

**Artisanal Toad** says:

February 5, 2016 at 4:55 am

@Don Quixote

I wish there was an easy way to explain this in twitter-sized comments, but that isn't possible. You might want to read this over several times before trying to rip it apart.

On your blog you said:

*If in 1Cor. 7:15 the apostle Paul gives grounds for divorce and remarriage, then he blatantly contradicts himself in 1Cor.7:39 and again in Rom. 7:2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. And contradicts the 'whosoever' doctrine of Jesus.*

I think this sheds some light on the problem. You are describing what is known as an "antinomy" which is where there is a contradiction in the interpretation of several portions of Scripture. Antinomies are not allowed. The problem is the Apostle Paul \*did\* give grounds for divorce and remarriage in 1st Corinthians 7:15 and there is no contradiction with the rest of the text. I perceive that the antinomy you have identified is the result of several issues, chief of which is your misunderstanding of divorce.

What I'd like you to do is consider what I'm saying, knowing that it disagrees with pretty much everything you've ever been taught. The people who are responsible for this were some of the most brilliant minds who have ever lived and they dedicated their lives to study in an era unencumbered by electronic distractions. They tinkered with their doctrine for about a thousand years and in some cases they modified the wording of Scripture to suit their ends. The doctrines they laid down were so pervasive and culturally accepted that translators found it very difficult to not default to the established doctrines when they translated the text.

[Some translation problems were honest mistakes, especially in the King James version, because for that translation the text went from Greek to Latin to English. It wasn't until a hundred years later that we got the first Greek to English lexicon (the Liddle Scott James), but the fact remains that the translators sometimes had to choose what they thought was the best interpretation of words that have different variations in meaning. In those cases their presumptions and biases induced by their culture had an impact.]

The book of Deuteronomy is somewhat misunderstood. Some call it a sermon, some call it a restatement of the Law, some call it the last message from Moses to the people. It's all of that and more, but one key point needs to be made about Deuteronomy and that is this; many of the passages in Deuteronomy represent judgments that Moses made while sitting as the judge of Israel. The concept is known as "stare decisis" which means 'once decided, always decided.'" Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is one of these, as is Deuteronomy 22:13-21 and 28-29. I can point to many others, but suffice to say that \*because\* these were the judgments that Moses made, they became part of the Law and the Law cannot be changed. We must take it as an article of faith that God intended these judgments, or at worst, that God permitted them. In any case, it is part of God's Law. To go further into that discussion is to get into dispensational vs covenant theology and I'm not going there today.

We must keep in mind who Moses was (the man who spoke to God face to face) and what his authority was (leader and judge of Israel). Lest you think that I am claiming that Moses made mistakes in the Law, I am not. Sometimes things go off course from the original plan, as is the case of the judgment on divorce, but Moses was the servant of the Lord and God backed him up completely.

As I've already pointed out, Genesis 2:24 is the authority to initiate marriage, it is granted to the man (and no other person or group), it is not limited (polygyny is permitted) and it does not contain the authority to end a marriage, only to begin one.

On the subject of divorce, in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 Moses gave his judgment, sitting as the judge of Israel. We know this was a judgment of Moses because of the commentary by Jesus in Matthew 19. "*Moses permitted you...*" Jesus was the Word made flesh and He knew God's will better than any person ever born. When asked what the grounds for divorce were He cited Genesis 2:24 and pointed to the lack of authority to end a marriage. The Pharisees brought up the judgment of Moses and Jesus pointed out "*but from the beginning it has not been this way.*" That means two things:

- 1st, He made a statement that divorce was not part of God's original plan.
- 2nd, He acknowledged that under the Law, divorce is permitted.

Then, He gave the famous "exception" that just about everybody gets wrong because of the doctrines they've been taught. Not because they're stupid or because they don't study. The problem is somewhat akin to reading a map. First, you orient the map to the terrain. Once that's done you can take your bearings, plot your course and do what you need to do. However, what just about everyone overlooks, because it is so basic, is the legend on the map is the guide for interpreting everything on the map. Change the legend and while everything appears to work, you don't understand what you're looking at and wind up making wrong decisions. Especially if there is a strong emotional desire to believe the legend.

In Matthew 19 Jesus responded to what Moses said in Deuteronomy 24:

*When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house..." Deuteronomy 24:1*

As you already know, the two prevailing schools of thought at that time were those of Rabbi Hillel and Rabbi Shammai; Hillel claiming divorce was permissible for virtually any reason and Shammai claiming that it was only justifiable in cases of adultery.

