

The Family: God's Pattern For Living  
 Dr. John MacArthur, Jr.  
 "God's Pattern Broken: Divorce and Remarriage"

There is a tribe of people in Africa who have a most fascinating marital custom. When you marry one of the young ladies in this tribe, she is given by her family a very special wedding dress. Now, as long as that dress lasts, the marriage is valid. When the dress wears out so that she can no longer wear it, the marriage is ended. Now, she has several alternatives. She can tuck it away, carefully padded, so that it will outlast their lifetime. Or, she can wear it all day and sleep in it if she wants to. The fabric of the marriage is only as good as the fabric of the dress. And we laugh at that kind of custom, and yet I dare say, in our own society, as cultured as we are, the fabric of our marriages may not even be that durable. We live in a time when divorce is of an epidemic nature. Now in our study together in this session we want to see what the Bible says about divorce, "God's Pattern Broken: Divorce and Remarriage." What happens when the ideal is forfeited? What happens when all of the anticipation of marriage somehow gets lost? When all of the fulfillment so eagerly sought is never found? And everything seems to come apart? What does the Bible have to say about divorce and remarriage? I can say as one who deals with people constantly in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ that it would be an unusual day just to have one day when you didn't hear about somebody getting a divorce. And the saddest part of all is that it is occurring even within the church. And even among those people who name the name of Jesus Christ and say they are committed to Him as Lord and Savior and want to live by the Word of God. Now we need to know God's mind on divorce. We need to know what God thinks about it, what He says about it, because face it, the divine pattern does get broken by sinful people, even in the church. Now some people would say to us that we really can't clearly know what the Bible says, there are just so many variations and so many opinions and so many ideas that there is really no way we can be dogmatic about it. But I would like to suggest that the reason we seem to be somewhat confused today is because we tend to want to accommodate the spirit of the age in which we live. We tend to sort of get overpowered by the pressure of the world around us and we bend a little bit in order to one way or another accommodate the world around us. For example, some people are saying in our society that man is ultimate. And since man is ultimate, man then sets the ultimate standard. And the ultimate standard is whatever makes you happy, whatever makes you feel good, whatever fulfills you, so that if you want to divorce the wife you are married to, divorce her. After all, you are ultimate, you are what matters and you want to do what makes you happy. And so as this kind of thinking encroaches upon the church, an ever-increasing unholy church membership starts making more and more concessions to the spirit of the age. And then there is immediately a counteraction to that, some well meaning Christian people say, "well look, the church is starting to bend to the world and we are starting to lower the standard, what we need to do is raise the standard and in order to prevent divorce altogether, they push the standard up. And so on the one hand we have people

who have lowered the standard from where God put it. And what we really want to find out is where did God put it. And let's leave it where He put it. And I believe we can know by looking at the pages of Scripture, because if there is anything that is clear in the Bible it is God's view of marriage and divorce. Now as we look at the spirit of the age around us, and as we try to reaffirm God's standard as over against the spirit of the age, we find ourselves in very familiar territory. We are exactly where our Lord was in Matthew Chapter 5 and I want us to note very carefully Matthew 5:31-32. Here is what our Lord Jesus Christ said on this matter, and He was talking here to the Jewish leaders, the religionists of His day who basically had set their standards, and He reaffirms to them God's standard, as over against their standard. Listen to what He says, "it hath been said whosoever shall divorce his wife let him give her a writing of divorcement, but I say unto you that whosoever shall divorce his wife except for cause of fornication (or sexual sin), causes her to commit adultery. And whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery." Now you will notice there are contrasts. Jesus says, "it has been said, but I say unto you." In other words He says you have been taught a certain thing, but I am telling you something different. The spirit of your age says this, but I say this. And that is in fact the whole approach of this section of Matthew 5. If you go all the way back to verse 21 Jesus talks to them in these terms, "you have heard that it was said by them of old, 'thou shalt not kill.'" In other words your law taught to you by your forefathers says you shall not kill and if you do you will be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, you should not even hold a grudge, you should not even hate, you should not even have anything against your brother. In other words, men had lowered the standard and the Lord put it back where it belonged. Now in verse 27 he says to them, "you have heard that it was said by them of old 'thou shalt not commit adultery,'" but I say unto you, you shouldn't even look at a woman to think a thought of adultery." See man had accommodated his standard downward from that very elevated standard of God. And Jesus comes back to reaffirm the right standard. And so when He comes to verses 31 and 32 He says, you have been taught that when you divorce your wife be sure you give her a writing of divorcement. But I say to you, if you divorce her at all, except for the cause of sexual sin, you will cause her to become an adulteress and whoever marries her to become an adulterer. Now Jesus throughout this section of Matthew is comparing the divine standard of God against the fallen traditions of men. He is not making new rules, He is not pushing the standard any higher. He is simply reaffirming the divine teaching. Now let's look at what they taught in this statement. "It has been said whosoever shall divorce his wife let him give her a writing of divorcement." You know what that says? It says when you divorce your wife be sure you do the paperwork! What is that? It doesn't say why you divorced her, it doesn't say whether you should have divorced her, there is no moral restriction, there is no legal standard there, no ethical standard, no biblical statement, it just says when you divorce your wife be sure you do the paperwork. Take care of the basic stuff that is going to protect your reputation. That was where they were. Now they had inherited this from a rabbi by the name of Hillel. And the rabbi Hillel had said that you could divorce your wife for

