

Rebuilding After Divorce

A paper prepared for the elders and congregation of *Tracy Grace Brethren Church*
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A few years ago, a well-known national corporation announced the adoption of a new policy regarding divorced persons. They stated that an employee who sought a divorce is a person who had the stamina and fortitude to stand up to a bad situation and call the shots. They concluded that such a person thereby becomes executive material!

Today there is hardly a church-attending family that, directly or indirectly, does not know the pain of divorce.

A spokesman for the *Sex Information and Education Council of the United States* has stated that divorce will soon become normative, and we must now strive to provide the support that will convince people that they are doing no wrong in seeking a divorce, but that it is just a part of the maturing process.

By the 21st century, the average adult will have been married three times.

Divorce is so traumatic, especially to someone who accepts a biblical view of marriage, that rebuilding is often considered an impossible task. Everything that the divorced person considered to be verities of life (inviolability of vows, sanctity of marriage, a high view of family, even biblical teaching regarding God's protection) are called into question; the foundations of that person's life are crumbled and lie in pieces all around him.

How can we consider rebuilding, if there is nothing apparent with which to rebuild?

1.0 The relevance of this discussion to you.

But the nature of God speaks against this: none is so lost that God cannot save, no situation is so far gone that God cannot redeem it and make it a trophy of grace, no sin is so foul or stigma so great that God cannot restore.

The process of rebuilding, however, demands a plan, a commitment, and personnel.

1.0 The relevance of this discussion to you.

You may be thinking of the relevance of this information to you. This information is vital to you if any of the following applies:

- 1.1 If you are struggling in a marriage, you know its relevance.
- 1.2 If you have gone through a divorce, you know its relevance.
- 1.3 If you are contemplating marriage, you better learn its relevance and that, if you do not carefully prepare for marriage, your odds of a divorce are as good as anyone's.
- 1.4 If you have a good marriage, be thankful for it but be on your guard: good marriages are still fragile in our throw-away age, and, without nourishment, even good things die.
- 1.5 If you live as a social being, with personal relationships, you must become aware of the relevance of this issue.
- 1.6 We are surrounded by marriages coming apart in a society which encourages divorce as an easy solution to problems in marriage. You need to know God's perspective if you are going to be salt and light in a darkened world.

2.0 The issue of forgiveness.

2.1 The meaning of forgiveness.

2.1.1 Forgiveness consists of three facets.

2.1.1.1 First facet: An injury as a result of an offense.

This injury is the result of a sinful act or acts committed against a person.

2.0 The issue of forgiveness.

2.1.1.2 Second facet: A debt resulting from the injury.

Whenever a person commits a sin, something is lost to that person that cannot be regained except by outside involvement.

The outside involvement is the forgiveness of the sin by the person injured by it.

In the case of sin against God, we were hopeless and helpless until God sent His Son to die on the cross and cancel the debt against us.

2.1.1.3 Third facet: A cancellation of the debt.

When Jesus died on the cross, He said at the end, “it is finished.” The Greek word, *τετέλεσται*, means “paid in full.” It was used of someone who received a receipt for something. On the front of the receipt was the word, *τετέλεσται*.

A man convicted of a crime would have the crime against him written on a parchment and the sentence for that crime also logged in. Then he was thrown in prison for the length of time stated on the parchment. When the time was served, the jailer wrote *τετέλεσται* on the parchment, gave it to the man, and set him free. The man had proof that he had paid his debt in full.

2.1.2 The meaning of the word forgive.

2.1.2.1 In the Old Testament.

To lift up or to bear.

Genesis 40:20 Now it came to pass on the third day, which was Pharaoh's birthday, that he made a feast for all his servants; and **he lifted up** the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker among his servants.

Psalm 32:5 I acknowledged my sin to You, and my iniquity I

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have not hidden. I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,” and You **forgave** [lifted up my head] the iniquity of my sin. Selah

Isaiah 53:4 Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

2.1.2.2 In the New Testament.

The primary word, *aphiemi*, means to send away; made from two words: stand and from. Basic meaning, therefore, is to stand away from.

When God forgave our sins, He took our sins and placed them on Christ, away from us. When He sees us, He no longer looks at us through our sins because our sins were sent away from us.

This is how we are to forgive each other. This is the way in which you must forgive your ex.

2.2 The responsibility for forgiveness.

The one injured must initiate forgiveness.

Matthew 18:21-22

21 Then Peter came to Him and said, “Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?”

22 Jesus said to him, “I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven.

Matthew 5:23-24

23 “Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember
that your brother has something against you,

24 “leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be
reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your
gift.

The one who injured must seek forgiveness.

2.3 The consequences of becoming a person with an unforgiving spirit. There are four
consequences.

2.3.1 God will not act on your behalf in disciplining the other party.

Proverbs 24:17-18

17Do not rejoice when your enemy falls, and do not let your heart
be glad when he stumbles;

18Lest the LORD see it, and it displease Him, and He turn away
His wrath from him.

Proverbs 25:21-22

21If your enemy is hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he is thirsty,
give him water to drink;

22For so you will heap coals of fire on his head, and the LORD will
reward you.

2.3.2 You will become embittered.

Bitterness is a poisonous root that will work its way into your soul and slowly
but inexorably destroy you as a person.

2.3.3 You will descend to the level of the one who injured you.

2.3.4 You will step outside the will of God (God has called us to forgive and to rec-
oncile).

3.0 The issue of reconciliation.

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Reconciliation means the restoration of a good relationship between enemies, the improvement of a negative relationship. To achieve this reconciliation, the factors that caused the enmity must be removed.

Theologically, this is accomplished by atonement; between men, by love's forgiveness.

