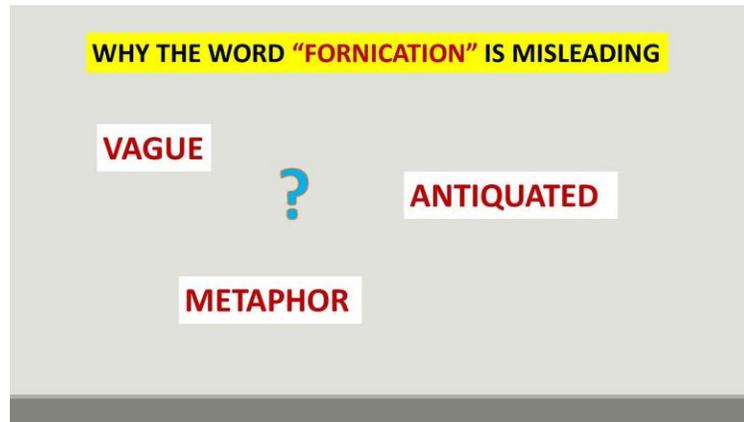


# MISLEADING TEACHING ON DIVORCE



## FALSE TEACHING

There is a false teaching that anyone who divorces and remarries is always guilty of sin if the previous spouse is still alive. This teaching has its roots in the Catholic Church and revolves around Matthew 5:32.

Matthew 5:31-32....."It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: 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" (KJV).

The major point of disagreement about KJV Matt5:32 is the meaning of the word "fornication," which comes from the Greek, "porneia." Today, in the English language we think of fornication meaning pre-marital sex, and adultery refers to a married person having sex outside of a marriage relationship. A little research also shows fornication in marriage is called adultery. In other words, adultery is a specific kind of fornication, the same way embezzlement is a specific kind of stealing. False teachers,

however, claim fornication only occurs before marriage. In order to find the true meaning of both fornication and adultery, one needs to do a little research.

## ANCIENT MEANING OF FORNICATION

In ancient Greece, the word porneia was a general term that included incest, bestiality, homosexuality, premarital sex, prostitution, and adultery. Porneia, translated “fornication” by the KJV, is also used metaphorically in the Bible to mean idolatry or spiritual unfaithfulness.

1. Isa 23:17 KJV..... And it shall come to pass after the end of seventy years, that the LORD will visit Tyre, and she shall turn to her hire, and shall commit fornication with all the kingdoms of the world upon the face of the earth.
2. Rev 17:2 KJV..... With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

## TRANSLATORS NEED TO BE SPECIFIC

Actually, both William Tyndale and the writers of the KJV did use the word fornication correctly in a general way, but a more specific translation would have been more beneficial to prevent misinterpretation. For example: I can say a vehicle (My wife’s grandmother used to say “machine.”) went speeding by my house. You would not know if it was a car or a truck. In fact, it was actually a motorcycle. Then, “motorcycle” is the more specific and accurate word in conveying the message. Otherwise, people could wrongly debate whether a car or a truck went by my house, when it was actually a motorcycle. An old word like “machine” would really be confusing. It is no wonder a 400-year-old word like fornication is confusing.

1. A second meaning of fornication is “adultery.” It is this second meaning, also used by the Greeks that some people often refuse to acknowledge. Moreover, fornication done within the context of

marriage is Adultery. Fornication is the act, and adultery is the worst kind of fornication. Therefore, we can consider "fornication" or even sexual immorality (based on Christ's statement in Matt 5:28) as "adultery" in Matt 5:32. Additionally, the context here is about marriage, not premarital sex.

2. A clearer translation is given in the NIV: Mat 5:32..... But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

### WHAT ABOUT THE DIVORCED WIFE?

In Matt 5:31-32 Jesus says, "causeth HER to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry HER that is divorced committeth adultery." Does that mean no divorced woman can ever remarry? No, because the first part of the verses says, "That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication," So, we clearly see fornication is the exception to making the wife guilty of adultery. Remember, this verse makes no mention of the husband being an adulterer, but only addresses the wife as guilty of adultery. Of course, the man is an adulterer, but my point is that adultery and the exception apply to both the woman and the man. Additionally, a divorce for anything other than fornication is not recognized by God. Therefore, improper divorce is a sin, and a person cannot marry an improperly divorced person. This is to discourage a person from tempting a married person to have fornication.