anything, anything you perceived as something wrong with her was grounds for divorce. Well all they needed was a rabbi to say that and they took it and flew with it. And they believed you could divorce your wife for burning the bagels. You could divorce your wife for putting too much salt on the dinner. You could divorce your wife if she made an improper comment about her mother-in-law. You could divorce your wife if she talked to a man you didn't like. And you could divorce your wife if you saw another lady you liked better, just do the paperwork. Now, Jesus says, that is what you say, but that is not what I say. What was God's original command? Before we see Jesus' reply, let's go back to Genesis and find out what God said in the beginning. Now listen, you will never understand God's view of divorce until you understand God's view of marriage. You have to understand God's view of marriage to understand His view of divorce. So we go all the way back to Genesis 2 and we find out God's view of marriage. And it is found in Genesis 2:23-24. "And Adam said, this is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh, she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man, therefore" (and what is the therefore there for? to build on the last point, because she came out of man, because she is bone of bone and flesh of flesh with man), "a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh." As they were once one flesh before she came out, they shall again be one flesh in marriage and they shall cleave together. The word cleave in the Hebrew means to be stuck, only not in the negative connotation. It means to be glued together. It really has the idea of a kind of pursuing love that never lets go. You know in Psalm 63:8 it says, and this is the psalmist speaking of his attitude toward God, "my soul followeth hard after thee," pursuing love. God says marriage is characterized by two people becoming one, stuck together, in an indivisible union. It is a deep, permanent, profound, indivisible blending of two minds, two wills, two sets of feelings, two emotions, and two bodies into one. And one is the indivisible number. So God sees marriage as the same kind of one flesh that existed even before woman was even separated from man. Now that ought to tell you a little bit about how God feels about divorce, to understand how He perceives marriage. Now, that passage is explained to us by our Lord Jesus Christ. He explains it to us in Matthew 19, listen to what He says, "have you not read, that he who made them at the beginning made them male and female," Matthew 19:4. Then in verse 5 it says, "and he said," this is referring to God, "for this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife and they two shall be one flesh." Now Jesus then quotes the Genesis 2:24 passage. Then in the next verse He explains its implication, Matthew 19:6, "wherefore they are no more two but one flesh." Now listen to this one, "what therefore God hath joined together let no man," what? Tear apart. Listen to this, marriage is God putting two people together, and a divorce is as much a travesty on a work of God as is an abortion. God puts those two people together. To break a marriage is to destroy a creation of God. And that is why our Lord says, "from the beginning it was not so," in other words God never intended divorce in the beginning. That was never His intention. Now the disciples were listening to this conversation with the Lord with great interest. And you know what their response was in Matthew 19:10?

