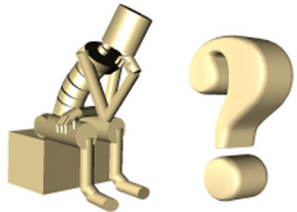


Divorce & Remarriage



From
Living Springs Institute

Question #15 - *“My boyfriend and I have known each other for a few years, and we have been in a committed relationship for the past several months. He is divorced, and I have been separated for a couple of years. Now, my boyfriend and I have spoken of spending the rest of our lives together, and just a few weeks ago I filed for divorce. After doing this, my friend informed me that the Bible says I am still a married woman and he can no longer have a romantic relationship with me. He just suddenly ended our relationship, telling me his decision was based on what the scriptures say. I explained to him I’ve read things in the Bible about “divorce papers” and I have already delivered these “divorce papers.” I told him that if he was interested in someone else he should just say so and not suddenly tell me the Bible says we can no longer be together. Can you help me with this? Does he really need to stop dating me because of what the Bible says? Can you find anything in the Bible that says we have to suddenly stop? Does this make sense to you? I want to know what the Bible says about love and being true to your word. He told me he would always be there for me and never leave. He told me we would spend the rest of our lives together. Now, he tells me this! Doesn’t the Bible say things about going against your word?”*

Nowhere, will you find a more complex subject than divorce and remarriage. The Bible is actually

pretty clear on the subject; but because of why marriage exists and what it’s supposed to be, sorting out what people should do in their particular situations can be difficult at times. Many people get themselves into a big mess before or because they do not know or maybe at times do not care about the truth. However, it sounds like your case should be fairly straight forward.

Whenever I get a question like this, I like to break it down into its most basic points. You laid out a line of questions in the middle of the facts you gave, and they are these: 1. “Can you help me with this?” 2. “Does he really need to stop dating me because of what the Bible says?” 3. “Can you find anything in the Bible that says we have to suddenly stop?” And 4. “Does this make sense to you?” The second part of your question goes into the idea of promises and words, ending with your direct question of, “Doesn’t the Bible say things about going against your word?” So, what we have here are five questions which I want to answer as simply as I can and also talk about why the answers are what they are!

Your first question is, “Can you help me with this?” The answer to this question is probably more up to your point of view than it is anything else. This question’s answer is based on what you consider help. If by help, you mean give you advise you can use to get your boyfriend back, then no, I can’t help you with that; but if you’re asking me to help you understand why he said what he did concerning scripture, yes, I can help you with that. As for the issues which make you question whether there may be someone else, that speaks to his motives and only he and God truly know those. What I will say is, probably the biggest reason you are so concerned about his motives is because of the suddenness of the action. You used the word “suddenly” several times in your question, and it seems obvious that the abruptness of your friends decision has left you feeling stunned. It’s likely you are trying to explain this feeling by suggesting there is another person involved. While there is no way for me to tell you this is not the case, I can tell you it doesn’t really matter. That may hurt now and be very hard to accept; but the question you are really hurting over is the question we all ask to some degree when a relationship ends, and we were not the one who ended it. It’s not just the broad question of why, but the question of what does this breakup say about me?

We want to know if we did something wrong or

what it was the other person found in us which was so unacceptable they no longer wanted to be with us. Because this examination is hard, we tend to want to blame external factors for the breakup. Because people want to spare the others feelings, they will often give an external factor for why they want to breakup, instead of simply being honest, which often leads the person who did not want to breakup, questioning the honesty of the other. If we have a very short relationship with someone, we can often blow the question off with the thought the person did not truly know us. If they broke up with us for reasons which speak against us, well, they did not know us well enough to make a right decision, and it's their loss. However, when we have known the person for a long time, and especially if we have been in a close relationship with them, we can't say this. We feel we have allowed the person to know us better than most people will ever know us, and the thought that such a person would reject us is very disturbing. This feeling is emphasized in no greater way than in the case of a "sudden" breakup. It's simply hard for us to imagine why a person who has been with us for so long can suddenly walk away for any reasons which are not mutually understood.

This is what you are feeling, and this is why you are questioning things like, is there another girl? The problem is, we just can't know for sure what the truth may be. Your friend may be a dirty rotten liar, but there is nothing we can do if that is the case. Further, there is the fact, if he is nothing but a liar, you are certainly better off without such a person in your life. What I can help you with are the next questions you asked, and those are the ones which deal with the real question here: and that is, can my friend's excuse for breaking up with me be the real reason? The answer to that is simply, yes! Why? Because your friend could be getting his advise from any number of ministries or people whom he believes know the Bible. If your friend truly believes he has heard good instruction from God's Word on the issue, he very well may have been compelled to end his relationship with you and do it as quickly as he could!