Ephesians 2:16 and that He might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity.

The Greek word, *ἀποκατάλασσω*, means to change the relationship.

3.1 Reconciliation exists along a spectrum with eight milestones.

3.1.1 Enmity.

Unbounded hatred and every thought and act towards the object of your hatred is destruction of that person, in any way you can.

3.1.2 Evil intent.

You are not consumed with planning evil against the person you hate, but every time you think of that person, you wish that person ill. Your thoughts are focused on vengeance and you often fantasize on that person's downfall.

3.1.3 Dislike.

The object of your dislike is someone you will not speak well of and you will spread gossip that injures that person if you hear it.

You will enjoy hearing of that person's troubles.

3.1.4 Toleration.

You allow the person his or her right to exist and find happiness but you do not desire to participate in helping that person find that happiness.

The person can share the planet with you but you hope it is some other part.

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3.1.5 Social acceptance.

You can socialize, however frigid your smile, with that person. In a mixed group, you can be civil and carry on a pleasant conversation.

3.1.6 Friendliness.

You enjoy that person's company and you actively wish that person well.

You are able to work together to solve mutual problems and your desire is to see that person be all that God desires for him to be.

You do not consider remarriage to that person a possibility but you are able to function intimately together as good friends.

3.1.7 Love.

You are committed to that person achieving God's best in his or her life and you will participate in helping that to be a reality.

3.1.8 Restoration.

The broken relationship is healed and is put back better than ever.

3.2 Reconciliation is a Christian virtue and a mandated ministry.

The Christian, by nature, is a reconciler. Reconciliation should always be sought.

Colossians 1:20-21

20and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaven, having made peace through the blood of His cross.

21And you, who once were alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now He has reconciled

But what if your ex will not reconcile? You do your part in reconciling and let God take care of the things that are out of your control.

4.0 The evaluations to be made.

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To evaluate your status, you must understand two things: the nature of divorce and the nature of the marriage bond.

4.1 The ten questions you must ask.

4.1.1 Is there such a thing as a biblical or Christian divorce?

This implies that there is a divorce from which God directly gains glory.

4.1.2 Are there biblical precedents for divorce?

The Bible has wicked examples, but are there any examples that demonstrate righteousness?

4.1.3 Is there anything wrong in remarriage?

If one divorces, must that person forever remain single?

4.1.4 What is the role of a friend (or other third party) in a couple's process of divorce?

4.1.5 What is the church supposed to do when a couple in the church family initiates divorce?

4.1.6 Is a person who remarries guilty of continuous adultery?

4.1.7 How should the person caught up in a divorce handle the tension between the ideal he holds of marriage and the sanctity of vows and the ugly reality of a marriage in ruins?

4.1.8 What are the effects of divorce on the rest of the Christian community, the church, the home, the children?

4.1.9 Is a rocky marriage worse than a divorce?

Another way to ask this question is to consider whether the pain and abuse of a bad marriage is worse than the pain and guilt of a divorce?

4.1.10 How do we counsel a wife who lives with an emotionally or physically abusive spouse?

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4.1.10.1 What are the implications of the headship of the husband?

1 Corinthians 11:3: But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

4.1.10.2 What are the implications of the submission of the wife to the husband?

In the light of 1 Peter 1:1-2, do we counsel the wife to stay in the house and continue to be beaten up or emotionally brutalized, knowing that quiet submission appears to increase the abuse of this type of man?

1 Peter 1:1-2:

- 1 Likewise you wives, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,
- 2 when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

4.2 The evaluation of your status.

4.2.1 Are you married or single in the sight of God?

4.2.2 The issue of dissolution vs. non-dissolution.

4.2.2.1 The issue: Does a biblically allowed divorce dissolve the marriage bond in order to allow a subsequent marriage or must the divorced person remain single the rest of his life?

Note the key issue: Does a divorce dissolve marriage? If divorce for adultery dissolves marriage, then there is no question about the right to remarry. If it does not, then the right to remarry must be denied.

Another question to ask is: Does every divorce dissolve a marriage bond or do only those divorces within the framework of the excep-

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tion clause, divorce prior to salvation, or the departure of the unbelieving spouse dissolve the marriage?

When the Jewish theologians brought the divorce dispute to Jesus, they argued from the Deuteronomic law that divorce was allowed for "every cause." By not arguing, Jesus conceded this point, but explained that it was allowed for "hardness of heart" (Matthew 19:3-9). Jesus would not have said that this divorce was for hardness of heart if the woman had been immoral. This is proved by the fact that Jesus allowed divorce for fornication (Matthew 5:32; 19:9).

In Deuteronomy 24:3, 4, when the woman married the second time, she did not have two husbands because God spoke of the first as her *former* husband.

Note: Deuteronomy 24:3, 4 is used to forbid remarriage of a man and woman to each other if there had been an intervening marriage and divorce.

There is a problem in applying this passage to any but Israel: the purpose for many social laws, such as this one, was to keep the land undefiled (v. 4: "and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you *as* an inheritance"). If a man divorced his wife, it was assumed that she was immoral; if she remarried and then was again divorced, the first husband was not allowed to remarry her. By doing so, he would have brought moral pollution to the nation, since the woman was either immoral when she received her first divorce, or the second divorce did not sever the second marriage bond; in either case, the Jewish man was forbidden to marry such a woman (who was either immoral or still married in the eyes of God).

4.2.2.2 The argument for non-dissolution.

Matthew 19:6: "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Romans 7:1-3:

1 Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long a he lives?

