

## CHAPTER 8: STANDARDS FOR CHURCH SERVICE

### WE HAVE SOME QUESTIONS FOR YOU

At a minimum, this chapter deals with and attempts to answer the following questions and more:

- (1) Do you believe that a bishop or deacon should be filled with the Holy Ghost?
- (2) Do you believe in a literal interpretation of the Scriptures?
- (3) Do you believe that the so-called qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 also apply to men who seek to be teachers, missionaries, evangelists, church treasurers, missions program directors, and so forth?
- (4) Do you believe that if a man gets a divorce after he is saved, that he is permanently disqualified from any position of leadership in the church including bishop and deacon?
- (5) Do you believe that a man who was divorced “before” he was saved is qualified for positions of church leadership including bishop and deacon?
- (6) Do you believe the timing of a man’s salvation has any effect on whether he is qualified for the offices of bishop or deacon?
- (7) Do you believe that a man disqualifies himself from the offices of elder, bishop, and deacon if he marries a divorced woman?
- (8) Do you believe that divorce ends a marriage in the eyes of God so that a former spouse is no longer scripturally a spouse in any sense of the word?
- (9) Was polygamy a potential problem in the early New Testament church era?
- (10) Is the context of the conflict in 1 Timothy and Titus Jewish or Gentile in nature? How does this context affect the doctrinal and historical interpretation of these passages?
- (11) Do you believe you have the discernment to determine whether anyone is/was saved at a particular point in time?
- (12) Would you leave a never divorced man in a bishop’s or deacon’s office when by his conduct he reveals that he is not filled with the Holy Ghost?
- (13) Do you believe that an adulterous or fornicating pastor or deacon should be allowed to remain in the ministry?
- (14) Would you kick a man out of the ministry whose sodomite wife left him for an abominable same sex relationship?
- (15) Do you believe that the so-called qualifications for church office are absolute standards or are they intended to be a general standard by which the overall present character and conduct of a man may be judged to determine his suitability to serve in the offices of bishop and deacon?
- (16) Was Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ qualified to pastor churches?
- (17) How should and how does Paul’s marital status affect the interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:2?
- (18) Is a divorced and remarried man disqualified from being the pastor of his

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home?

We have included an appendix to this chapter that deals with the interpretation of the phrase “husband of one wife” by numerous commentaries and by many preachers of the distant past and some more recent. If you do not read the comments in that appendix, you will lose some of the benefit you would otherwise have experienced. Many of the comments are very enlightening. In some cases, we give the comment and then add some of our own comments to it. Our comments will be preceded by the statement: **Note from this author**. We wished we had access to more free commentaries so we could further research this topic.

### **WHAT THEY BELIEVE AND PRACTICE**

The very first question that should be answered when dealing with those who might be qualified to hold the offices of bishop and deacon is: “Do you believe that a bishop or deacon should be filled with the Holy Ghost?”. While many will quickly say that they believe that a bishop or deacon should be filled with the Holy Ghost, they make no real effort to hold those in those positions accountable for their unholy conduct much less hold them to the general standards for bishops and deacons from 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Acts 6:1-7 says:

Acts 6:1-7

<sup>1</sup> And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministration. <sup>2</sup> Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. <sup>3</sup> Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. <sup>4</sup> But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. <sup>5</sup> And the saying pleased the whole multitude: and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicolas a proselyte of Antioch: <sup>6</sup> Whom they set before the apostles: and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them. <sup>7</sup> And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

The laying on of hands was an Old Testament principle that carried over into both the appointing of members to the Jewish Sanhedrin and into the New Testament Church (Numbers 8:10, Numbers 27:18-23, Deuteronomy 34:9, Acts 13:1-3, 1 Timothy 4:14, Hebrews 6:2). The Bible says to lay hands on no man suddenly. That is what the modern apostate church is so guilty of. That is why we have so many wicked men in our pulpits in America. In Acts 6, we have the first seven deacons called by the church. The only “qualifications” given to the church was that these men had to be: (1) of honest report; (2) full of the Holy Ghost; (3) and full of wisdom. These three

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requirements alone would disqualify most men that occupy American pulpits. Gone would be most of those who hold positions of leadership by virtue of their educational, economic, and social status. The most important of these three would be that of being full of the Holy Ghost. Most men who hold the positions of bishop and deacon in American churches are not full of the Holy Ghost because they are lost, hell bound sinners. They are not even qualified to be members of Bible believing churches much less to be bishops and deacons. The proof of that is in the filthy, Satanic effluent that comes spewing forth from their mouths as they step behind their pulpits and lecterns. That is also true of many fundamentalist and Independent Baptist churches. If we used Acts 6 as our first stop when examining men for church office, we would not even have to go to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Even if we could get to 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 there is a wide range of misinterpretation in fundamentalist and Baptist congregations.