If this is the case, then your friend has done nothing wrong in ending his intimate relationship with you or in the fact he did it quickly. If we feel we are in violation of God's will, we should change our actions and there is no excuse to be dilatory about it! What it would seem your friend has done wrong is in leaving

you behind with what appears to be very little effort on his part to explain to you what caused him to come to this conclusion. If he has learned something true, then he should be willing to, at the very least, attempt to share it with you; because this truth would apply to your life in much the same way it does his. However, we still can't judge your friend. He is struggling with an issue which is between him and God. If your friend truly loves you in the way you described, it may be just too painful for him to be with you and not be "with" you. If he feels it's wrong for him to be with you in the intimate way he has been, the temptation to do the wrong action may be just too strong for him to even attempt to have a friendship with you. The Bible tells us to, "Flee also youthful lusts: but follow righteousness, faith, charity, peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart." II Timothy 2:22 It also tells us we must put God first in everything we do. (Mark 12:30) If we are going to live righteously, we may have to give up some things we love very dearly! Your friend may not only be telling the truth as he sees it, but attempting to do the right thing in every way he understands.

All this is also connected to your last question about keeping your word. However, I believe a further discussion on that will mean more to you after we cover your other questions, so let's leave it for later. Your second question was, "Does he really need to stop dating me because of what the Bible says?" and your third question does not really need to be separated from this one. It was, "Can you find anything in the Bible that says we have to suddenly stop?" This is the big issue! Everything about where to go from here really hangs on these questions because this is the part your friend did not or could not stay around long enough to explain to you. Whether he is leaning on truth or false doctrine is of great importance to the way you move forward from here!

Because of the fact I only want to base my answers on what the Bible has to say and teach people where it says it, there is only one difference between these two questions for me. Again, it's that word "suddenly" you used in the second of the two, and we have already covered it for the most part. One of the biggest problems people have in our world today is they believe they can hold on to God with one hand while holding on to the things of the world with the other. One of the greatest explanations I have ever heard for why we

should raise our hands in praise unto God is because when you surrender you put your hands in the air. You show you are holding on to nothing and become vulnerable to being searched. This is the way we should live our lives before God. If God convicts our lives of something, we should not put God off or tell Him we will deal with it in our own time. We should live our lives with our hands raised and open, dropping everything we are holding on to and allowing the Lord to search our being for those things we are still carrying with us which are displeasing to Him. Even in a marriage where one spouse finds the Lord, that spouse must be willing to give everything to the Lord in spite of what the other one thinks. Again, our lives are first and foremost lived unto our Creator.

One of the most profound things about living this life is that we live in time. This means we put one foot in front of the other. What actions we will take in the future are entirely up to the choice we make in that moment not the decisions we made for that moment. Many plans have been laid without being realized because we simply do not take the actions we planned to take for one reason or another. Then there is the other side of time's truth which is, once an action is taken it's in the past, and there is nothing we can do to change it no matter how much we may want to. That is the difference between sinning and being sinful: the moment by moment choices we make. We are not necessarily sinning at every moment just because we are corrupted by past sin. There was nothing Adam and Eve could do once they had eaten of the fruit God told them not to eat of. They had sinned, and they would have to suffer the consequences of that sin. So, they attempted to make choices about where to go from there. They did not do a very good job of handling their new circumstances, but where they really blew it was in hiding from the very God they needed help from to know what they should do next. (Gen. 3)

It may sound silly, but it's an inescapable truth that wherever you go, there you will be; and today is the first day of the rest of your life! Neither you or your friend can do anything about anything you may or may not have done which has been inappropriate before God up until now. That's just a fact. The way you change your life is to find the truth and base the choices you make from then on, on what you have learned. Paul puts it this way, "How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?" Romans 6:2 The

answer is, we cannot. If we choose to do wrong knowing it's wrong, we are continuing to live in sin, not being dead to it! If your friend believes he learned a truth about righteous living, he has an obligation to live by it immediately. (James 4:17) So, yes, if your friend believes the Bible tells him he should not be with you because he is a divorced man and/or because you are a divorced woman, he really has a need to stop dating you.