Listen to what they said, “if the case of the man be so with his wife, it is good not to marry.” In other words they said, look, if we get married and it is so that we are stuck for good with one woman, it would be better not to get married. And I love Jesus’ answer, He says, yes, but not everybody can handle that. Only those to whom it is given to be single. But you see they caught the message of what Jesus was saying, that God says when you get married you are stuck with that union for the rest of your life. It is a one partner, lifelong union that is how God defines and designs marriage. Now the Scripture affirms God’s attitude toward this indissoluble marriage in many other ways, but particularly in the way God deals with things that tend to violate marriage. For example, in Leviticus 20:10 it says this, “and the man who commits adultery with another man’s wife, even he who commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.” You know what God said? If anybody in a marriage commits adultery, kill them. Kill them. Very serious, right? Can’t get any more serious than that, the ultimate penalty. To violate a marriage is to bring the death penalty. And I might add an interesting footnote to that, the Old Testament teaches us in Exodus 22:16 that if you have a single person who lies with another single person, and that is not adultery, adultery defines sex by married people with other than their partner, but if you have people who are outside marriage, single people and they come together and commit a sex act, the Bible says, they must marry. So the penalty for fornication was marriage. And the penalty for adultery was death. You see God treats adultery even more seriously than fornication because of that one flesh union which He Himself has wrought. In fact, God even goes further than that. In the Ten Commandments God said this, “you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.” Not only shall you not engage in a sex act with her, you shall not even desire that. God tried to protect marriage. And that is what Jesus meant in Matthew 5:28 when He said if you even look on a woman to lust after her, you have already committed adultery in your heart. So God is saying any violation of marriage, the actual physical violation or a violation in thought, breaks His commandments, and could bring about death. In Leviticus 18:18 God also forbid polygamy, one partner for life, no violation physically and no violation even in mind. God’s ideal then, lifelong, one partner union, and any violation is condemned. Now God reiterates that in a wonderful portion of Scripture, the prophet Malachi. Malachi, listen to what it says in Malachi 2, and here the prophet of God indicts people for getting divorces and in Malachi 2:15 we read this, they have been told they are going to be punished and they say, why? Why would you do that, what have we done? And God answers through the prophet, “because the Lord hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth against whom thou has dealt treacherously yet she is thy companion and the wife of thy covenant and did not he make one.” In other words again it says that the union of marriage is a divine creation, as much so as the creation of a child, just as wondrous, just as marvelous, just as God ordained, and he says you will be judged because you have violated the covenant that you made with the wife of your youth. You see, God doesn’t like the violating of covenants. One of the ways that God defines Himself is that He is a covenant keeping God. And marriage is a vow, and marriage is a covenant.

And he indicts them because they violated that covenant, and they dealt treacherously against the wife of their youth. And then in verse 16 it says this, “for the Lord, the God of Israel, says He hates divorce.” Now you can’t put it any more clearly than that. You want to know what God’s opinion is on divorce? He hates it! Simple. In fact it goes on to say the one who does it covers his garment with violence. In other words he is like a murderer who goes out and slaughters some people and he comes back and he is easy to find because their blood splattered all over his clothes. You splatter violence on your garment and that is a figure for gross sin. Divorce, God hates. You say, well, what if things aren’t working out very well? I mean, we don’t like each other. I’m lovable, she’s not. And it is not working out! I mean you should know the things she has done to me! Or you should know the thing he has done to me, nobody would tolerate this. Listen to this. I want to remind you of a little story about a man named Hosea. He was a prophet and he married a wife who turned out to be a prostitute, a harlot, a vile woman who slept with who knows how many men. And as you look at the prophecy of Hosea, it is basically a living drama. Hosea symbolizes God, Gomer his wife, symbolizes Israel. God is a faithful loving husband. Israel is an adulterous, unloving, unfaithful wife, chasing after other gods, chasing after other religions, chasing after other husbands or idols, and God is ever and always faithful, faithful, faithful. Now, while the book is to teach that great lesson of God and Israel, we can’t help but learn about Hosea’s attitude toward divorce in the process of seeing the drama. He marries this woman, embraces her as his wife, they covenant together to be married and she turns out to be a prostitute. Now what is he going to do? We come to Chapter 2 and find out. There is an amazing ambivalence here, she is out walking the streets, she is doing her thing. Most people at this time would have said that is it! It is over, I wouldn’t touch her, a prostitute. Notice his ambivalence in chapter 2:2, “she is not my wife and I am not her husband” he says. In other words he just can’t bring himself to admit that they are even married. I mean she is not fulfilling her role and I can’t fulfill mine. “Let her therefore put away her harlotry out of her sight and her adulteries from between her breasts, tell her to stop this, tell her to cease from this, lest I find her and I will strip her naked as she was in the day she was born and I will make her like a wilderness and I will set her like a dry land and I will slay her with thirst.” Boy if I ever get my hands on that woman I am going to give her what for. I will strip her bare, I will make it so painful.., he is going through all of the anger and all of that bitterness. And I won’t have any mercy on her children for they are the children of harlotry. She was producing children all around. “For their mother has played the harlot, she that conceived them has done shamefully for she said I will go after my lovers that give me my bread and my water and my wool and my flax and my drink.” They paid for what they got from this lady. And after he has gotten through all the bitterness he says this, “I’ll hedge up thy way with thorns and I will make a wall that she will not find her paths.” Now he has gone from anger to wanting to help her. Now he says I am going to try to put a wall around her and she won’t be able to find her way back to her old haunts, I’ll protect her, I’ll hedge her in and she will follow after her lovers but she will not overtake them and she’ll seek them but she won’t find