2 For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband.

3 So then if, while *her* husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

Note: The only way in which these two passages can be used as proof texts for non-dissolution is to take them out of their limited contexts and to apply them as universal principles (which is often done).

In the first passage, Jesus was answering a group of legalists who were trying to entrap Him (His purpose was not specifically to teach on divorce). Also, for Jesus to forbid divorce (note imperative of last clause of Matthew 19:6) implies that it was possible to do so since one does not have to forbid that which is impossible.

In the latter reference, Paul is making a point regarding the power of the Law over a person as long as he lives; the issue of divorce is

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merely being used as an illustration and is not the point of the discussion.

4.2.2.2 The argument for dissolution.

4.2.2.2.1 Seen in the nature of adultery.

4.2.2.2.2 Adultery severs.

This is the reason for the exception clause of Matthew 19:9. The adultery severs the one-flesh relationship, the certificate of divorce merely formalizes it.

4.2.2.2.3 Adultery joins.

1 Corinthians 6:16: Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body *with her*? For "The two," He says, "shall become one flesh"

The one who commits adultery (even a simple "one-night stand") establishes a one-flesh relationship to the one with whom he or she commits fornication; thereby severing any previous one-flesh relationship.

This is the great horror of adultery: it destroys the legitimate bonds of marriage.

4.2.2.2.4 Seen in the nature of bondage.

1 Corinthians 7:15: But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*. But God has called us to peace.

The only bondage referred to in the context is the bondage of marriage. Paul states that bondage is no longer applicable to the believer when the unbelieving spouse departs (divorces).

4.2.2.2.5 Seen in the comments of Jesus.

Matthew 5:32: "But I [Jesus] say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."

Matthew 19:9: "And I [Jesus] say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

4.3 The divine plan for marriage.

4.3.1 Marriage is to last a lifetime.

Matthew 19:6: "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Romans 7:1-3:

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married another man.

Caution: Paul is trying to prove a point regarding the power of the Law, he is not trying to make a point regarding divorce; therefore, it is important not to push his argument too far in proving that there is no such thing as an allowable divorce, and that death, alone, can sever the marriage bond.

4.3.2 Marriage between believers is a picture of God and His people.

Ephesians 5:31, 32:

31 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."

32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

4.3.3 Divorce was an accommodation to the hardness of men's hearts.

Matthew 19:8: He [Jesus] said them [the Pharisees], "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."

Note: According to Matthew 19:8, God allowed divorce because of the hardness of men's hearts. Hardness of hearts is the disease that causes divorce; the preventative is the indwelling power of the Holy Spirit and the submission to the Lordship of Christ.

Divorce is a symptom of spiritual sickness; therefore, the cure for divorce or its tendency is spiritual renewal.

4.4 The evaluation of the biblical teachings.

4.4.1 The biblical precedents.

4.4.1.1 God and Israel.

Jeremiah 3:8 "Then I saw that for all the causes for which

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backsliding Israel had committed adultery, I had put her away and given her a certificate of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear, but went and played the harlot also.

God is not subject to an external standard of ethical rules as we are; all external standards come from Him: the way He is and the way He acts.

God only does those things which are righteous (another way of saying it is that His acts are righteous because does them).

Don't assume that a divorce is a righteous act simply because God divorced Israel. All you can assume is that divorce, in and of itself, is not sin, but it always is the result of sin.

4.4.1.2 Hosea and Gomer.

Throughout the book of Hosea, God is attempting to reconcile with Israel and He uses His instructions to Hosea to restore his wife, a common prostitute, as a means of illustrating that fact.

She was a prostitute when Hosea was commanded by God to marry her, which he did. She returned to prostitution and ended up being sold as a slave. Hosea was ordered to buy her and bring her back to his house.

God was trying to illustrate how He had dealt with His adulterous wife, Israel. But note the stress on reconciliation and the de-emphasis on divorce.

4.4.1.3 The returning Jews in the days of Ezra.

Ezra 9:1-3

1 When these things were done, the leaders came to me, saying, "The people of Israel and the priests and

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the Levites have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands, with respect to the abominations of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Perizzites, the Jebusites, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Egyptians, and the Amorites.

2 "For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so that the holy seed is mixed with the peoples of those lands. Indeed, the hand of the leaders and rulers has been foremost in this trespass."

3 So when I heard this thing, I tore my garment and my robe, and plucked out some of the hair of my head and beard, and sat down astonished.

The Jews, including the Levitical priests, had intermarried with the people of the land; the problem was that "the holy seed is intermingled with the peoples of those lands."

The Jews confessed their sin and put away (i.e., divorced) their pagan wives.

Ezra 10:1-3

1 Now while Ezra was praying, and while he was confessing, weeping, and bowing down before the house of God, a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.

2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, one of the sons of Elam, spoke up and said to Ezra, "We have tres-

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passed against our God, and have taken pagan wives from the peoples of the land; yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this.

- 3 "Now therefore, let us make a covenant with our God to put away all these wives and those who have been born to them, according to the advice of my master and of those who tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

Note: there is not evidence that these men remarried or that they did not continue to support their families; it is an argument from silence either way. It does, however, demonstrate the righteousness of the divorce, even though it does not necessarily state a right to remarry.

This divorce was to bring Israel back into obedience to the Law of Moses:

Exodus 34:11-16

- 11 "Observe what I command you this day. Behold, I am driving out from before you the Amorite and the Canaanite and the Hittite and the Perizzite and the Hivite and the Jebusite.
- 12 "Take heed to yourself, lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land where you are going, lest it be a snare in your midst.
- 13 "But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars, and cut down their wooden images

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14 `for you shall worship no other god, for the LORD,
whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God),

15 "lest you make a covenant with the inhabitants of the
land, and they play the harlot with their gods and
make sacrifice to their gods, and one of them invites
you and you eat of his sacrifice,

16 "and you take of his daughters for your sons, and his
daughters play the harlot with their gods and make
your sons play the harlot with their gods.

