



*Behold, the Lamb of God Who takes away the sin of the world. John 1:29*

*Behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, has prevailed Revelation 5:5*

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## L I O N & L A M B C H U R C H

### **Lion & Lamb Church Statement on Divorce and Remarriage**

#### **Introduction**

The issue of divorce and remarriage is one which has eluded unanimity among Christians for centuries. The resultant confusion has left the practice of modern Christians barely distinguishable from that of the rest of the culture. The leadership of Lion and Lamb Church believe that it is essential that scripture form the basis of our beliefs and convictions, rather than a simple “baptism of what is.” Nonetheless, after a fairly exhaustive review of various biblical texts on the issue, many good and godly brothers in Christ have diverged on the justification and even the scriptural basis for divorce and remarriage. To an extent, that diversity of opinion is reflected among the leaders of Lion and Lamb Church.

Lion and Lamb leaders are in wholehearted agreement that marriage is one of God’s greatest blessings on the human race and a means whereby He accomplishes much of His will on the earth. Marriage as an institution should be protected as the incalculable gift of God it is, and every effort should be exhausted to strengthen marriages and to prevent faltering marriages from ending. Lion & Lamb is committed heart and soul to helping marriages reflect the glory of God and to be the source of blessing God means them to be.

We also understand that while God’s design for marriage is perfect, marriage partners are not. Sin, willfulness, neglect, and unfaithfulness on the part of one or both marriage partners much too often lead to dissolution of the marriage through divorce.

Lion and Lamb leaders are united in their conviction that God designed marriage to:

1. Be a lifelong relationship, and the primary means by which:
  - \*mankind experiences completion as man and woman;
  - \*God provides a stable, loving relationship in which men and women can grow and thrive;
  - \*children are brought into the world;
  - \*children are given a safe, stable environment in which to grow and thrive;
  - \*the knowledge of God is passed from one generation to the next; and,

2. Be a living example of God’s love for His people, and Christ’s love for the Church.

God’s provision of marriage, and His call to marital faithfulness and mutual love and service between husbands and wives, is a high call, meant to glorify God, bless men and women, and provide a living illustration of the great and costly love of God for those in relationship with Him.

Because God’s design for marriage includes permanence and mutual self sacrifice in service of the other spouse’s best interest, any marriage ending before the death of a spouse falls short of God’s design, and is a serious and significant failure, affecting both spouses, their families, any children, the Church, and the larger culture.

While divorce has become commonplace in both the wider culture and the Church, its widespread pervasiveness should not be mistaken as an indication that divorce is anything less than the rupturing of a union meant to last a lifetime. Divorce leaves all parties damaged and God’s good will and image marred. It is important for the Church to have a biblical perspective on divorce and its aftermath, as well as what the scriptures say about the possibility of remarriage.



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### **Practice at Lion & Lamb**

Out of a respect for differing interpretations and convictions, a desire to walk in unity, a humble recognition that we are all sinners saved by God's grace as well as a recognition of the reality of divorce and remarriage within the church at large, the leaders have agreed to the following as a practical approach to situations that may arise within the body of Lion and Lamb:

1. Those who have been divorced and those who have remarried are welcome in full fellowship in Lion and Lamb so long as they willingly affirm the ideal and purpose of marriage portrayed in this statement. We believe this will involve seeking forgiveness for any wrong committed, regardless of the fault on the other side, and making things right to the extent possible. We encourage transparency regarding one's own weaknesses and failures that may have contributed to the collapse of his or her own past marriage(s).
2. If a divorced and remarried couple would like to fellowship at Lion and Lamb, but is under censure at another church, Lion and Lamb leadership will investigate the reasons for the censure and may require that the couple seek reconciliation at their previous church before being accepted at Lion and Lamb.
3. Assuming that the above reparative steps have been accomplished to the extent possible, leaders at Lion & Lamb may perform marriages only for those whose previous marriage was severed by unfaithfulness or abandonment by the other spouse. (Unfaithfulness and abandonment being the potential exceptions allowing divorce and remarriage as understood by Church leadership.)

Leaders may choose not to perform such marriages based on their own convictions.

4. Believing in the inestimable worth of marriage, leadership will encourage restoration and reconciliation in any circumstance of marital separation.