### DO PROPER RESEARCH

My belief about divorce is not a theory I dreamed up, but a common belief based on proper biblical interpretation and much factual research. To start with, I found out the word "fornication" is so outdated and often misunderstood, the NIV and 12 other modern Bible versions, including the New King James Version, do not even use this word when translating the Greek word porneia.

Mat 5:32 NIV..... But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for SEXUAL IMMORALITY, makes her the victim of adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

I was then curious what additional research I could find on the word fornication. I looked at the Collins English Dictionary, English Oxford Living Dictionary, Merriam-Webster Dictionary, Vine's Bible Commentary, and the KJV New Testament Greek Lexicon. In addition, I looked up fornication and adultery in Strongs Concordance. All of these stated fornication (porneia) can definitely occur within marriage, and it is then called adultery.

However, false teachers insisted that 400 years ago, when the KJV was written, fornication meant only sex outside of marriage. They insisted that I was wrong because modern definitions have been corrupted. So, then, I looked up the meanings of fornication and adultery in 9 older dictionaries and 3 older Bible commentaries, all written between 1656 and 1889. All these references stated the same thing as modern dictionaries. Finally, I found the Geneva Bible notes, written in 1557. The Geneva Bible notes made it clear that, even before the KJV, "fornication" with a married person was considered adultery. Therefore, all reasonable proof showed the exception clause in Matthew 5:32 states it is acceptable to get a divorce if one's spouse commits "fornication."

#### WIFE MENTIONED IN MATTHEW 1:20

The second reason many people believe this false teaching about fornication and divorce is the misinterpretation of the word "wife," based on Matt 1:20. For the full context, we should start reading at verse 18.

Mat 1:18-20 KJV..... Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before

they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Although the Greek word for wife (*gunaiká*) can have two meanings, one must consider several facts. Several things to consider are as follows:

1. The false belief that an engaged woman can be called a wife is due to false deductive reasoning. This is based on the fact that a Hebrew engagement (betrothal) was a formal binding contract and more of an obligation than an engagement is today. However, betrothal was not marriage. Nevertheless, betrothal could be broken, and Joseph even considered doing that.
1. Biblical reference books such as Vine's Expository Dictionary, Nelson's Bible Dictionary, and Easton's Bible Dictionary all define this Greek word for wife, *gunaiká*, as meaning only a married woman.
2. Some research shows the meaning of the word "wife" (Greek word *gunaiká*) is either a married woman, or a woman in general. This Greek dual meaning lends itself to misinterpretation. The key phrase in Matt 1:20 is "take unto thee Mary thy wife." One can easily become confused, but everyone should agree, Mary was not Joseph's wife at this time, since 2 verses earlier it stated she was only "espoused" (Greek word *Mneesteuthesees*, as opposed to *gunaiká* used in Matt 5:32). So, we clearly see the complete context in Matt 1:18-20.
3. An engaged person is neither married nor worthy of the titles "husband" or "wife." According to Jewish custom, an engaged person is not worthy of the many marital perks such as having sex or living together. That is why a wedding ceremony, *Chatunah*, is

still given even today to make things final. A wife was not an espoused woman, but a married one. Moreover, think how confusing it would have been for either Jews, Greeks, or even people today to use the word “wife” to identify both an engaged (espoused or betrothed) woman and a wife.

4. So, if Mary was only espoused, why then was Joseph told to “take unto thee Mary thy wife” (gunaika)? As explained by experts in Greek linguistics, Joseph was instructed by the angel to take Mary “as his wife.” Insufficient translation given by the KJV makes things confusing. Various Bible translations such as the NASB, NRSV, NAS, ESV and NIV show “as your wife.” Also, prestigious Greek lexicons, Greek expositories, and Strongs Concordance show the same thing. Once again, the 400-year-old KJV has confused things.

5. The bottom line is that the angel told Joseph what to do (get married) in Matthew 1:20, and Joseph did it, four verses later, in Matthew 1:24.