4.4.1.4 Joseph and Mary.

Matthew 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man,
and not wanting to make her a public example, was
minded to put her away secretly.

“Put away”: ἀπολύω: to separate from; to loose away from; to
divorce.

Do righteous men seek divorce? Joseph did!

4.4.2 The biblical principles.

4.4.2.1 The allowable exceptions to God’s plan for marriage.

4.4.2.1.1 Adultery.

Matthew 19:9: "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife,
except for sexual immorality, and marries another,
commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is
divorced commits adultery."

The reason the second marriage begins with adultery is
due to the fact that the marriage bond from the first was

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not severed. The sexual consummation of the second marriage on the wedding night was an adulterous event.

The reason there is not the same stigma to a marriage ended in adultery is because the adulterous affair severed the marriage bond before the divorced occurred.

Matthew 5:32: "But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery."

4.4.2.1.2 Departure of the unbelieving spouse.

1 Corinthians 7:12-16:

12 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.

13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.

14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.

15 But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart; a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases. But God has called us to peace.

16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether

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you will save your wife?

The bondage referred to in verse 15 is the marriage bond: if the unbeliever departs (permanently), the bond is severed.

4.4.2.1.3 Divorce prior to salvation.

1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 27 & 28:

17 But as God has distributed to each one, as the Lord has called each one, so let him walk. And so I ordain in all the churches.

20 Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called.

27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be loosed. Are you loosed from a wife? Do not seek a wife.

28 But even if you do marry, you have not sinned: and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.

In verse 27 the man is divorced prior to salvation; in verse 28, his remarriage, according to Paul, is not a sinful act, which it would be if the marriage bond were still intact.

Even in such cases, the new believer should look to reconcile. The best suggestion (not a rule or requirement), to avoid any question by others, is to remain unmarried

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until the previous spouse remarries. But, above all, pray for and work for reconciliation.

4.4.2.2 The reasons disallowed.

4.4.2.2.1 Irreconcilable differences.

4.4.2.2.2 Falling out of love.

4.4.2.2.3 Spousal abuse.

This does not mean the victim should not physically separate from the perpetrator and the legal protection of the victim from the perpetrator, but it does not justify divorce since physical abuse, however abhorrent, does not sever the marriage bond.

4.4.2.2.4 Loving someone else more.

4.4.2.2.5 Desire for greater independence.

4.4.2.2.6 And a hundred more worldly quick fixes.

4.5 The evaluation of your options.

4.5.1 Regarding your marital status: Are you free to remarry? Are you still bound?

Realize the difference between a legal bond and the marriage bond.

Divorce can sever the legal bond between two people.

The marriage bond is established by God through one of two means: sexual union between a man and woman or marital vows of commitment spoken before God.

4.5.2 Regarding your social status: Are you in an environment that accepts you and wants to help you? Or are you in one that puts you down?

Do you need to relocate (city, church, neighborhood) to begin the rebuilding process? Don't confuse this positive step for the negative step of "running away."

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Have your friends chosen your ex-spouse and “dumped you”?

- 4.5.3 Regarding your economic status: Are you able to support yourself and your family, if any? Do you have the skills necessary to earn an income? All other things being equal, could you afford to remarry (consider alimony, child support, loss of half of all previous capital due to property settlement, etc.)?

Note: Only forty percent of absent parents meet their child-support obligations. Of that forty percent, only ten percent pay on time and in full. In other words, four percent of absent parents responsible for child support pay child support as ordered by the court. This does not include those who gave up trying to collect.

- 4.5.4 Regarding your church status.

What is your church’s position regarding divorce?

Is your church committed to healing and restoration?

Is your church willing to confront sin and to aid those in sin to make the necessary correction?

Are the members of your church committed to biblical living?

Are the members of your church aware that they are but sinners saved by grace?

- 4.6 Some conclusions.

- 4.6.1 The Bible counsels not to divorce either a saved or an unsaved spouse.

The Bible recommends staying with the spouse under all circumstances and relying on the Lord for strength. The most important ways to bring about a change in the unrepentant spouse is to pray for your mate and to show love for your mate in all circumstances. In other words, perseverance is recommended. One must have the hope that godly living will be used by God to convert the spouse.

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4.6.2 The burden of proof is on the "wronged" spouse to prove adultery using the method outlined in Matthew 18:15-17.

4.6.3 In the case of the unbelieving spouse leaving, or in case of proven adultery according to Matthew 18:15-17, the believing or "wronged" spouse cannot be considered to have sinned and cannot be forbidden to remarry or to hold leadership positions in the church for that reason.

That person's reputation in the community, however, and the reputation that would be attributed to the church by his leadership must be considered when placing such a person in leadership (note 1 Timothy 3:7: Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside).

4.6.4 There are three biblically allowed divorces (all, of which sever the marriage bond and allow remarriage).

4.6.4.1 Adultery: Matthew 19:9.

4.6.4.2 Departure of the unbelieving spouse: 1 Corinthians 7:12-16.

4.6.4.3 Divorce prior to salvation: 1 Corinthians 7:17, 20, 27 & 28.

4.6.5 In the case of an unbiblical divorce, the consummation of the second marriage, if there is one, constitutes adultery, in that it severs the first "one-flesh" bond.

It is not an issue of continual adultery (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:16). The short-term nature of that sin should not, however, make it more palatable.