Jesus interpreted what Moses said in the strictest terms, saying "*If any man divorces his wife, except for the cause of 'porneia'...*"

I won't go over the definition of porneia again, but a good proxy in English is "marital unfaithfulness." Look at the structure of the language Jesus used: IF a man divorces his wife [for any cause] EXCEPT for marital unfaithfulness, THEN...

Structurally, we see there is a differentiation between those divorces for marital unfaithfulness and all other divorces. With respect to the "all other divorces" group, Jesus said

*“and marries another woman [he] commits adultery.”*

Here's the first problem with what we see. Adultery is a crime that involves a married woman and without a married woman there can be no adultery. So, the ONLY way the man who is in the group of “all other divorces” can be committing adultery is if the woman he marries is someone else's wife.

Please keep in mind that Jesus could NOT change the Law without being in violation of Deuteronomy 4:2 and 12:32. Transgressing that command would have been a sin, which would mean He wasn't the Messiah. Therefore, Jesus was NOT making any change to the Law by creating some new definition of adultery. K?

That point is critical. Jesus was NOT introducing something new here. Yet, there is another problem with the text, in that going by the early manuscripts, there are actually three versions of this text:

1. *“If any man divorces his wife, except for the cause of ‘porneia’ and marries another woman [he] commits adultery.”*
2. *“If any man divorces his wife, except for the cause of ‘porneia’ he makes her commit adultery.”*
3. *“If any man divorces his wife, except for the cause of ‘porneia’ he makes her commit adultery and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”*

I believe there is a reason that #1 is the preferred choice of translators, because what it says in English supported false church doctrine that forbid a man from having more than one wife. Still, the meaning becomes clear if we look carefully at the context (talking about all the cases in which the woman was divorced for some reason OTHER than ‘porneia’) and then look at the word “another” to see what it means. That word, in Greek, is “allos” ([Strong's 243](#)) and it is defined as:

” another of the same kind; another of a similar type.”

Knowing that adultery is a crime in which a married woman is required, the text tells us:

**\*\*A woman divorced for any reason other than marital unfaithfulness is not legitimately divorced, she is still married.**

**\*\*Such an illegitimately divorced woman commits adultery if she marries another man.**

**\*\*The man who marries “another” (of the same kind; of a similar type) illegitimately divorced woman commits adultery.**

Takeaway points:

1. Matthew 19:9 is NOT speaking of a legitimately divorced woman who was given a certificate of divorce by her husband and sent away because she committed marital unfaithfulness.
2. Matthew 19:9 is focused solely on the woman who was NOT legitimately divorced for marital unfaithfulness, a woman who is STILL MARRIED but has the legal status of a divorced woman.
3. To marry such a divorced woman is to commit adultery.

4. Jesus is NOT saying that \*all\* divorced women are illegitimately divorced and thus still married and He is NOT saying that a man commits adultery if he marries a legitimately divorced woman.

There is literally no way around this. Under the correct conditions (marital unfaithfulness) the LAW permits a man to legitimately divorce his wife and that divorced woman may legitimately marry another man without committing adultery. He who marries a legitimately divorced woman does not commit adultery. The point of Deuteronomy 24:4 was that the woman who defiled herself with marital unfaithfulness and was sent away was not allowed to return and be restored as a wife, even if she was at a later point free to remarry. It was not the divorce that defiled her, neither was it her legitimate marriage to another, it was her own actions that were judged by her (original) husband as serious enough that it warranted divorce. To take her back was to accept her infidelity.

BUT, that isn't the end of the story. Return to what Jesus said earlier in the passage when He said *"What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate"* and *"but from the beginning it has not been this way."* He was pointing to Genesis 2:24's lack of authority for the man to end a marriage as the original plan for marriage but in NO WAY did Jesus deny that the Law allowed men to legitimately divorce their wives for reason of marital unfaithfulness.

SO... with that understanding we turn to 1st Corinthians 7:10-15 (For clarity's sake I've put the translator's alternative translations in brackets)

*"But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave [depart from] her husband (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce [leave] his wife.*

*But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her [leave her]. And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away [leave her husband] . For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband [the brother]; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace."*

The first thing we should notice is there are two authorities speaking in this passage, and they are addressing two different groups. In verses 10-11, the Lord Jesus Christ is addressing His married believers, meaning two Christians who are married to each other. This is important because for two married Christians wedded to each other, there is no divorce. There is literally nothing that can end the marriage other than death and no exceptions to this rule.