Many Baptist pastors will not allow divorced men to preach in their pulpits. Many Baptist pastors and evangelists will not preach in a pastor's pulpit if that pastor allows divorced men to preach in his pulpit. Many Baptist pastors will break fellowship with and ostracize a man who will allow a divorced man into his pulpit. Some Baptist pastors, preachers, and evangelists do not believe that a divorced man can be anointed of the Holy Ghost in the pulpit. Some Baptist preachers and evangelists will break fellowship with a pastor who will not break fellowship with a pastor who allows divorced man to preach in his pulpit. Now, if that sounds confusing, it ought to. I guarantee you that God is not in it because God is not the author of confusion. Many Baptist pastors, evangelists, and preachers will take a pastor who allows a divorced man to preach in their pulpits to the Peter Ruckman Whipping Post as if he is the standard of judging the standards for the ministry. Some Baptist churches will allow divorced men to hold church offices and preach and teach provided their divorce took place before their salvation. Other Baptist churches will allow a divorced man to hold any office including pastor in their church and to preach and teach provided he maintains Biblical standards of holiness in his life. So you can see there is a wide variety of belief and practice in Baptist churches. Regardless of what you believe and practice, some of these beliefs and practices have to be scriptural and some of them have to be unscriptural. Some of these folks have to be scripturally wrong. They are wrong either in interpretation and/or application. If you exceed the standards of the scriptures in application, then you are guilty of setting yourself up as a self-righteous judge. If your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scriptures, then you are guilty of being a self righteous Pharisee. Many men parrot the positions of their pastor, or their favorite evangelist, or their favorite seminary/institute professor without having studied the scriptures and determined for themselves the whole counsel of God on the matter. Rather than being a workman that rightly divideth the word of truth, they are a lazy, mocking parrot. As a reminder to the parrots, it is not what thus saith the man, but instead what THUS SAITH THE LORD. Many men hold positions on the matter under discussion that are obviously contradictory to the clear teaching of the scriptures and the Spirit of the Holy Ghost of God. Regardless of motivation, to go beyond the clear teaching and standards of the scriptures is doctrinal error also. When we set the bar higher than the scriptures, we are putting ourselves in the role of the Holy Ghost of God. We have made that scripture which God never intended to be scripture. In other words, we have added our personal standards to the scriptures: our own private interpretation. Put bluntly, we have put man's words into God's mouth. We call that adding to the Scriptures!

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Do you believe that the so-called qualifications in 1 Timothy 3 also apply to men who seek to be teachers, missionaries, evangelists, church treasurers, missions program directors, and so forth? There are some Baptist churches that believe that the qualifications for bishop (pastor) and deacon also apply equally to preachers, evangelists, missionaries, teachers, song/music leaders, musicians, choir members, etc. That is not scriptural. There are but three New Testament church offices. Those are elders, bishops, and deacons. Preacher is not a New Testament church office. Evangelist is not a New Testament church office. Teacher is not a New Testament church office. Missionary is not a New Testament church office. Song leader is not a New Testament church office and so forth. For anyone to attempt to apply the standards for bishops and deacons to anyone other than bishops and deacons is to ADD to the Scriptures. It is nothing more than a self-righteous standard that exceeds the righteousness of the Scriptures. That makes it a manmade doctrine. Concerning the subject of this paragraph Ralph Woodrow had the following to say:

“A preacher who was ready to ‘clean house’, as he put it, declared that no person in his church who had a previous marriage could sing in the choir, hold any position in the church, or even serve as an usher! ‘I don’t believe in second marriages!’ he said. A close friend of his (who had divorced and remarried) said to him in private, ‘I know you have only married once, but did you ever have a sexual relationship with another woman?’ (Being close friends, neither considered this conversation too personal.) With some hesitation the pastor admitted there had been some involvement with...two women...long before he was married to his wife. ‘Well,’ replied the other man, ‘you have been married to THREE women and never even divorced the first TWO. I have been married only TWICE, but I got a divorce!...Woodrow continues:

Some months ago I heard a man give his testimony about how God saved him from a very wicked life. Though raised in church, he had rebelled at an early age, became involved with gangs, got into drugs, cursed God, chased women, living with one then another, though he never legally married. Then he got saved, went to Bible School where he married a Christian girl, and is now an ordained minister. We can all rejoice in what God has done for him. But there is a serious INCONSISTENCY here. The denomination which ordained him does not allow divorce and remarriage (in the ministry or in deacons). Had he married even ONE of these women he lived with, any marriage after that would not be ‘first’ marriage and ordination would have been refused!