4.6.6 To bring an end to a seemingly intolerable situation, such as a loveless marriage, by embarking on the sinful path to divorce only exchanges one set of problems for another worse set.

4.6.7 Working on and patiently enduring a "bad" marriage can be a means of suffering for Jesus' sake: an effort that builds Christian maturity and gains heavenly rewards.

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4.6.8 Divorce damages the testimony of the church as the members of the body seek this worldly method of resolving marital problems.

4.6.9 There are biblical precedents for divorce.

4.6.10 The church must be willing to identify sinful practices that lead to divorce; to comfort those suffering from divorce; and to aid those who are rebuilding their lives after divorce.

4.6.11 Divorce is not, in itself, sin, but it is always the result of sin.

4.7 Some final suggestions regarding divorce and remarriage.

4.7.1 Get rid of counselors who encourage divorce.

Suppose you or I were treated in a hospital the way marriage is treated on television or in many counseling centers. We'd die! For instance, imagine being in an accident, rushed to the hospital, and carted into emergency all battered up (the way some describe their marriages). A man walks in with no medical training, calling himself a doctor, and says, "This is a mess. For all practical purposes this patient is dead already. There are probably lots of hidden pressures building up also--causing other complications. He's beyond mending, impossible to save. Let's walk away from this, turn out the lights, and go home."

Ridiculous? Not at all, when you consider that some counselors without in-depth training in God's handbook for marriage are actually paid for prescribing the sin of divorce for troubled marriages.

Proverbs 17:15:

He who justifies the wicked, and he who condemns the just,
Both of them alike are an abomination to the LORD.

4.7.2 Be willing to identify sinful practices that lead to divorce.

4.7.3 Comfort those who suffer from divorce.

You can provide comfort even if you cannot approve of the divorce.

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

4.7.4 Aid those who are rebuilding their lives after divorce.

4.7.5 Encourage those to stand firm in their marriages who might otherwise be considering divorce.

Realize God understands the pressures you are under in your marriage and the temptation to escape from those pressures through divorce.

For those who have lost a wife or husband because of unfaithfulness, the Lord understands.

He knows exactly what you are going through, what your options are and the pain you are feeling.

He too had that problem, as He admits in the books of Hosea, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel.

To the prophet Hosea, who had an unfaithful wife, the Lord didn't just send condolences. Rather, He solemnly declared that He Himself was reluctantly filing divorce charges against Israel for her idolatry. This court action He states in Hosea 2 and proceeds to elaborate throughout the book.

His grief is heard in Hosea 11:8 and summarizes His feeling toward the nation and dramatically reflects the sobs of many bereft partners as He exclaims, "How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?"

God Himself had to get a divorce because of His beloved's unfaithfulness. Israel destroyed the marriage bond through the adultery of idolatry; God finalized the action according to the Law.

Even though He divorced Israel, He stills seeks reconciliation and restoration.

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

Grief.

Low self-esteem.

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

Sense of loss.

Guilt.

5.1 Grief.

There are four stages of grief that can be applied to divorce. These four stages need to be understood by the person going through the grieving process in order for some of the anxiety to fade (“What you are feeling is normal to someone in your position”); and it is necessary for the supportive friend to know to adjust the help offered to the abilities of the divorced person to receive and benefit from that help.

5.1.1 The first stage: shock.

There is disorientation and emotional numbing as all of the old relationships and foundations of life are gone.

The person often forgets to eat or do the other things that were once simple, routine tasks.

There is a numbness to outside stimuli. Sleep seems to be the only escape from the reality everywhere around.

5.1.2 Denial.

This denial can show as anger: “How could God allow this to happen to me?”

This denial can show up as guilt: “It’s my fault. Look what I’ve done! If only”

This denial can show up as projection of blame on someone else: “If that other woman hadn’t come along, he never would have left me.” “I did everything I could to make him happy.” “He never did anything for me.”

This denial can show up as fantasy: “He will come back.” “Everything will be okay when she comes to her senses.” “Once she dumps him, he will come crawling back on his hands and knees.”

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

5.1.3 Acceptance.

I am divorced, I was partly responsible for the failure of my marriage, but I must go on with my life. I must rebuild my life in Christ from this point onward.

5.1.4 Altruism.

2 Corinthians 1:3-4

3Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort,

4who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

The victorious believer, with a clear understanding of the biblical precepts of marriage and divorce, can help others deal with divorce without compromise.

5.2 Low self-esteem.

So many of us establish our sense of worth from the success of our marriages, our families, our homes. When this esteem builder is destroyed, we consider our lives as of no value since the coinage upon which we based our worth has been debased.

5.3 The sense of loss

5.3.1 Loss of directions and goals.

No one lives completely without direction and goals. In marriage, you establish some plans, even such as where to go on vacation this summer. These plans are all thrown in the trash through a divorce.

5.3.2 Loss of a significant person.

Your ex may have given you endless grief but he was a significant person in your life and his presence helped define your existence. You have lost some-

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

one whom you once loved (and still might live), with whom you shared your life and hopes and dreams, with whom you might have had children or did have children.

5.3.3 Loss of routine.

Whatever your routine was, it is different now. If you were a wife and mother, it has change dramatically.

“No matter what you were doing as a wife, the ‘normal routine’ will be disrupted. Now you must take Susie to daycare and Tommy to school. You can’t run out and get groceries; you have to take the kids along. Jogging is out because you can’t leave the children alone. You will have to mow the lawn and cook the Bar-B-Q, decide whether to watch the news or ‘M.A.S.H.’ and when to finally [*sic.*] turn off the lights and try to get some sleep.”¹

5.3.4 Loss of hopes and expectations.

Here is perhaps one of the greatest losses experienced, particularly for the Christian.

