

MARRIAGE & DIVORCE—WHAT DOES THE SCRIPTURE SAY? (3)

By Keith Greer

Paul, on one occasion told King Agrippa that he had taught the Jews and Gentiles, "but declared first to those in Damascus and in Jerusalem, and throughout all the region of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent, turn to God, and do works befitting repentance." (Acts 26:20) Repentance is a "turning away from" sin. It is not just being sorry for that which is wrong, but it is a "turning away from" that which is wrong.

We can also read where Paul told the Corinthians, "Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death." (2 Corinthians 7:9-10)

Some would charge us with teaching that we're making adultery an "unforgiveable sin." Nonsense! "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) Many seeking to use such reasoning against the truth are just "clouding" the issue with doubt.

Does God forgive us when we repent, turn to Him, and do "works meet for repentance?" ABSOLUTELY, every time. We know that "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 1:9) God's children who are living soberly and righteously, He has promised us that "For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more." (Hebrews 8:12) Yet, remember that God's mercy and forgiveness are not unconditional. Does God not expect the sinner to "turn away" from their sinful conduct—whatever it may be?

I believe we can understand that the Christian who is a thief cannot continue to steal. We know that the apostle Paul told the Christians at Ephesus to "Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need." (Ephesians 4:28) So, can the Christian who is living in adultery continue in that relationship and still be pleasing to God?

"Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Corinthians 6:9-11)

"What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it?" (Romans 6:1-2)

Let us be honest, some Christians today are in difficult and heartbreaking circumstances, but how much "love" do two people have for one another if they stay in a relationship that costs each other their souls?

Not long ago, a preacher went to see a very close friend of mine. He had divorced his wife, because he met someone else, and went ahead and married her. The preacher pointed out, according to the scriptures, both of them were living in adultery. (By the way the man was a member of the church) He said, "I love her too much to live without her." He said, "Do you love her enough to cause both of your souls to be lost?" My friend said, " Yes, I guess I do." Unbelievable, no person has the right to cause another to lose their soul and in the same breath profess undying love for them! Better advice—just repent! ***