them, and she'll say, oh, I can't find anybody, I'll go back to my husband and it will be better with us then. He actually wants her back, he is going to try to protect her and close out all of her options so she has to come back to him. See all this ambivalence back and forth, anger and all of the other emotions. Then in versel 0 he kind of goes back and says, "I'll uncover her lewdness in the sight of her lovers, I will cause all her mirth to cease," I'll end her party fast! "I will destroy her vines and her fig trees, I will judge her," and then I love this in verse 14, he says this, "I will allure her, I will woo her back, I will bring her into the wilderness and speak tenderly unto her." When he has worked through all of his anger and all of his bitterness, he comes back to the fact that he wants her back and he says I will woo her back, I'll draw her back. And that is what he decides to do. So he goes to find her. You know where he finds her? In the market place, stark naked, up on the block being auctioned to the highest bidder. She has hit the dregs. In chapter 3:2, "so I bought her for 15 pieces of silver and a bushel and one half of barley." He bought her, high price for a vile prostitute. But he bought her. You know why? I love this, chapter 2:19, "I will betroth thee unto me forever. Yea I will betroth thee unto me in righteousness." What does that word betroth mean? In Hebrew it means, get this one, "to woo a virgin." Can you imagine that? He says I want to treat her as if she were a virgin.

Now that dear prophet of God expressed the heart of God in marriage, even when marriage has been unbelievably violated, and you can't get any further off than this woman got, Hosea is God in action. He plays the part of God, he demonstrates the heart of God to draw her back. That is God's ideal. No divorce. No divorce under any circumstances, any kind. You say, but what about the extremity? Oh in the extremity, Hosea becomes the pattern. But the Pharisees were a million miles from that, they said, "divorce her for any reason you want, just do the paperwork." And so with one stroke of the pen they were proliferating divorce everywhere and whenever these people were being divorced, they were consummating new marriages and adultery was happening all over the place. You say, well the Pharisees aren't stupid, they must have had a reason for taking this view. They did. They had a reason. And that reason becomes clear to us in Matthew 19:7-8. When Jesus laid down the divine law of marriage, and when Jesus tried to stop their multitudinous divorces they said this, "why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement and to divorce?" I mean if divorce is wrong then why did Moses command this? Jesus said this to them, "Moses permitted it because of the hardness of your hearts, but from the beginning this was never God's intention." You say is divorce permitted? Jesus said Moses permitted it because of the hardness of the heart. Where did Moses permit this? Where do we know that he permitted it? When did Moses ever speak to this issue? One time, Deuteronomy 24:1-4. And that is really where they were getting this. Listen to what Deuteronomy 24:1-4 says, "when a man takes a wife and marries her and it happened that she find no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife." Now he sends her out for some indecency, writes the paper, she goes, and as inevitably