Growing older together, enjoying retirement, traveling after the kids are gone. If your ex remarries, your dreams will be fulfilled, but by someone other than you.

5.3.5 Loss of known roles.

You will still receive mail addressed “Mr. And Mrs.” And you do not know what you are: single? Divorced? Mrs.? Ms.?

You will find yourself not fitting into with the lifestyles of your married friends and you will not feel comfortable with the singles scene (if you can even find the singles scene).

5.3.6 Loss of place.

1. Dandi Daley Knorr, *Splitting Up* (Wheaton, Illinois: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1988), pp. 60-61.

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

You may lose the home you built over the years along with half of your “stuff.” You once may have lived in a toney neighborhood of four-bedroom executive homes and now you are moving into what is little more than a cold-water flat in the rough side of town.

You may change jobs, neighborhoods, even cities.

Nothing feels right. You don’t belong where you were and you don’t feel comfortable where you are.

5.3.7 Loss of relationships.

You have lost more than just your spouse: you have lost many other significant adults: in-laws, common friends, perhaps church family, and every acquaintance who felt it necessary to “choose up sides.”

5.3.8 Loss of security.

Forty-eight percent of single-parent homes live below the poverty level.

“Only 40 percent of all absent parents meet their child-support obligations. Of that 40 percent, only 10 percent pay on time and in full. Of course, these figures do not reflect the number of custodial parents who cease collection efforts.”¹

5.3.9 Loss of identity.

You once gained some of your social identity by reference to your ex: I was Bill’s wife; I was Connie’s husband.

Your loss of identity grows large during holidays and anniversaries.

5.4 The guilt to overcome.

5.4.1 The nature of the guilt.

You must determine if you are truly guilty or is your guilt merely the attack of Satan who will try to keep you from ever walking in victory. If the guilt is

1. Gayle C. Foster, *Life After Divorce* (Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1987), p. 49.

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

false guilt ignore it and consider its source. Satan will do whatever it takes to convince you that you are a failure and you need not try anymore. One sure-fired way is to convince you that you are guilty of some vague failure or indiscretion.

If you find there is true guilt, then that guilt fits in one of two categories:

5.4.1.1 Guilt before God (judicial guilt).

Romans 8:1: There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.

This is the guilt that will condemn a person to Hell at the Great White Throne Judgment of Christ. The Christian does not stand under this guilt.

5.4.1.2 Guilt before men (practical guilt).

This is the guilt that causes us to bear temporal consequences for sinful actions and that causes the Holy Spirit to prick our consciences.

This guilt, if not dealt with, brings the discipline of God.

5.4.2 The reality of the guilt.

Are you guilty of an unbiblical divorce? Even if you are guilty of such a divorce, there is often nothing that can be done about it.

Was your divorce biblically allowable?

Even with a biblically allowable divorce, there are normal guilt feelings: did I spend enough time with my spouse? was I looking for reconciliation during the divorce process or was I merely looking for the quickest way out of a bad situation? is there anything that I could have done differently to have prevented the divorce?

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

5.4.3 The evidences of guilt.

5.4.3.1 Defensiveness.

Proverbs 21:2: Every way of a man is right in his own eyes,
but the LORD weighs the hearts.

5.4.3.2 Refusal to accept reproof.

Proverbs 15:12: A scoffer does not love one who reproves
him, nor will he go to the wise.

5.4.3.3 Awareness of wrongdoing.

Genesis 42:21: Then they [Joseph's brothers] said to one another, "We are truly guilty concerning our brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear; therefore this distress has come upon us."

5.4.3.4 Depression and physical deterioration.

Psalm 32:3-5.

3 When I kept silent, my bones grew old

Through my groaning all the day long.

4 For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me;

My vitality was turned into the drought of summer.

5 I acknowledged my sin to You,

And my iniquity I have not hidden.

I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the
LORD."

And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

5.4.3.5 Withdrawal from God.

Ezra 9:5-6:

5 At the evening sacrifice I arose from my fasting; and having torn my garment and my robe, I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the LORD my God,

6and said, “O my God: I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift up my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads, and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.”

This is a prayer of Ezra, a godly man, who was not withdrawn from God; but he does verbalize the separating quality of sin.

Psalm 40:12: For innumerable evils have surrounded me;
My iniquities have overtaken me, so that I am not able to look up;
They are more than the hairs of my head;
Therefore my heart fails me.

Again, this prayer is by a godly man, David, who is aware of God's grace in forgiving sin; but he points out that his sins keep him from looking up to God.

5.4.3.6 Judgmental attitude against others.

Romans 2:1-3:

1Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things.

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

2But we know that the judgment of God is according to
truth against those who practice such things.

3And do you think this, O man, you who judge those practicing such things, and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God?

5.4.4 Gaining release from true guilt.

5.4.4.1 Humble yourself in repentance.

James 4:8-10:

8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

9 Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

5.4.4.2 Identify the specific sin.

Psalm 51:1-3:

1Have mercy upon me, O God,
According to Your lovingkindness;
According to the multitude of Your tender mercies,
Blot out my transgressions.

2Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
And cleanse me from my sin.

3For I acknowledge my transgressions,

5.0 The wounds in need of healing.

And my sin is ever before me.

5.4.4.3 Make all possible corrections.

Matthew 5:23-24 (pray and work for reconciliation with your spouse):

23“Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you,

24“leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way.

First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

5.4.4.4 Confess your sin to God.

Psalms 32:5: I acknowledged my sin to You,

And my iniquity I have not hidden.