**Context:** I know you guys get really tired of me bringing this up, but part of the context here is that the man is authorized to have more than one wife. Notice that if the wife leaves, she is commanded to remain single (chaste) or be reconciled to her husband. Not her ex-husband. However, the husband is given no such command because he is authorized to marry another woman. In other words, no wife has the right/ability/authority to sentence her husband to sexual starvation by leaving him and then remaining chaste, unwilling to reconcile herself to him.

This command is completely in accord with what Jesus said in Matthew 19:3-9. *"What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."* However, without providing an explanation or details, He implies that perhaps the time might come when a wife must choose to violate the command not to

leave her husband, perhaps because staying would be worse. If she does so the text is clear that she is still married and not authorized to marry another.

Again, we have two authorities speaking to two groups. Christ was speaking to those who were wed in unions in which both man and woman are Christians. Paul takes up the instruction beginning in verse twelve, beginning with the words *But **to the rest** I say, not the Lord...*” and he made it clear that what followed was from him, speaking with his apostolic authority rather than a direct command from the Lord.

Again, Christ spoke to Christians married to each other, Paul is speaking to the rest. What are the rest? The text makes it clear that Paul is speaking to those unequally yoked, the unions in which the Christian is married to an unbeliever. The text also makes clear “the rest” are not in the same category as the first group.

First, to “the rest” comes the command to stay with the unbeliever and not leave them, send them away or divorce them IF the unbeliever consents to the relationship. The reason is the believer in the relationship sanctifies the unbelieving spouse as well as the children.

Then comes what is known as the “Pauline privilege” in which Paul says:

*“Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under **bondage** in such cases, but God has called us to peace.”*

Notice I put the word “bondage” in bold. Let’s compare that to 1st Corinthians 7:39 and then look at definitions:

*“A wife is **bound** as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.”*

**Bondage:** Translated from the Greek word “douloó” ([Strong’s 1402](#))

Cognate: 1402 doulóō – enslave (passive, “become enslaved”), focusing on the status of being a bond-slave. In contrast to the other verb-form of the same root (1398 /douleúō), 1402 (doulóō) stresses the results (effects) of enslavement. That is, what automatically goes with belonging to another. See 1401 (doulos).

**Bound:** Translated from the Greek word “deó” ([Strong’s 1210](#))

I bind, tie, fasten; I impel, compel; I declare to be prohibited and unlawful.

In Matthew 19 Christ made it clear that there was to be no divorce. That is the rule. However, because of the Law, there is one exception to the rule and Christ defined exactly what that exception is.

In 1st Corinthians 7 Christ made it clear that for His bondservants married to one another, there is to be no divorce, no exceptions. He is free to command His servants and He has done so. However, for those servants of His who are unequally yoked, they are commanded to remain as they are, married to the unbeliever. The one exception to this is if the unbeliever will not consent to live with them and leaves. At that point they are no longer in bondage to that person.

There is no more a contradiction between the statements of Christ in Matthew 19 than there is in 1st Corinthians 7. The rule is given, the exception to the rule is stated and the rule is again re-stated, just as it is stated in other places in Scripture (Romans 7:2). Notice what Romans 7:2 says and pay attention to the text:

*“For the married woman is **bound by law** to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from **the law** concerning the husband.”*

The Law provided a way for a husband to unbind himself from his wife, leaving her unbound from him, but only for marital unfaithfulness on her part.

In the same way, the instruction in 1st Corinthians 7:15 states that a believing wife who is married to an unbeliever who will not live with her is no longer bound to him (no longer in bondage to him).

This exegesis creates no antinomy and 1st Corinthians 7:15 is thus in harmony with verse 39 as well as with Romans 7:2 and follows the same pattern laid out in the Law in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 and expounded by the Lord in Matthew 19:3-9, so I leave you with the words of the Lord in Matthew 19:10-11

*The disciples said to Him, “If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.” But He said to them, “Not all men can accept this statement, but only those to whom it has been given.”*

Now, lest you think I'm some kind of apologist for divorce (which is a real hoot if you've read the stuff I've written about divorce over the past few years), consider the four groups of women who were at one time married but now are \*legitimately\* no longer married and thus eligible to marry again, in descending order of the likelihood that you'd ever meet one:

**The first group** are those legitimately married women who have an unbelieving husband (and it doesn't matter if the wife is a believer or not). He, not being a Christian and subject to the “house rules” that servants of Christ are, is free to legitimately divorce his unfaithful wife and be free from her. Such a woman is legitimately divorced by her unbelieving husband and free to remarry.

**The second group** are those legitimately married women whose husband died. They are known as widows and are free to remarry (If she is a believer, she must marry another believer).