Now for the question I believe we have all been waiting for, what does the Bible say about divorce and remarriage? To understand divorce and the issue of remarriage you must first understand what God intended for marriage in the first place. This is a subject which is very confused in our world of political correctness; and this is, in no small way, due to our confusion about the place of sex in our lives. Our world today wants us to believe a sexual relationship is a necessary part of our lives, and because of this, we must find a relationship one way or another. Some would even suggest an adult without a relationship will go mad. While it's true a person without a relationship may go mad, it's not true that they have to! It all depends on what we are living for.

We need to be clear on the fact God's Word doesn't say things at random. It doesn't meander and tell us things which have no point. This means when God tells us the specific story of our creation and includes statements about His own thought process, God is trying to help us understand something! In Genesis, God creates the heavens, the earth, light itself, and every living thing on this planet by speaking words. Then God says, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness:" Genesis 1:26 To do this, God reaches down and specifically forms man from the dust of the ground. Then God breathes the breath of life into that man. God had finally created the being for which all the other elements He had created over those six days was for. God created a man, and that is exactly what God had intended to do!

Now, it's important to note that when creating all the other living things, God had commanded those things to bring forth after their kind. He had created plants with seeds and animals consisting of male and female. They were to procreate and be abundant on the earth. However, when God created man, He only created one! What does this tell us? It tells us God

created humans not simply as part of what we would call the ecosystem, or even as a functioning group. God created humans as individuals! This is a point which we, in our observation of the natural world, seem to miss. It may be our flesh's nature to see the world as a group, and God certainly teaches us to care for our neighbor, but God created individuals. When we live our lives only in the flesh, we, many times, act like animals; but God did not create us to simply follow the herd, pack, or flock.

It was only after the full and complete creation of Adam, and God's placement of Adam in the garden God had planted that God tells us His determination that it was not good for man to be alone. (Gen. 2:18) Some will tell you this is an edict to marry, but that could not be further from the truth. God was not simply looking for a way to make man a part of a herd. God determined man should have the chance to interact with other creatures in the flesh. This was not about procreation, it was about socialization, which, contrary to the world's message, does not include sexual relationships. This is why the immediate solution to the problem of Adam being alone was not the creation of another human, but the searching for a helpmate among all the creatures God had already made. In doing this, the point was made again that man was special. There was nothing among the animals which compared to Adam. His interaction with them would always be as a master. There was no equal. Thus, God's solution was to put a deep sleep upon Adam and take a piece of him to form another human. Eve was not a new creation as Adam was, she was exactly what Adam recognized her as being, bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. (Gen. 2:23)

In determining the formation of another human from a piece of the one already in existence, was the answer to man not being alone; God followed the physical pattern He had already laid down in creation. God not only created another human; God created the second human as female. This meant Adam could not control the population of the planet by dividing himself; but with a commitment to each other, Adam and Eve together could choose to share a part of themselves in a process which would produce more individual humans. Their offspring would also be a mixture of males and females, giving their offspring this same choice. The pattern God had laid down was not one which said every human must be married, but

a choice to become one flesh with someone of the opposite sex, which comes with the possibility of creating a child who is literally a fruition of that truth. "Therefore," the Word tells us, "shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Genesis 2:24

The option of procreation was not given for the sake of pleasure in spite of the fact God made it pleasurable. The point of a physical relationship was not part of man's social structure or a necessity like food and water. It was so that more humans could be brought into this world, as those individuals committed to raising them wanted to do so, and this is not a choice which should be taken lightly. It's a serious commitment and responsibility to raise and nurture a child born to those who make the choice. This is what the institution of marriage is all about, and why the Bible teaches us that a sexual relationship should only exist between a male and a female who have made the commitment to be together for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer until death do we part. Children need this commitment, and everyday life clearly shows us this!

Simply put, sex was created for the purpose of procreation. Therefore, it has no place between two people who were not created to accomplish procreation. Sex was not simply created to be a physical pleasure. It has a purpose, and that is why it also should not be a part of any relationship where procreation is inappropriate even if possible. It does not matter what your "sexual preference" is. Incest, homosexuality, rape, adultery are all misuses of a gift God gave us for a specific purpose.