I said, “I will confess my transgressions to the LORD,”

And You forgave the iniquity of my sin.Selah

5.4.4.5 Seek for Scriptural principles to strengthen you against future sins.

Psalms 119:9-11:

Psalms 119:9-11

9How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.

10 With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

11 Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not
sin against You.

John 17:17: “Sanctify them in the truth;
Thy word is truth.”

6.0 The goals to set.

6.1 First goal: To rebuild with God—Psalm 32:8; Psalm 51:10-12.

Psalm 32:8 I will instruct you and teach you in the way you should
go; I will guide you with My eye.

Psalm 51:10-12

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit
within me.

11 Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your
Holy Spirit from me.

12 Restore to me the joy of Your salvation, and uphold me by Your
generous Spirit.

6.2 Second goal: To determine a ministry.

Psalms 51:13 Then I will teach transgressors Your ways, And sinners
shall be converted to You.

6.3 Third goal: To seek God’s will concerning your marital status.

See 1 Corinthians 7:24, 28 for those free to remarry:

7.0 The personnel needed to rebuild.

24 Brethren, let each one remain with God in that calling in which he was called.

28 But even if you marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. Nevertheless such will have trouble in the flesh, but I would spare you.

6.4 Fourth goal: To consider ways of rebuilding family harmony

Proverbs 18:19 A brother offended is harder to win than a strong city, and contentions are like the bars of a castle.

7.0 The personnel needed to rebuild.

7.1 You.

It will not happen with you sitting on the sidelines, hoping everything will somehow resolve itself.

7.2 Caring Christian friends.

Proverbs 17:17: A friend loves at all times,
And a brother [or a sister] is born for adversity.

A caring, godly, Christian friend is infinitely more valuable to you than a professional marriage counselor or even a pastor.

These caring Christian friends, however, must equip themselves to provide the right kind of care.

Real friendship is proven in the crucible of adversity. Anyone can be a friend when things are going well.

7.2.1 Caring friends will learn what divorced people need.

7.0 The personnel needed to rebuild.

In a survey of recently divorced people, these were the commonest requests of friends:

- For someone to be there for me.
- To know I have someone to listen to me if I need to talk.
- To be accepted and to feel I am O.K.
- Someone to be with.
- Diversion.
- A friend to talk to.
- A listening ear.
- Someone to care for me and about me.

Notice that there was no request for a sermon or a lecture on the evils of divorce, they already knew the evils of divorce!

7.2.2 Caring friends work hard to avoid misconceptions.

Some of those misconceptions arise as a result of whispering, particularly among family and common friends of the man and woman going through the divorce.

Proverbs 18:8 The words of a talebearer are like tasty trifles, and they go down into the inmost body.

Proverbs 16:28 A perverse man sows strife, and a whisperer separates the best of friends.

Proverbs 17:9 He who covers a transgression seeks love, but he who repeats a matter separates friends.

When you hear gossip about two people getting a divorce, just say, "Please let's not gossip, they don't need that just now."

7.0 The personnel needed to rebuild.

Friends often treat a divorced friend as if divorce was contagious. In some ways it is but not by being around someone who is divorced.

Some friends do not know how to help and therefore stay away from a needy friend. This avoidance is translated as rejection of the friend.

Job 6:21 For now you are nothing, you see terror and are afraid.

Job accused his friends of seeing terror and therefore being afraid.

7.2.3 Caring friends love, not just with words, but with actions.

“An Iowa woman reported that she knew her father disapproved of her divorce; yet he didn’t run. He couldn’t verbally communicate with her during those first months after she filed for divorce; but he changed the oil in her car, did house repairs, and shoveled her walk after blizzards. He didn’t let his ambivalent feelings control his actions.”¹

1 John 3:17-18

17 But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

Proverbs 3:27-28

27 Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do so.

28 Do not say to your neighbor, "Go, and come back, and tomorrow I will give it," when you have it with you.

1. Dandi Daley Knorr, *Splitting Up* (Wheaton, Illinois: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1988), p. 7.

7.0 The personnel needed to rebuild.

7.2.4 A caring, godly, Christian friend is infinitely more valuable to you than a professional marriage counselor or even a pastor.

7.2.5 A caring friend will become a paraclete.

A paraclete is someone who comes alongside to help.

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12:

9 Two are better than one,
Because they have a good reward for their labor.

10 For if they fall, one will lift up his companion.
But woe to him who is alone when he falls,
For he has no one to help him up.

11 Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm;
But how can one be warm alone?

12 Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand
him.
And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

7.2.6 Caring friends don't fan the flames.

7.2.6.1 The flame fannies.

How could he/she have done this to you?

If I get my hands on him, I'll . . .

She's not worth your concern.

You just wait. She'll get hers.

It's just not fair! He remarries, buys a new car, and you're still riding
the bus.

This never would have happened if you had a man around.

7.0 The personnel needed to rebuild.

And I suppose the bum says the check is in the mail?¹

7.2.6.2 The caring friend evaluates the sensitivities of those who are hurting, even if it was self-inflicted.

“I love my family, but I have to stay away from them. Everything they say about my ex stirs me up.”

“They’re always bringing up some of the bad things he did.”

“Some of my friends acted like my kids were deaf. They would rant and rave about ‘that horrible woman’ as if that woman’s kids weren’t standing right there.”

“I really was married for four years. He really did exist. When my mom refuses to even mention his name, I feel like she’s ashamed of me! Pretending my ex never existed doesn’t work. I know—I tried.”

“I find it hard when my mother still seems to carry a great grudge against my ex. I have worked hard to forgive him, I wish she would do the same.”

“I divorced my ex, I wish my family could do the same and let me get on with my life.”