happens, she goes and marries somebody else then the next verse says, “and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her another certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand and sends her away out of his house, “now she has been divorced by number 2, “or if he dies, then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife.” She can’t go back to number one. Why? “Since she has been defiled.” Now what is this saying? It is saying this, here is a man who divorced his wife. She remarried. She was divorced or that man died, now she is looking again, she can’t go back to number one. Why? She is defiled. How did she get defiled? I will tell you how. She had no right to be divorced. And so that second union constituted an adulterous union. She became an adulteress and is defiled and husband number one is not to marry such a defiled person. Now what caused her to be an adulteress? Listen carefully. The husband number one divorced her for some indecency. You say what is that? You want to know something that word is used in the immediate proximity one other time, and it is used for human excrement. It mean indecent, it means unclean, filthy, dirty, and that is really all we know. But we do know this, it did not mean adultery, because if she had committed adultery what would have happened to her? She would be dead. And it seems as though what happened was this. Women knew the penalty for adultery and they did not want to commit adultery and die so they would get right up to the thin edge of adultery and they would carry on with some kind of indecency and uncleanness and vile living short of the act of adultery so that they wouldn’t have to face the death penalty, and the husband would be irritated with that and divorce her, but when he did that and she remarried, he turned her into an adulteress. Because indecency, though it is a sad thing, and an improper thing, is not a ground for divorce. And so Moses is not here advocating divorce, he is simply warning them that is they do divorce a wife for anything short of adultery, they are going to turn that woman into an adulteress and defile her. Now Jesus is saying, listen, “but I say unto you that whosoever shall divorce his wife except for the cause of sexual sin, causes her to commit adultery,” in the inevitable remarriage, “and whoever marries her also commits adultery.” He is saying the exact thing that Deuteronomy 24 illustrates. And He said it again, by the way, in Matthew 19:9, “whosoever shall put away his wife except it be for sexual sin and shall marry another commits adultery and whosoever marries her who is put away commits adultery.” In other words, sum it up, when you send your partner away for anything other than adultery, you are going to proliferate adultery every place. If the partner remarries that is adultery, the one that marries them, that is adultery, you remarry that is adultery, who marries you that is adultery, you’ve got adultery all over the place. Now, the ideal one lifelong union, and where there is even and adulterous act or myriad of adulterous acts, the spirit of Hosea forgives and forgives and forgives. And you know what happened to Gomer when Hosea wooed her back, she came back. And if forgiveness applied is received and the union can be maintained, the God’s ideal is met. But it seems as we look at Deuteronomy 24, and it is abundantly clear in the words of Jesus, that sexual sin was a legitimate grounds for divorce. Now you say well where is this taught in the Old Testament? And I will show you, listen carefully, in Ezra IOWe find that

Ezra by the will of God actually commands the people to divorce their pagan wives, Ezra 10:3-5. You say, now wait a minute. Ezra commands them to divorce their pagan wives? That is right. Why? First of all, because there was a higher issue at stake. The covenant people of Israel through whom the Messiah would come were starting to intermarry with all of the foreign nations and if they had kept on doing that they would have totally annihilated the covenant people, and there would have been no line for the Messiah. So to preserve the nation Israel, God permitted the lesser of two evils. And I am sure we can see behind the scenes that the characteristic of pagan wives as the characteristic of all pagan religions of that time, was adulterous activity. There is little doubt in my mind that they were adulterous pagans. So perhaps there were legitimate grounds. But the importance of the Ezra passage is to show you that there are those times, when for the greater good God allows the lesser evil. It is not His ideal. Then in Matthew 1, we read this, "Mary was espoused to Joseph and before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Spirit." Now here is Mary pregnant and Joseph has never lain with her at all, and Joseph her husband looks and see his wife is pregnant and the Bible says this, "Joseph being a just man, a righteous man and not willing to make her a public example was minded to divorce her privately." Did you hear that? To divorce her privately would have been a just thing to do. Now that implies that unfaithfulness to this marriage vow and sex with another man, gave Joseph the right to divorce his wife. He was minded as a just man to put her away. Of course he found out later that it was the Holy Spirit. Let me tell you another reason why we see adultery as a cause for divorce. Listen to this, God Himself divorced Israel. That is right. During Hosea's time, God was wooing Israel back. He was calling Israel back. And Hosea lived at the time of Isaiah and at the same time that we see Hosea looking and seeing God wooing Israel back, we hear Isaiah say this, "thus saith the Lord, "50:1, "where is the bill of your mother's divorce?" In other words God is saying, you are out there with all these pagan gods and I have never divorced you. Show me your bill of divorce, show me your right to leave me and go and join yourself to other idols. So in Isaiah 50:1, God says I have not divorced you. But some years later after constantly wooing and wooing and drawing and drawing, and finding the obstinacy of the people, we read this in Jeremiah 3:8, and this is after 700 years of God's patient calling, we read this, "and I saw when for all the cause whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away and given her a bill of divorce." You say well why didn't God do like Hosea did and take her back? He did and He tried and he tried, but there comes a time when there is unmitigated, unceasing adultery, and when there is no way to reconcile the person back and as a last resort, even God divorced Israel. What is God's ideal? Lifelong marriage. And you divorce your wife and you violate God's ideal. You say what is she commits adultery, what about my husband if he commits adultery? Forgive him and take him back. And if he will come back, betroth him as if you were wooing a virgin, but if it is continuous and if it is unrepentant and it is irreconcilable God does not sentence you to a lifelong miserable attempt at something that never can come to pass. Not if you are innocent. And then listen to this. I believe that adultery can be seen as a