Does this mean people who are married have a responsibility to have children? No! What it means is that marriage is the appropriate institution for the raising of children. A man truly leaves his father and mother when he chooses to take a wife, and he, with her, creates a new unit. In this new unit, leadership roles exist and responsibilities are worked out and shared between the two. They literally build a life "together," and together they are to ride out the good times and bad. This solid union creates an institution which can harbor offspring until they are ready to face the world on their own. Because marriage is the right institution in which children can be raised and nurtured, a physical relationship can be freely enjoyed

between a man and his wife. In marriage, the prerequisites for the possible results of your physical relationship have already been met! The problem comes back to those simple facts of time we talked about earlier. No matter what we say we want to do, only what we choose to do moment by moment comes to pass; and that brings us to the issue of divorce.

Nowhere is the issue of divorce laid out more simply than what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 19 verses 1 through 9. Here, Jesus admitted that in the law of Moses (which is that law God committed to the Jewish people: that part of the Bible we know as the first five books) God allowed a man to give a woman a "bill of divorcement." However, Jesus tells us this was not the perfect will of God, by pointing out that, "...from the beginning it was not so." God only allowed divorce because of the hardness of men's hearts! This goes back to the point about God making us individuals. There's no union among humans which has the potential of being closer than the union of marriage; but even in marriage, there is still individuality. The Bible tells us a man and his wife become one flesh; but humans, unlike animals, are not flesh only. We are also mind and spirit. Only one part of what we are is irreparably linked, and it's the same part which links us to this earth - the flesh. The fact we become one flesh is why we say a child is the fruition of marriage. A child is an individual spun off from the original one flesh truth of a marriage. Genetically, a child is a mixture of both its parents, but still an individual with its own mind, body and spirit. People say things like, "divorce is easier when there isn't a child involved." This is true, because one of the main reasons marriage is the right institution for the raising of children is the fact children have both parents to learn from in order to understand the mixture they are made of. They also have the example of their parent's union to draw from. The parent's union is the cloth - so to speak - from which a child is cut. This is an important aspect most people do not appreciate; but in a way, marriage is like a child, in and of itself! The two becoming one flesh is a new melding. One of the reasons it's so hard on children for their parents to get a divorce is because it's much the same as losing a sibling to death! Children often describe their parent's divorce as if a part of them died. This is also very true. When the union they are the fruition of ceases to exist because of the death of a parent, children experience a natural loss; but when parents attempt to dissolve their

union, it's an attempt to destroy the very fabric the child consists of!

Because this is true, God teaches us in His Word that the fabric can't truly be destroyed. The union of marriage is until death do us part, whether we like it or not! Jesus specifically states, "What therefore God hath joined together, let no man put asunder." Mark 10:9 The union will end upon death because the flesh is what succumbs to death, (Matt. 10:28) but as long as both are alive, the two are one. That fact does not change, even with a bill of divorcement! So, what did Jesus mean when He said God gave us permission to write a bill of divorcement due to the hardness of our heart? He was telling us that God would allow men and women to separate from living together in the case where they just can't get along. Couples often forget they are still individuals with individual thoughts and feelings. Marriage is a lifelong journey of being joined at the hip - so to speak - while learning who each other is and creating a life together which serves both of you. This is sadly not what most of us expect out of marriage. Many enter it with the thought they have found the person of their dreams, and everything is going to be great! Then, when the marriage turns out to be something other than they expected, they want out; or they make their spouse so miserable, they want out. Whether one or both people want out is not the relevant point. The relevant point is that in some cases there are those marriages where because one or both the people involved can't see their place or refuse to accept what they have agreed to, the marriage becomes truly dysfunctional. This can go to such a bad degree that violence and/or constant upheaval become the norm. In these cases, where the two individuals who have become one flesh can't, or will not, work out their differences one step at a time while attempting, to the best of their ability, to live in peace with each other, God determined it would be better for them to go their separate ways than to continue on the path they are on.

However, let's be clear, the hardness of our heart is a failure to be what we are capable of being: to accomplish what we are capable of accomplishing. A bill of divorcement in the Bible is not the same thing as a divorce according to our law. The Bible is only talking about a parting for the sake of civility because the two people are so bad together they actually need physical separation. Biblical divorce is not the freedom to try it again with another, and this brings us to

the issue of remarriage.