If a person in fellowship at Lion & Lamb leaves their spouse, they will be exhorted to remain unmarried, per 1 Corinthians 7:10-11, with the hope of restoration.

If a separation is necessary for the protection of spouse or children, repentance, reconciliation and restoration will be encouraged as a solution, rather than divorce.

If they proceed to divorce their spouse in a situation not covered by the potential exceptions in Matt 5 and 19 (unfaithfulness), or 1 Corinthians 7 (abandonment), they will be approached in the spirit of Matthew 18:15-18, and exhorted back to covenant faithfulness.

Lion & Lamb Church wants to sound a clarion call to God's high design for marriage faithfulness and permanence, while at the same time, displaying God's redeeming love in compassion, forgiveness, and restoration.

We want to encourage a culture in which lifelong devotion and joy in marriage is the norm. We will strive to communicate this in both teaching and example.



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## Biblical Passages

The following are the passages in the scriptures that deal most directly with divorce and remarriage and which inform this discussion.

### Genesis 2:20-24

<sup>GE 2:20</sup> The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. <sup>GE 2:21</sup> So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. <sup>GE 2:22</sup> The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. <sup>GE 2:23</sup> The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.” <sup>GE 2:24</sup> For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh

### Deuteronomy 24:1-4

<sup>DT 24:1</sup> “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, <sup>DT 24:2</sup> and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man’s *wife*, <sup>DT 24:3</sup> and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts *it* in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, <sup>DT 24:4</sup> *then* her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.

### Malachi 2:16

<sup>MAL 2:16</sup> “For I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says the LORD of hosts. “So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.”

### Matthew 5:31-32

<sup>MT 5:31</sup> “It was said, ‘WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE’; <sup>MT 5:32</sup> but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

### Matthew 19:3-12

<sup>MT 19:3</sup> *Some* Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, “Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any reason at all?” <sup>MT 19:4</sup> And He answered and said, “Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, <sup>MT 19:5</sup> and said, ‘FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH?’ <sup>MT 19:6</sup> “So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” <sup>MT 19:7</sup> They <sup>\*</sup>said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND *her* AWAY?” <sup>MT 19:8</sup> He <sup>\*</sup>said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. <sup>MT 19:9</sup> “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” <sup>MT 19:10</sup> The disciples <sup>\*</sup>said to Him, “If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.” <sup>MT 19:11</sup> But He said to them, “Not all men *can* accept this statement, but *only* those to whom it has been given. <sup>MT 19:12</sup> “For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother’s womb; and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are *also* eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. He who is able to accept *this*, let him accept *it*.”



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### Mark 10:2-12

<sup>MK 10:2</sup> Some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and *began* to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. <sup>MK 10:3</sup> And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?” <sup>MK 10:4</sup> They said, “Moses permitted a man TO WRITE A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY.” <sup>MK 10:5</sup> But Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. <sup>MK 10:6</sup> “But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. <sup>MK 10:7</sup> “FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, <sup>MK 10:8</sup> AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>MK 10:9</sup> “What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” <sup>MK 10:10</sup> In the house the disciples *began* questioning Him about this again. <sup>MK 10:11</sup> And He \* said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; <sup>MK 10:12</sup> and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.”

### Luke 16:18

<sup>LK 16:18</sup> “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

### 1 Corinthians 7:10-16, 39

<sup>1CO 7:10</sup> But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband <sup>1CO 7:11</sup> (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife. <sup>1CO 7:12</sup> 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. <sup>1CO 7:13</sup> And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. <sup>1CO 7:14</sup> For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. <sup>1CO 7:15</sup> 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. <sup>1CO 7:16</sup> For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

<sup>1CO 7:39</sup> 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.

### Ephesians 5:25-32

<sup>EPH 5:25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, <sup>EPH 5:26</sup> so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>EPH 5:27</sup> that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. <sup>EPH 5:28</sup> So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>EPH 5:29</sup> for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, <sup>EPH 5:30</sup> because we are members of His body. <sup>EPH 5:31</sup> FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. <sup>EPH 5:32</sup> This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. <sup>EPH 5:33</sup> Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must *see to it* that she respects her husband.