### FAULTY LOGIC OF OMISSION

Many false teachers are also hung up on the fact that fornication is mentioned in Matthew 5:32, but not mentioned as an exception in Luke 16:18 or Mark 10:11-12. I have several things to mention:

1. Is it OK for a woman to divorce a man since it is not mentioned in Matthew 5:32, even though it is mentioned in Mark 10:11-12 and included in Matt 19:9?
2. If a man marries a divorced woman, does he make her guilty of adultery, since this is mentioned in Matt 5:32, but not mentioned in Mark 10:11-12? Do you see the hypocrisy of some false teachers?
3. Finally, is a man ever guilty of adultery, since Matt 5:32 says, “causeth HER to commit adultery?” Absolutely nothing is said about the man being guilty of adultery.

### JESUS DOES NOT CONTRADICT HIMSELF

It should be noted, different accounts in the three gospels have

nothing to do with different manuscripts. If this were true, different Bible versions that use different manuscripts would not agree, but, instead, all Bibles show the exception in Mathew and not in Mark and Luke. Also, the story in Matthew happens in a different place than Mark or Luke, so they are completely different occasions, not contradictions.

So, why did Jesus feel obligated to give one answer in Matthew 5:32, and others in Luke 16:18 and Mark 10:11-12? In Matt 5:32 Jesus was giving a sermon (on the mount) and perhaps Jesus felt the need to preach the whole message about divorce to this general audience. In Mark and Luke, however, Jesus was confronting the Pharisees and Jesus evidently did not feel they should hear about the exception. In Mark, the disciples (also probably wondering why his answer differed from the Sermon on the Mount) ask him to repeat what he said to the Pharisees, and he again did not mention the exception. However, he also made it clear that divorce rules apply to both men and women. Only Jesus knows for sure why he chose different words in different settings.

Additionally, one must admit it is quite common in the Bible that the same story or lesson is told more than once, and all the details are not given each time. (In fact, atheists use this same false logic to try and prove the Bible is inaccurate.) For example, In Luke 18:18, a man asks Jesus what one must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus answered, "Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother" (KJV). Does this mean it is okay to violate the other five commandments and still inherit eternal life? Of course not, so let's forget about this silly logic of omission. Jesus does not contradict himself, and his total message to man is not given in just one verse, or even one place.

WHAT MAKES LOGICAL SENSE?

If you believe false idea that sex before marriage is the only valid reason for divorce, by misrepresenting the exception clause of Matthew 5:32, then you must believe the following:

1. A person can divorce their spouse for premarital sex, but not for an adulterous affair.
2. A deceiving man can seek out a Christian wife and cheat openly (even in their own house) during the whole marriage and she is stuck with this man unless he dies.
3. If a woman gets divorced and remarries, she can never be forgiven by God because remarriage is a continuous sin. However, if she kills her first husband and then remarries, she can be forgiven since murder is a one-time sin, and it is okay to remarry if the first husband is dead.
4. Considering continuous sin, one could say murder is unforgivable, since the person is always dead, and a person who stole and spent money cannot be forgiven if he cannot pay all the money back.
5. A man who has had pre-marital sex with his wife, may now divorce her because she is guilty of fornication and is subject to the exception clause in Matt 5:32. Additionally, she may divorce him, because he also is guilty of fornication.

One can easily see that misinterpretation of Scripture creates some strange beliefs. These false interpretations reward the sinner and punish both an innocent spouse and the children. Jesus, however, said there is one acceptable reason for divorce and remarriage in Matt 5:32, and he repeated it again in Matthew 19:3-9. That is the complete message.

## SUMMARY

I have given information on the interpretation of Matthew 5:32 and Matthew 1:20 and have appealed to both one's appreciation of proper research and common sense. I have shown that "fornication" done in the context of marriage is "adultery" both today

and centuries ago. I have also shown that a "wife" was never considered just betrothed or espoused.

Improper divorce is the sin, not remarriage. One must also realize both adultery and divorce are not unforgivable sins. If remarriage were, Jesus could have explained it at least as good as false teachers. Instead, Jesus said, "And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the world to come" (Mat 12:32 KJV). Who are you going to believe, false teachers or Jesus? Joh 8:36 KJV..... If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.

