



## On Divorce & Remarriage

The subject of divorce and remarriage is an emotionally charged topic. Compounding the pain we may feel from personal experience is the fact that sincere and godly Christians have reached differing conclusions regarding the biblical material pertaining to the topic. It is therefore a controversial as well as a heartrending subject.

Our purpose here is to summarize briefly the position and practice of Stony Creek Church in regard to divorce and remarriage. As evangelical Christians we regard the Bible as the supreme and final authority on this and every subject. Our goal then is to honor the Lord Jesus Christ by lovingly following the guidance of the Word of God on this and every matter. May God help us to do so!

- God loves and values every person—single, married, divorced, or widowed (John 3:16). Followers of Christ need to see divorced people *not* as second-class citizens or damaged goods—but, like all of us, as people needing God's redemption and our acceptance (Romans 13:8-10).
- Marriage is a sacred institution established by God as a life-long bond between one man and one woman (Genesis 2:18-25; Mark 10:2-12). Every feasible effort should be made to nurture and preserve a marriage, even when it is undergoing severe difficulty (1 Corinthians 7:10-14).
- Divorce is always a tragedy. God hates it (Malachi 2:14-16). The Bible prohibits divorce for invalid grounds (Mark 10:2-12) and discourages it even when there are valid grounds (Matthew 19:3-9). Reconciliation is always to be preferred (1 Corinthians 7:10-11). Like the amputation of a hopelessly-diseased limb, divorce tragically becomes an alternative only when there are valid grounds and all feasible efforts to achieve reconciliation have been thoroughly exhausted (cf. Jeremiah 3:8a).
- Stony Creek Church will endeavor to develop and nurture healthy marriages by teaching and modeling the biblical view of marriage (Ephesians 5:21-33) and by providing biblical counsel when needed. Church leaders/members are encouraged to offer their help (through prayer and godly counsel) to couples whose marriages are struggling. When divorce becomes an issue, the leaders of the church may need to apply the steps prescribed by Jesus in Matthew 18:15-20

(cf. also 1 Corinthians 6:1-5), yet they are called to do so with a spirit of humility, gentleness, and love (Galatians 6:1-2). Believers should welcome, embrace, and include divorced persons into their fellowship and ministry (Romans 15:7).

- Valid grounds for divorce and remarriage include marital unfaithfulness (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9) and desertion by an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:15).
- It is vital for divorced persons to work through and heal thoroughly from the salient issues of their former marriage (Proverbs 15:13; 17:22; 18:14; Matthew 5:23-26). This is best done under the guidance of a qualified church leader and/or a Christian therapist (Proverbs 15:22; 20:18; 1 Corinthians 6:2-5).
- Before a divorced person is remarried at Stony Creek Church, the pastoral leadership, in prayerful consultation with the elders, must be convinced that the proposed marriage **1)** meets the biblical qualifications for a legitimate remarriage; **2)** is advisable according to the biblical standards of compatibility; and **3)** is in conformity with the standard marriage policies of the church.
- A person whose divorce occurred for invalid reasons or was the guilty party in a valid divorce may be restored and *possibly* (under certain conditions) remarried at Stony Creek Church.

Approved by the Elder Board of Stony Creek  
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