**The third group** are those Christian women who were legitimately married to an unbelieving husband, but **ONLY** those cases in which the unbelieving husband would not consent to live with them and left. In those cases the believing woman is no longer under bondage and is free to marry another (but only if he is in Christ).

**The fourth group** are those women who, in their youth and while living in their father's house under his authority, entered into a marriage by giving their virginity to a man; and their father, upon hearing about it annulled that marriage in the day he heard about it.

Group one women were guilty of betraying their husband. Group four women were guilty of betraying their father. Group three women may or may not have been culpable in driving their unbelieving

husband away, so only the widow is free from any charge (although it's always possible she's a black widow who murdered her husband and didn't get caught).

Every member of these groups possess three characteristics: They are free to remarry, they are no longer virgins and their consent to marry is required, as opposed to virgins, whose consent is not required. The other thing about these gals is you'll almost never meet one of them because if you noticed, I said "legitimately married" and the vast majority of "wives" both in the church and without are *\*not\** legitimately married to the guy they claim to be married to.

Everyone has problems with the fact that every non-virgin is either married or she's been married. The only "never-married" woman you can possibly meet is a virgin. Now, I'm not in the mood to discuss "vaginal virgins" in this age of anal and casual blowjobs, but I will draw the line in accordance with the text that a woman is either virgin, married or previously married. No other choices.

What makes Christians scream in frustration is if you search Scripture you'll find that **NOWHERE** is having sex with one of these women outside the bounds of marriage forbidden, prohibited or condemned in any way. It is therefore not sinful behavior. It cannot be described as "fornication" of "illicit sex" because those things are sin and having sex outside the bounds of marriage with one of the women in those four groups is not a sinful.

Am I saying that guys should go ahead and do it? No. Just because something isn't forbidden does not mean it's wise, healthy, beneficial or good. In fact, it doesn't mean it couldn't be a sin. Please pay attention: Just because something isn't prohibited does not mean that it **couldn't** be a sin. While not prohibited or condemned, the act **could** be a sin IF it is "not of faith" (Romans 14:23) or IF the person knows that for them, *\*not\** having sex outside of marriage is the right thing to do, in which case not doing what they know to be right is a sin (James 4:17). However, in both these cases it's a matter of conscience and we are commanded not to judge in such matters.

Let's say you met a nice woman who is *\*eligible\** to marry (meaning she's either a virgin or one of the four groups listed above). You get to know her, you like what you see, you talk it over with her and the two of you agree to get married. *\*Because\** you have the intent to marry her and *\*because\** she has given her consent to be married, having sex with her will be the consummation of your marriage to her because nothing else is required. If she is a virgin, her willingness to give you her virginity is her consent to be married to you.

If life were a movie, everything could be perfect, but life doesn't always work that way. Let's say you're seeing a woman who is eligible to marry, getting to know her, and although you have not yet decided you intend to marry her... things get out of hand, physical urges take over and you have sex. You haven't sinned and neither has she. Or, maybe you have. That all depends on your conscience or her conscience. Yes, it happens, but what about intent? Was your intent really to find a suitable wife, or was your intent just to get laid? The fact there is no bright red line with sin on one side and righteousness on the other side means that intent counts for a lot. At least, that's my way of thinking. What's the difference between a slut and a whore? Is it the money or the attitude? Isn't it reasonable to ask the same question about the men?

But, let's say you're seeing a woman and she isn't eligible to marry (meaning she's already married, whether she knows it or not) and for whatever reason you have sex with her. That is what is known as adultery. What I know to be true is that virtually any "single" woman a guy meets that isn't a virgin is already married and banging her is adultery. And... can you trust her if she tells you she is a virgin?

At this point any man seriously considering marriage to any non-virgin woman should go over the passages in question with her and her father, explain what they mean, have her confess to her father and ask him to annul her marriage. Failing that, locate the guy she gave her virginity to and if he isn't a Christian get him to give her a certificate of divorce. Failing that, the only question is whether he's willing to live with her as her husband. If he won't, she's free because he's the unbelieving husband who won't consent to live with her. If he is willing, her choice is to be reconciled with her husband or to remain separate, unmarried and chaste. Her choice.

The only way out for a Christian woman who married a Christian man is if she married him while in her youth, living in her father's house and he didn't know about it. Not having given his approval, he has the right to annul the marriage in the day he hears about it and Numbers 30 doesn't have any time limits. If he won't (her guilt would be on him) then she's stuck with the guy she married until the day he dies.

Nobody has to like it, they just have to obey.