grounds for divorce by implication. Technically if a person commits adultery and God carried out the prior law, what would happen to that person? Die. Now if, let's assume that a husband commits adultery and God does what the law says and just snuffs him. He is dead. Is the wife free to remarry? Roman 7 says that you are only bound to a husband as long as he lives, if he is dead you are free. Let's say this then, God doesn't take his life, God is gracious, God is kind, God is merciful, because God is merciful, and patient, and gracious, and kind to the guilty, does that mean the innocent is sentenced to a life of lonely suffering, as if the innocent had to pay for the grace God gave to the guilty? No, No, I believe the implication is that because adultery should bring death, when all attempts at reconciliation have been exhausted, I believe the implication is that the innocent person is free to remarry, and that God does not penalize the innocent because He shows grace to the guilty. Grace is not paid for by any of us. If God just killed the adulterers we would be free. And if He is gracious, I believe in cases where it is irreconcilable, God shows kind mercy to the innocent person. God is not in the business of sentencing people to horrible lives of unfulfillment and loneliness. There is a final word in this matter added by the beloved apostle Paul in I Corinthians 7. And through the inspiration of the beloved Holy Spirit he enriches our understanding, I Corinthians 7:10, "and unto the married I command, yet not I but the Lord, let not the wife depart from her husband and if she departs she must remain unmarried or be reconciled and let not the husband divorce his wife." In other words, if there is no adultery and you just leave or you just divorce, you have two choices, you either go back, or you stay unmarried the rest of your life. Those are the only two options. That is it. But verse 15 says this, "if the unbelieving departs let him depart, a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases but God has called us to peace." The bond is broken. If you have an unbeliever who moves out, who departs, who says I want nothing to do with this relationship, I want nothing to do with Jesus Christ, I want nothing to do with God, I want nothing to do with His work, and he leaves, you are not still bound. And that word is a strong word, it is the same word used in Romans 7 to speak of our bondage of Jesus Christ and there is no stronger bondage than that. The strong bond of marriage is broken when an unbeliever departs. And I believe that person is then again, by God's wonderful grace, free to marry. For God has called us to peace and there is no peace in the life of one whom God made for marriage, but who can't enjoy that. Now when the person remarries, verse 39 should be applied, she is to be married, "to whom she will only in the Lord." Don't be unequally yoked. What does God say? Marriage is for life. I hate divorce, but I recognize sin and I am not going to sentence one who is my own beloved child, who is innocent, to a life of misery when they have exhausted all efforts to reconcile a wayward partner and that partner will not be reconciled. And one of my beloved children, who happens to be married to a godless unbeliever who wants out, is not to be sentenced either to pay the price of a life of loneliness, if God designed them for marriage. And so God is gracious, but the only concessions God ever made to divorce were based on the hardness of men's hearts. And His provisions made for the guilty, they just proliferate their adultery. And you say, well, John, what do I do if I have already had a divorce

and I am already remarried and I didn't have any grounds for that? Then confess your sin to the Lord and accept His wonderful mercy and grace and go on to pursue His will from now on. You say well, I was the guilty party, and my partner divorced me and I was the adulterer, do I have the right to remarry? The Bible grants no such right, except God's grace that you are still alive and seek to live in His will. And you say, well, I was the innocent party and I did everything I could to reconcile, but she wouldn't come back. If you are free then marry only in the Lord and make all of that second gracious opportunity that you didn't make of the first one. The point is this, in whatever state you are in, start now to seek God's will. And if this is the second time for you or if you are a single parent, start now, as best as you can to look at the biblical options, and see where you are to be to be obedient to God, and then in the midst of that obedience, begin to apply the biblical principles for a family, as much as you can, so that all of the error of the past can be in the past, and you can begin to build the family even from the broken pieces, to the glory of God. And may I encourage you by saying, God is great at putting together broken pieces. He is in that business.

