Hagar is no exception. God insisted that she be sent away because of the Lord's purpose to establish His covenant with Isaac, not to correct Abraham's sin of taking her in the first place [Gen.17:18-21; 21:10-12; Gal.4:21-31]. Even after Hagar was gone, and while still married to Sarah, Abraham continued to have concubines [Gen.25:5,6]. A concubine was a slave-woman taken as wife who had no inheritance rights [compare Jud.8:31 and 9:18].

The Lord was not pleased with Abraham's taking Hagar and concubines. God was not happy with David's taking many wives. But, like Abraham and David, any man who humbles his heart and seeks forgiveness can enter heaven by the grace of Christ.

Some wrongly imagine that the God of heaven only recognizes the first wife as being the only true marriage in His sight: That, since she is the only genuine wife, the other wives are not wives at all.

They are, they say, adulterous relationships. Therefore, it is said, a man must send them away in order to show "restitution" before God can forgive him.

But this is not true. God never speaks of these wives as adulterous partners. He calls them wives. The Lord nowhere commands this imaginary "restitution."

Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah are all referred to as Jacob's wives [Gen.29:21,25,28; 30:4,9]. David's wives were many even before he married Bathsheba [2 Sam.3:2-5]. The wives of Gideon were numerous [Jud.8:30].

In the inspired language of the Word of God, the Lord said they were wives. They were not concubines. They were not adulterous partners. God knows the differences between the relationships that a man can have with women. He has called them wives.

Since they are wives, it is not possible for their own husband to commit adultery with them. A man can only commit adultery with someone who is not his wife, but never with his own wife.

A man's wives should not be sent away, divorced, and uncared for [Mal.2:16; I Tim.5:8]. Had David sent Bathsheba away, Solomon would not have been born. And if Solomon had not been born, Jesus Christ Himself would not have been [Mt.1:6-16].

This is no excuse for David marrying more than one wife. He should not have. But it does show that, once the woman is taken as a wife, God does not require that she should be sent away.

There exists, therefore, no biblical command, example, or reason to send junior wives away in order for a man to be forgiven by God and enter into eternal life. Thus, the practice of "restitution" is not the will of God. A man has a life-long responsibility to each of his wives and children. Hear what the Word of God says:

If anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever [I Tim..5:8].

A man must continue to provide the needs of his wives and children. Their food and cloth must be supplied in obedience to the Word of God. As well, a man must continue to be a husband to each of his wives according to the Word of God.

If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first wife from having food or clothing or sexual relations [Ex.21:10].

A man who has more than one wife can be a genuine Christian if he believes the gospel. He can be a full member of the church, be baptized, and take of the communion/Lord's Supper. He can testify of his saving faith.

But he will not be qualified to be an overseer/elder in the church of God. An overseer/elder is to be above reproach as an example to all Christians. Since he has more than one wife, he would be setting the wrong example for the church to follow because of his married condition.

The Word of God says that the overseer/elder **must be the husband of one wife** [I Tim.3:2]. But with the exception of being an overseer/elder, he can serve the Lord Jesus to the glory of God without hindrance.

Since marriage illustrates the faithful loving relationship of Christ and His church [Eph.5:22-33], there must be a true example of that seen in the leaders of God's people.

It is for this reason, because the husband pictures Christ, and the wife, the church, that no Christian should ever marry more than one wife. It dishonors the Lord Jesus to portray Him as One with divided affections and loyalties. Polygamy is against what God made marriage to be from the beginning [Mt.19:4-6].

No Christian man should ever think about or actually marry more than one wife. It is never acceptable to God to do so. Taking more than one wife is never biblical. But if a man has already done this, he is not to commit another sin by divorcing her.

SUMMARY

This is what the believer's home is to show; the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ in His church as a testimony before angels and men.

For this we need grace, humility, and repentance. The average church-goer's home is little different than his unbelieving neighbor's. It is a shameful state. It grieves God and brings reproach upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. May the Lord help us.