For that, there is no better straightforward words spoken than, again, those of The Messiah Himself! In the book of Matthew chapter 5, beginning in verse 31, Jesus says, “It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorce: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” Here, the responsibility is put on the man directly. Jesus says if a man puts away his wife for any reason except in the case where she has committed fornication, the man causes the woman to commit adultery. This is based on the simple fact which Paul points out in I Corinthians 11:9, “Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.” It’s the responsibility of a man to take care of the woman he has joined with. Putting her away is going back on the commitment of taking care of her for life. In doing so, the time you have spent together becomes adultery in the same way as having a relationship with a woman the man never intended to make a commitment to in the first place. The only exception to this is in the case where the woman has given herself to another man. This does not include rape because that would be forced upon her, but if she chooses (as we would say today) to have an affair with another man, she is the one who has violated the commitment by becoming one flesh with another. This creates a mess, and God will, under these circumstances, allow a husband to put away his wife. Even in this case, it would actually be for the sake of not having a physical relationship with her anymore.

Jesus also points out here that any man who marries a divorced woman commits adultery, and this is because of the one flesh facts. The divorce does not dissolve the truth she has already become one flesh with a man. Taking her while her husband is still alive is just as much an act of adultery as having an affair with her before she is divorced. This fact is also pointed out in those verses of Matthew chapter 19, where we were before. Beginning in verse 9, Jesus says, “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” This is actually one of the most straightforward, black and white issues in all the

Word of God. We can even look at a couple of other scriptures to see it emphasized.

In the Gospel of Mark, we see the same conversation recorded in chapter 10 as we saw in Matthew 19; but in Mark, we get a little extra. Mark chapter 10 verse 10 tells us, Jesus’ disciples ask Him about this matter again once they had went inside the house. Verses 11 and 12 tell us Jesus’ answer, “Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.” Here, Jesus specifically points out that if a man puts away his wife and marries another, that man commits adultery “against” his wife. In modern terms we might be tempted to say, “The man who divorces his wife and marries another woman is cheating on his first wife!” If a man does not fulfill his commitment to one wife, he has no right to take another. Here, Jesus also talks about the responsibility of a woman. Jesus points out if a woman puts away her husband and is married to another, she commits adultery!

It simply doesn’t matter how you slice it, divorce is not the end of the one flesh union of marriage. Adultery is simply having a physical relationship with someone you have not made or should not be making the commitment God intends us to make. This is why Jesus went so far as to explain in Matthew 5:27-28 that if a man looks at a woman to lust after her he has already committed adultery with her in his heart. That man has not made a commitment to that woman, and that woman has not made a commitment to him. It’s inappropriate for the man to allow his mind to lust after a woman under those circumstances, and it doesn’t matter whether the man is married or not. The pleasures derived from a physical relationship belong only between a man and a woman who are committed to their union!

Now, through all that we have covered, I believe we have answered your fourth question. Yes, your friend’s actions do make sense to me. The Bible does support the truth that your relationship as a previously married woman to a previously married man is inappropriate. He may have been using something he heard as an excuse to leave; but the truth is, his explanation to you is supported in the Bible. If he is off with another woman, as a divorced man he is still

committing adultery, but his adultery is no longer affecting you. As long as you keep yourself clean, you are no longer committing adultery; so Biblically, it works well for you. This means the only issue left to cover is your question about God telling us to keep our word.

Yes, the Bible does teach us to keep our word. The ninth commandment, out of the ten commandments, tells us we should not bear false witness. (Ex. 20:1-18) In Revelation 21:8 we are assured that liars will, "...have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death." Remember what I said earlier about the flesh being the part which succumbs to death? That is what can be appropriately labeled as our first death. Hebrews 9:27 tells us, "... it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment: . . ." The judgment is the place where we will find out if we will be granted eternal life or suffer the second death: which is the destruction of those parts of us which are not flesh. Lying is one of those activities which will certainly cause us to suffer the second death. It's very important we keep our word, but that's where we have made a big mess of our lives! The question is, once we have made conflicting commitments, which word do we keep and to whom do we keep it? Your friend, at some point in the past, gave his word to another woman that he would stay by her side, and he did not keep that word. If his past wife did not commit adultery, the Bible says he causeth her to commit adultery by divorcing her. One of the things you mentioned in your question is that you had talked about marriage and always being there for each other; yet, it would seem you were already having a physical relationship which would make you one flesh. In doing this, your friend has also committed adultery by being with a woman who is already one flesh with another. You as well have committed adultery by being with him. The problem is, so many people do not see the action of sexual intercourse as becoming one flesh. Making the commitment should come first, but when it doesn't, it does not change the fact the action joins you. In I Corinthians 6:16 Paul asks, "know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh."