One should believe what the Bible says, and verses must be taken in context. One should also consider all of the teachings of Jesus, not just our favorite verse. One must also realize he can either get information from accurate Bible translations, expositives, lexicons, concordances, and Bible dictionaries, or he can get your information from Facebook pages, charlatan book authors, or YouTube videos. There is an old saying: "Consider the source." The choice is yours.

Finally, one should not only read a 400-year-old Bible named after a King who considered himself head of the Church (the KJV) is the only Bible authorized by God. After all, among other things, the Holy Spirit is not a ghost, and not all effeminates are homosexuals. In other words, God wants us to understand his word, not endorse only a 400-year-old English translation.

## DOCUMENTATION

### MODERN DICTIONARIES

1. COLLINS ENGLISH DICTIONARY..... Voluntary sexual

intercourse outside marriage. (law) voluntary sexual intercourse between two persons of the opposite sex, where one is or both are unmarried. (Bible) sexual immorality in general, esp adultery

2. ENGLISH OXFORD LIVING DICTIONARY..... Sexual intercourse between people not married to each other: 'laws forbidding adultery and fornication'

3. MERRIAM-WEBSTER DICTIONARY.... In legal use there is a difference between adultery and fornication. Adultery is only used when at least one of the parties involved (either male or female) is married, whereas fornication may be used to describe two people who are unmarried (to each other or anyone else) engaging in consensual sexual intercourse..

4. VINE'S BIBLE COMMENTARY ..... 1. porneia (G4202) is used (a) of "illicit sexual intercourse," in Joh\_8:41; Act\_15:20, Act\_15:29; Act\_21:25; 1Co\_5:1; 1Co\_6:13, 1Co\_6:18; 2Co\_12:21; Gal\_5:19; Eph\_5:3; Col\_3:5; 1Th\_4:3; Rev\_2:21; Rev\_9:21; in the plural in 1Co\_7:2; in Mat\_5:32 and Mat\_19:9 it stands for, or INCLUDES, ADULTERY; it is distinguished from it in Mat\_15:19 and Mar\_7:21; (b) metaphorically, of "the association of pagan idolatry with doctrines of, and professed adherence to, the Christian faith," Rev\_14:8; Rev\_17:2, Rev\_17:4; Rev\_18:3; Rev\_19:2; some suggest this as the sense in Rev\_2:21.

5. THE KJV NEW TESTAMENT GREEK LEXICON - Definition of porneia-

illicit sexual intercourse adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc. sexual intercourse with close relatives; Lev. 18 sexual intercourse with a divorced man or woman; Mk. 10:11, metaph. the worship of idols of the defilement of idolatry, as incurred by eating the sacrifices offered to idols

STRONGS CONCORDANCE

STRONGS GREEK / HEBREW CONCORDANCE is probably the gold standard among Biblical scholars. The Strong's number assigned to the word "fornication" in this verse is 4202. Strong's

refers to the Greek word "poreia." Strongs specifically puts in parenthesis that poreia "(includes adultery and incest)." Moreover, fornication done within the context of marriage is Adultery. Fornication is the act, and adultery is the worst kind of fornication. Therefore, we can also consider "adultery" or even "sexual immorality" (based on Christ's statement in Matt 5:28) for "fornication" in Matt 5:32. The context here is within marriage so fornication now becomes "adultery. To leave out these 4 words in parentheses is dishonest and many people fall for this because they never check Strongs for the complete meaning.

### OLD DICTIONARIES

#### 1. THOMAS BLOUNT'S GLOSSOGRAPHIA ANGLICANA (1656)

"fornication: whoredom, spoken of single persons, if either party be married then tis adultery."

#### 2. R. BROWN'S THE ENGLISH EXPOSITOR IMPROV'D (1719)

fornication: whoredom committed between single persons, whereas if either, or both parties so offending be married it is called adultery, and is punishable with death by the common law.