The inconsistency of this double standard says, in effect, “Don’t get married – just live with different ones. God will forgive this, and if you do finally get married it will be a first marriage. But if you marry and it doesn’t work out, you can never get married again...and certainly never be a deacon or minister!” [Divorce And Remarriage, pages 83-84 Ralph Woodrow, 1991]

Stanley A. Ellisen said this about the subject before us:

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“How far should these restrictions be carried? If they cannot be deacon or pastor, can they serve as usher? Collect offering? Or would that be too close to the duties of a deacon? Would they be allowed to pray or read Scripture from the pulpit, or give their testimony from the pulpit? Would that be too close to ‘preaching’? To press it further, would the divorced person be allowed to sing in the choir or sing a solo? Or would such a performance border too closely to the concept of ministry? I have not heard of any such church who restricts divorced folks from being deacons or pastors from contributing to the offering plate, however.” [Divorce and Remarriage, Stanley A. Ellisen, page 83]

Some Baptist churches take this hypocrisy a step further when they will even go so far as to prohibit divorced man from testifying of his salvation in church services. What does this do for the command of the LORD to “let the redeemed of the LORD says so”? There are even some Baptist churches that will not allow a divorced man or woman to be a member of THEIR church. We are also aware that some Baptist churches do not allow women to teach anyone at all. That does not line up with Titus 2:3-4 which states:

Titus 2:3-4

<sup>3</sup>The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; <sup>4</sup>That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children,

We have also heard many preachers and pastors attempt to **selectively** apply the rules that applied to the Old Testament priesthood to men in the ministry in the New Testament. It will not work and we will explain. If you are going to apply some of them, you will have to apply all of them to New Testament bishops and deacons. Here are those requirements from Leviticus chapter 21:

- (1) The priests could not shave their heads or their beards. (There goes most of the pastors and preachers from American pulpits). There goes those of you who preach against beards. For those of you who preach against beards, you must have been among those who plucked out the beard of the Lord Jesus Christ before the crucifixion.
- (2) The priests could not have tattoos. (There goes many military men and drunks who visited tattoo parlors before they got saved)
- (3) The priests had to marry a virgin. (How about you preacher man? Did you marry a virgin?). Or, how many women’s virginity did you steal before you had a ceremony?
- (4) The priest’s wife could not have been a whore (How many different women have you engaged in sex with?) Did you have sex with your wife before you had a ceremony. You guessed it. You made her a whore when you done that.
- (5) The priests’ wife could not be profane; in other words unsaved. (How about you preacher man? Was your wife saved when you got married, or did she make a profession after you were married?).
- (6) The priests could not take divorced women for wives (more on this one later).
- (7) The priests could not have any physical defect such as being blind, lame, brokenfooted, brokenhanded, a eunuch, having a flat nose, a crooked back, or being a midget. Physical defects would disqualify many men from the ministry today.
- (8) We have bad news for every preacher and pastor who believes that New Testament bishops and deacons must meet the requirements for Old Testament priests. You have all missed the

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boat because you are not of the lineage of Aaron. Rats! Why didn't we read that one first! Verse 1 in Leviticus 21 says this:

Leviticus 21:1

<sup>1</sup> And the LORD said unto Moses, Speak unto **the priests the sons of Aaron**, and say unto them, There shall none be defiled for the dead among his people:

From the list above, the one that states that the priest cannot marry a divorced woman is the one that is most frequently regurgitated and unscripturally applied to the “qualifications” for potential bishops, elders and deacons in the New Testament. The one that most “once married” peacocks dare not bring up is the requirement that the priest had to marry a woman who was not a whore. The reason they dare not bring it up is that most of them have made their wives a whore when they stole their virginity before their redundant, hypocritical marriage ceremonies. Then there is also those promiscuous fornicators that bedded down every whore under the sun before their redundant, hypocritical marriage ceremonies. They are the Don Juans of our pulpits that brag about all their “pre-marital” affairs before they got saved. And, these are the men we set aside divorced pastors and preachers for!?? Many of these virgin stealers and Don Juans are also the ones that cannot wait to open up the wounds of a divorced man and pour salt in them while their conduct makes a divorced man a saint by comparison. While we agree that the conduct of bishop's, elder's, deacon's wives should be above reproach, you cannot disqualify a man from the ministry because his wife has had a divorce. If you do that, you would again be guilty of reading divorce into a passage that neither directly states or insinuates that a [wife's] divorce disqualifies a man from the ministry. If you look real close, you will see that the potential bishop's wife's conduct is not even mentioned in 1 Timothy 3 whereas the deacon's wife's conduct is mentioned in verse 11. Looking at Titus chapter 1, we see that deacons are not even mentioned. However, we do see the standards for elders and bishops mentioned without the conduct of their wives even being brought up.

In the chapter before us, it will become clear to our readers why we spent so much time and effort in the chapter on “Marriage” in emphasizing the fact that God considers a sexual relationship to be a marriage. We are about to embark on one of the most controversial subjects in so-called fundamental Bible believing churches. It is a controversy that walks hand in hand with the controversy concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Those have also been the subject of three previous chapters in this book. The controversy of this chapter swirls around the interpretation and application of 1 Timothy 3:2. While many refer to the lists in 1 Timothy 3 as “qualifications” for church office, we prefer to call those lists “Standards For Church Service”. We have not always held to the position on this subject that we now hold to. We will admit that the decades long opinions and positions we once held on this subject prior to thoroughly studying this issue for ourselves were the opinions of our peers and mentors in the churches that we have served in. In short, they were what we had been taught and not what we have rightly divided. It was an issue that we had not sought the whole counsel of the Word Of God on. If you will consult the Introduction to this book, you will see how thorough our research and study has been. We have researched the commentaries of many

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respected preachers and the works of all the so-called church fathers in preparing for this book. We did not do the research to find out where we should stand on the subject before us. Our convictions are based upon an independent study of the entire subject from the Bible. We studied the works of others to find where they stood on this subject and what we have found is that many good men of God come down on opposite sides of the issue we are dealing with here. So, what is the problem here? Job 32:9 says that great men are not always wise: neither do the aged understand judgment. We realize that many will not even read what we have written here because they “know what the have been taught”. They will reject what we say here out of hand. Proverbs 18:13 says: “He that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him”. Proverbs 15:32 says: He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul: but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding.

### A CHALLENGE AND WHAT WE HAVE BEEN TAUGHT

**If we are wrong on this issue, we have a very strong desire to be proved wrong and to be corrected. If you have a thoroughly researched counter argument against what we have said in this book and what we will say in this chapter, or if you have further supporting arguments, please feel free to contact us via email at: [contact@earnestlycontendingforthefait.com](mailto:contact@earnestlycontendingforthefait.com).** Before you get outraged and start attacking us, we would encourage you to temporarily set aside everything you have been taught or preached on this subject. Then pick up a King James Bible and take every occurrence of the 62 words listed on page 3 of the Introduction to this book and read and study them in context and take notes before you pick up any commentaries. Then you can go back and pick up all that you have been taught and preached that lines up with the King James Bible. We have too many parrots today and not enough Biblical oracles. We do not wish to remove any old landmarks here. We just want to make sure that those old landmarks are set in their proper Biblical context.

We have read many good articles and books on the subject before us, some of which we agree with and others we do not agree with. There is some really wild stuff out there on both sides of this issue! Before anybody points the Peter Ruckman finger at us and takes us to the Peter Ruckman whipping post, you need to know that our research was almost complete before we read his 29 page article titled “Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage”. Though we agree with Peter Ruckman on this issue, you need to understand that neither Peter Ruckman or Peter Ruckman’s doctrine on marriage, divorce and remarriage is the standard by which we judge our doctrine. Peter Ruckman is the straw man for all those who hate the King James Bible and those putrid “double married” preachers. They cannot defend their positions on the Bible or marriage so they pull Peter Ruckman out and kick him around for a while hoping that you will not ask them for chapter a verse. This is an issue that we have had serious doubts about ever since we first heard the doctrine propounded that divorced men could not enter the ministry and to our shame and our hurt we did nothing to exhaustively study the issue scripturally. We heard and received that which men taught. The real question is what does the Bible say; not what we think. Our standard is the perfect, inspired King James Bible. Many of those “once married” preachers that we have heard expound their doctrine of exclusion of divorced men over the years accuse those of us who hold to the doctrine that we do that we are responding to the issue emotionally and not doctrinally. Really? When confronted with their doctrine, most of them will run and hide under the emotional coattails of their favorite