There is a reason a marriage ceremony is supposed to be very public. Even if you do not want to share the moment with many others, the law often still requires there to be at least two witnesses - which is Biblical.

(II Cor. 13:1) The fact people go back on commitments all the time is one of the main reasons legal paperwork abounds. You don't purchase a car or a house without the signing of documents committing both parties to their end of the deal. Even when you go to the grocery store and buy food, it's traditional for the clerk to give you a receipt which proves you purchased, as opposed to stole, the items you are walking out with. If you give yourself to someone before you get that more public and legal commitment from that person, you are taking an action without care for the automatic consequences, and with no way to hold the other person to what they have said. In the end, what you have ended up with is a situation where adultery exists both in the physical relationship you shared as well as in the very promise of a marriage which is not right before the Lord. The best way to see it is, as a divorced man, any talk of a marriage commitment to you was a lie the moment it was spoken, and no amount of action on his part can change that. Remember what I said before about time? We can't change the past. It's not so much that he is going back on his word now, but recognizing his words were wrong then. Simply put, it does not matter how much you loved each other, a commitment to you was not rightfully his to give; and as long as his wife and your husband live, that will remain true!

At the end of your question, you stated that you are very distraught over this situation, and I can certainly understand why. This is exactly why God tells us not to commit adultery. The ability God gave us to have close physical relationships with the opposite sex is very serious indeed. The decision we make to enter into such a relationship should not be taken lightly. The pain of broken commitments, whether spoken, legal and binding or not is something we don't want to feel. However, the only way to avoid such pain is by listening to the voice of God in the first place. His direction is not about keeping us from having a life, it's about keeping us from destroying our life and the lives of those around us, because that is exactly what sinful actions do! As I touched on earlier, if your friend truly wronged you, it was in the fact he did not try to help you understand what he came to understand; but if he felt he just could not handle the pain or temptation of the time it would take to explain it, then he did what he felt he had to do. We also cannot discount the possibility he simply felt the conviction of The Holy Ghost to stop living in adul-

tery; but he may not, for many years to come, be able to thoroughly explain why your circumstances were adultery.

The thing you should look at is this: Romans 8:28 tells us, "And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." Every time we fail to do what is right, we complicate our lives with sin in some way. The more we sin, the more complicated it can get; but thanks be to God, He looks beyond our faults and sees our need! Even in trying our best to do what is right, we may inadvertently do something else wrong. Just as in your case where promises were made which should never have been made, it simply is not possible to untangle every mess we have made and do everything we have said. Remember, in spite of all you and your friend have said and done, you are still individuals. You will stand before God as individuals, and that means you should not worry about what your friend has done right or wrong. Your concern should be to do what you know is right. The Bible tells us to, "Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body." I Corinthians 6:18 If your friend is being truthful with you, that is exactly what he did; and your friend not attempting to help you understand the issue, caused you to reach out in a way you may never have done before. In the end, you probably have gained a greater understanding about the issue than you ever would have in talking to him, while at the same time you also have not been tempted to continue down a wrong path. Now you can sit down and, in a clear mind, make the choice as to what you are going to do next. The choice to reject the wrong and choose the right is always up to us!

If you are tempted to harbor bitterness toward your friend, just remember, we have all sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Rom. 3:23) There is none righteous, no, not one! (Rom. 3:10) The only way for us to pull out of this nose dive we are in is turn to the Lord with our whole heart (Ps. 119:2) and allow Him to do a work in our lives. Then we can stand on the promise that all things work together for good, because where we are unable to do the work - God is able. (Rom. 14:4) Right now you may not feel that what has happened to you is a good thing, but trust me, you have been given an opportunity to heal your life. (Isa. 55:7-8) If God is what you want in your life, you

will find He never fails! The Bible tells us if we confess our sin He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. (I John 1:9) What you need to do now is forgive your friend for any wrong he has done to you, (Luke 6:37) and begin to seek the ways of God in your life more and more.