#### 3. JOHN KERSEY'S THE NEW WORLD OF WORDS (1720)

a. "fornication: the act of uncleanness between single persons, so call'd because usually committed in stews, under vaults or arches, in Latin, fornicas."

b. "adultery – the defiling of the marriage bed, properly the sin of incontinency . [kersey defines incontinency as "a not abstaining from unlawful desires" – and "lustful inclination" between two marry'd persons, yet if but one be marry'd it is adultery]

#### 4. UNIVERSAL ETYMOLOGICAL ENGLISH DICTIONARY, 1737 BY NATHAN BAILEY

c. "fornication, the act as uncleanness between single persons. F. Of a fornicator [fornicateur, f.] A whore-monger. I.'

d. fornication: uncleanness between single persons

e. "adultery, is the act of incontinency or whoredom in married persons ; but if one is married, and the other unmarried, it is fornication in the unmarried, and adultery in the married. "

5. DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE BY SAMUEL JOHNSON (1828):

- Adultery - The act of violating the marriage bed of a married person.
- Fornication – Concubinage or commerce with an unmarried woman.

6. HAWKER DICTIONARY (1828).... “here is a spiritual fornication of which the Lord complains, which is idolatry. (See Jer\_3:9; Eze\_23:37; Hos\_2:2)”

7. WEBSTER’S DICTIONARY (1828)..... By the laws of Connecticut, the sexual intercourse of any man, with a married woman, is the crime of adultery in both: such intercourse of a married man, with an unmarried woman, is fornication in both, and adultery of the man, within the meaning of the law respecting divorce; but not a felonious adultery in either, or the crime of adultery at common law, or by statute. This latter offense is, in England, proceeded with only in the ecclesiastical courts.

8. NOAH WEBSTER BIBLE (1833) - Matt 5:32..... But I say to you, That whoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of lewdness, causeth her to commit adultery: and whoever shall marry her that is divorced, committeth adultery.

9. EASTON’S DICTIONARY (1889)..... Conjugal infidelity. An adulterer was a man who had illicit intercourse with a married or a betrothed woman, and such a woman was an adulteress. Intercourse between a married man and an unmarried woman was fornication [implication is both, but only the man is guilty of adultery]. Adultery was regarded as a great social wrong, as well as a great sin.”

OLD BIBLE COMMENTARY

1. MATHEW HENRY COMMENTARY (1708)..... “That men's divorcing of their wives upon dislike, or for any other cause except adultery [NOTE THAT FORNICATION BY A MARRIED PERSON IS CALLED ADULTERY], however tolerated and practiced among

the Jews, was a violation of the seventh commandment, as it opened a door to adultery, Mat\_5:31, Mat\_5:32”

2. JOHN GILL COMMENTARY (1748-1762)..... saving for the cause of fornication; which must not be taken strictly for what is called fornication, but as INCLUDING ADULTERY, INCEST, OR ANY UNLAWFUL COPULATION;

## OLD BIBLE NOTES

### GENEVA BIBLE - 1557 –

a. Like most English translations of the time, the Geneva Bible was translated from scholarly editions of the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Scriptures that comprise the Old Testament. The English rendering was substantially based on the earlier translations by William Tyndale and Myles Coverdale (more than 80 percent of the language in the Genevan Bible is from Tyndale). However, the Geneva Bible was the first English version in which all of the Old Testament was translated directly from the Hebrew (cf. Coverdale Bible, Matthew Bible). It was used by Puritans + Pilgrims.

b. Here are the Geneva Bible notes (1560) [about 50 years before the KJV was written] It was a protestant Bible rejected by the Catholic Church.

i. Luke 16:18..... Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her..... that is put away from [her] husband committeth adultery. They that gather by this passage that a man cannot be married again after he has divorced his wife for adultery, while she lives, reason incorrectly: for Christ speaks of those divorces which the Jews had which were not because of adultery, for adulterers were put to death by the law.

ii. Matt 19:3..... The band of marriage ought not to be broken, unless it is because of fornication.

I am not pushing an agenda since I have been married over 50

years but want people to research the truth. I am showing these resources so you can do your own research, as I have done! However, I also, know people who have been cheated-on by their spouses. I now realize these people were free to get a divorce and remarry, because one person broke the three-way covenant due to fornication, as mentioned in Matt 5:32.

God bless us all and may we all have a happy marriage!