

c. The scriptural teaching on remarriage

Romans 7:1-3 -- "Or do you not know, brethren (for I am speaking to those who know the law), that the law has jurisdiction over a person as long as he lives? For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then if, while her husband is living, she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress, though she is joined to another man."

I Corinthians 7:15 -- "Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace."

I Corinthians 7:39 -- "A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord."

2. Summary of the scriptural teaching

a. Summary of the scriptural teaching concerning marriage

After God had created a perfect man (Adam) and placed him in paradise, He said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." (Gen. 2:18). So God created a perfect woman (Eve) from Adam's bone and flesh (Gen. 18:22). And God brought Eve to Adam and joined them in holy matrimony; and as Eve had been taken from Adam's flesh, so Eve became one flesh with Adam. This oneness was not a numerical oneness, but a dynamic unity of two persons, even as the Trinity is not a numerical oneness, but a dynamic unity of three Persons. Since Adam and Eve were joined together before the Fall, marriage is a creation ordinance, instituted by God for the benefit of mankind.

Jesus affirmed this "one flesh" teaching, and implied from it that no human being should attempt to pull apart what God has joined together (Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9). Paul also affirmed this "one flesh" concept (Eph. 5:31), and asserted that marriage partners are bound together by law so long as both are alive (Rom. 7:2).

Paul's attitude toward marriage seems ambivalent. At times he appears to give preference to the single state, as being more conducive to full devotion to the Lord and as avoiding trouble in this life, especially in view of the present distress and the shortness of time. At other times he clearly encourages the married state as a deterrent to immorality. The fact that he was single may have influenced his attitude somewhat, since he says that he wishes that all men were as he is. Yet he admits that he is not trying to place restraints on his readers, but merely attempting to benefit them in their devotion to the Lord and His work.

In the early history of the patriarchs, there is evidence of both polygamy and marriage with close relatives. Abraham had Hagar and Sarah and Keturah as his wives, Jacob had Leah and Rachel and Bilhah and Zilpah as his wives, and Esau had Judith and Basemath and Mahalath as his wives.