“I need friends who won’t run down my ex. I loved him for a long time and they need to respect my feeling about that time in my life.”²

Proverbs 25:23:

23The north wind brings forth rain, and a backbiting tongue
an angry countenance.

1. The above list is from Dandi Daley Knorr, *Splitting Up* (Wheaton, Illinois: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1988), p. 41.

2. *loc. cit.*, pp. 42-43.

7.0 The personnel needed to rebuild.

By fanning the flames, you produce self-destructive anger in your friend and you get in the way of God's healing hand.

7.2.7 A caring friend knows when to be quiet and what not to say.

Proverbs 15:2 The tongue of the wise uses knowledge rightly, but the mouth of fools pours forth foolishness.

Jesus understood this principle of rationing out wisdom, dependent upon the receptivity of the listener:

John 16:12 "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now."

A written survey of the worst advice received by divorcing people:

"Things will work out. You'll see, there's someone wonderful for you out there."

"You're still attractive. I know you'll be married within two years."

"Oh, everybody says they'll never marry again. Don't worry--you will."

"You have to find a good man. You weren't meant to raise those kids by yourself."

"Don't go back to school. Someone else will come along."

"Nancy felt just like you do two years ago. She said she'd never get married again--and look at her now. She's happily married."

"God wouldn't allow you to go through life alone."¹

7.2.8 A caring friend will point a divorcing or divorced friend to God.

1. The above list is from Dandi Daley Knorr, *Splitting Up* (Wheaton, Illinois: Harold Shaw Publishers, 1988), pp. 23-24.

7.0 The personnel needed to rebuild.

Remember, this must be done without preaching and it must be done with prayer.

Lamentations 3:19-24

19 Remember my affliction and roaming, the wormwood and the gall.

20 My soul still remembers and sinks within me.

21 This I recall to my mind, therefore I have hope.

22 Through the LORD's mercies we are not consumed, because His compassions fail not.

23 They are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

Psalms 27:13-14

13 I would have lost heart, unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living.

14 Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!

7.3 A hospital church.

Many churches tend to be mausoleums for the preservation of piety; what the rebuilders need is one that is a hospital, prepared and equipped to care for those in its ministry.

7.3.1 A hospital church will be non-judgmental. If there is sin, it will be dealt with according to Matthew 18:15-20.

7.0 The personnel needed to rebuild.

7.3.2 A hospital church will be supportive and protective of an abused spouse.

If the wife or children are at emotional or physical risk due to an abusive husband or father, physical and legal separation may be required to control the abuse.

Note the instruction of 1 Peter 1:1-2 (that the wife submits even to a disobedient husband), would not apply in this situation since the husband has gone far beyond his delegated authority in the family.

God has given the husband limited authority over the wife. This authority does not extend to abuse of any kind.

The abusive husband would be demonstrating “hardness of heart” and divorce might be tolerated in such a case even though it would not give the right to remarriage for the wife since the marriage bond is unsevered. The wife’s goal should be reconciliation, but not at the cost of physical safety and not at the risk of her children.

7.3.3 A hospital church will look for, encourage, and help toward reconciliation.

God told Hosea to marry Gomer (a prostitute) and to have children by her. When she later willfully deserted him and returned to prostitution, God commanded Hosea to go find her and take her back: as He had done with Israel. That is reconciliation!

But Hosea not only had to find her and bring her back to himself, he had to pay money to get her back. He had to buy her back! Would you or I be willing to go that far in our reconciliatory duties?

In commanding Hosea to do this, God pictured for us the true, rotten, and sinful condition of his bride at the time he married her; and in so doing, He foretold how Christ on the cross of Calvary would buy us all back, and thereby reconcile us to God.

8.0 The areas of rebuilding.

7.3.4 A hospital church will know the biblical teachings regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage. And remain teachable!

7.3.5 A hospital church will not go beyond what the Bible allows.

7.4 God.

God is the one resource you cannot do without.

Jeremiah 2:13 "For My people have committed two evils: they have forsaken Me, the fountain of living waters, and hewn themselves cisterns-- broken cisterns that can hold no water.

8.0 The areas of rebuilding.

8.1 Self-esteem.

Psalm 8:1-9

1 O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth,
who set Your glory above the heavens!

2 Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants you have ordained
strength, because of Your enemies, that You may silence the
enemy and the avenger.

3 When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon
and the stars, which You have ordained,

4 What is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that
You visit him?

5 For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and You have
crowned him with glory and honor.

6 You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your

8.0 The areas of rebuilding.

hands; you have put all things under his feet,

7 All sheep and oxen-- even the beasts of the field,

8 The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea that pass through the paths of the seas.

9 O LORD, our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth!

Your value and worth as a person are directly related to God's estimation of you as someone He loves and desires to exalt.

8.2 Finances.

If you never budgeted before, you will need to budget now.

Don't put off getting the education necessary to equip you for a job that provides a decent wage. Don't wait for something to happen!

8.3 Children

Determine that your children will not grow up in a "broken home." A single-parent home can be an intact, marriage-affirming, love-inspiring place.

Raise your children to affirm the sanctity of marriage.

Don't run down your ex in front of your kids or use your kids as a means of one-upping your ex. Don't force your ex to be the bad cop (discipline, rules, etc.) to your good cop. And don't let your ex force you to be the "bad cop" either.

8.4 Life goals.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.

8.0 The areas of rebuilding.

Begin to make plans for your future. With God it will be a hopeful future, even though it will be different than the one you might have been hoping for.

You must determine to be a rebuildler, an overcomer, and you must determine that you will and can only do it with Jesus Christ in the center of your life.