In this life, opportunities to live in the way we desire may be lost, and things may never work out the way we would like them to. However, with God that's OK, because if we have God, we have everything we need, and the promise of an eternity filled with so much more than this life could ever offer! (Matt. 6:19-21) You mentioned that you wished you knew what the Bible said about love. Well, that's an easy one! The Bible tells us simply, God is love, (I John 4) which means we will never know true love if we are unwilling to have a relationship with Him; and that is why the Bible tells us the greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with everything we are! (Matt. 22:34-40)

In closing this Q&A, I want to be clear that this segment of teaching is the basic truth which the Bible tells us, and in it I mention, more than once, the fact things in our lives can become very messy when we fail to follow God's plan. What we must understand is that sin will only be fully defeated in our lives when our lives in this flesh pass away. This is the whole reason Jesus came to provide for us a new life. This new life can be eternal because there will be no sin which needs to be wiped clean by the death of our flesh. Jesus' blood washes away all sin because it allows us to die in the flesh without losing our existence! Paul says, we are in the here and now free from the law of sin and death, (Rom. 8:1-2) not because we will never die, nor because we can get away with never shedding this flesh back to the dust of the ground, but because we can live our lives knowing the problems our sins have created will someday be not even a memory. (Rev. 21) However, Paul also asks, does this mean we should live in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! (Rom. 6:1-4) If we desire to continue living in sin then we are not truly dead to it nor are we free from it. This is why Paul reminds us that what we yield ourselves servants to obey that is whose servant we are. If we are the servant of sin, we will suffer the wages of sin - which is death; but if God's, we shall receive life everlasting. (Rom. 6:15-23)

I'm sure there are many of you which have read this Q&A that are not in the situation of the person who ask this question. You are not facing the question of whether to remarry, but the fact that you already have. Some of you may already have children with your new partner, and in either case you are asking what you should do based on the facts you have read here. To you, I want to say again, that sin complicates and destroys our lives. You may have a very good marriage and even feel you are blessed to have the person you are with now, especially in light of who you were with before. However, none of those facts take away from the truth contained in God's Word which were covered in this Q&A. Whether we feel we are better off or not, we have violated God's plan; and just as Jesus pointed out about the allowance of a bill of divorcement, it is because of the hardness of our hearts.

As much as we may want to, we must not attempt to sidestep or excuse this fact. We have made a mistake; and one of the things God will not accept is a heart which will not admit it has made a mistake. We should not attempt to excuse our sin; we should face up to it. We should be broken about the mistakes we have made and the harm which comes with them. Then and only then can true freedom from sin be found. For at that point, we can move into another truth of scripture. Psalms 51:17 tells us, "...a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." and I John 1:8-9 tells us, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." We cannot undo the fact we are divorced at least once already, and it makes no sense to keep making the same mistake over and over. If we are already remarried, then I believe we should not seek to change that fact, anymore than I believe someone should attempt to change the fact they are not yet remarried. Instead, we should fall before the grace of God. We have all sinned and come short of God's glory. (Rom. 3:23) All any of us can do is ask for God's forgiveness and walk forward from where we are at that point! If you have not yet made a binding marriage commitment to another, you should not do so; but if you have already bound yourself to another, then to the best of your ability, you should attempt to fulfill all the commitments you have made! (Ecc. 5:4-6)

Men if you have alimony to pay, you should pay

it. If you have child support to pay, then pay it; and women if you have married or remarried a man who has these payments to make, you must accept the facts. You chose to marry this man who has prior commitments. Do not give him grief or hinder him in this task. If you want to stand before God blameless, then be his helpmate, always remembering it is not about how "good" or "bad" the "other" person is, it's about your righteousness!

Whether men or women, you should do your best to care for the children you have brought into this world. This is by no means an easy task when divorce is involved, or when there was never a marriage to begin with; and it is certainly a large reason God tells us not to get into this situation in the first place. However, we should pray to God that He help us with our weaknesses and guide us to be the best parents we can be! Do your best to instruct your children about the mistakes you have made and why they were mistakes. Share the things you know and have learned in the kindest way you can. Correct them when they are wrong, but always keep in mind the fact they will not just have to, but will, make their own choices in the end. Support them in the ways which help them, and let them know you understand you're not perfect either. Above all, let them know you love them, by loving them!

We have all made mistakes in this life, and many of them can never be changed; but thanks be to God, because of those mistakes, none of us will make it out alive. We cannot stay in this sinful flesh, but if we serve God we shall be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye this corruptible flesh and the mistake ridden life we now lead will be left behind. Then and only then can we truly, fully, and ever be with the Lord!

Comfort one another with these words, and until that great day of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ's return, may you gain God's strength to continually find and live in His will for your life!

***Questions submitted to the Institute, answered by
Philip E. Busby.***