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evangelist, preacher, seminary professor, or Bible Institute teacher. Most of them will respond that they know what they have been taught, or they know what so and so says. Really? But what does the Bible say chapter and verse? Most of them will not even attempt to defend their doctrine from the Bible because they have never studied the issue through and through for themselves. We want to thank Brother Karl M. Baker for his excellent book “The Marriage & Divorce Controversy With A Rebuttal Of 1 Timothy 3:2”. It was his book that motivated us to do the most exhaustive study of any subject that we have ever completed other than our study on the King James Bible itself. For many years we were convicted that our doctrine on the subject before us was an affront to the Holy Ghost that dwelt in us, but we “felt like” surely we must be wrong because how can so many good men of God be wrong on this subject and us be right. Besides, we were but the water boy on the doctrine field with all the big players. We are not being sarcastic here, but like most young Christians we held, and should hold, our elders, deacons, pastors, and preachers in high esteem for their work’s sake. First Thessalonians 5:12-13 and 1 Timothy 5:17 tell us:

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

<sup>12</sup> And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; <sup>13</sup> And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

1 Timothy 5:17

<sup>17</sup> Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

We are not making light of those who have been our elders in doctrine over the years. We love them. What we are saying is that our very strong respect for those elders led us to receive and believe some things that we should have checked out for ourselves. Our first mentor has changed his position on whether a divorced man can enter the ministry and no longer holds a position that bans all divorced men from the ministry. It is wrong for us to hold the elders we love responsible for the doctrines we hold to. What we should not do is receive a doctrine without having checked it out in the Scriptures. The charge to be a Berean and to rightly divide the word of truth is a charge given to every believer and not just church leaders. When we receive a doctrine without having checked it out in the Scriptures what we prove is that we love man more than we do God. That is especially true of those who are, and who would be, church leaders. Blindly following church leaders without the informed consent of the Scriptures is ungodly, sloppy, and lazy. If you will believe a man, especially in a controversial doctrine, without having checked his doctrine against the Scriptures, then you are NOT qualified to hold a position of leadership in the church. That is especially true in this issue because much fundamentalist and Baptist doctrine as it relates to marriage, divorce, and remarriage has been corrupted by Roman Catholic theology. This same type of ungodly sloppiness and laziness is exactly why we have so many heretics and apostates in pulpits and behind lecterns trying to correct and overthrow the perfect King James Bible. What we are confronted with on the



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doctrine of the King James Bible is the very same thing we are confronted with on the doctrine of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and standards for church officers. That is, we have to many preachers, pastors, and teachers that are slothful sluggards that parrot the positions of their mentors without having studied the issue through for themselves. If you will not study the issue through for yourself, shame on you. For such a high profile and high impact issue as marriage, divorce, remarriage, and standards for church office, it is unconscionable that a God called pastor would be asleep at the spiritual wheel when at least 50% of the members of most fundamentalist and Baptist congregations have experienced a wreck on the highway of divorce. How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? The sluggard is wiser in his own conceit than seven men that can render a reason. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep.

### BAD ATTITUDES, PRIDE, AND ROMAN CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

If you want to start a stuttering convention all you have to do is ask the average group of assembled Independent Baptist preachers to give scriptural and historical reasons why they hold to the King James Bible; or why they are two, three, or four point Calvinists; or, God forbid, why they condemn “double married” preachers. Hello out there: **“This is a recording from the Independent Baptist glory corner. We only use the King James Bible and we don’t want any double married preachers around here because Doctor So And So said so. And, by the way, divorced man where is the tithing dough bro?”** We do not know why we hold to the King James Bible or why we detest “double married” preachers. We just do. We just do what we are told to do.

On this issue of marriage, divorce, remarriage, and standards for church office, the preachers are teaching and preaching the commandments and doctrines of men. The pastors are beating the bleating divorced sheep on the anvil of Roman Catholic theology. The teachers are fleecing the bleating sheep through bleeding ears that have been scratched raw with false doctrine. If you will corrupt the Word of God doctrinally because you are too lazy to study this issue through, then you are no better than the heretic who corrupts the Word of God by taking away from or adding to the words of our Bibles. Whether you corrupt it in word, doctrinally, or in application you are equally culpable before God.

Many divorced men show much more of the grace of God in their ministries than many of the “once married” peacocks do. We know many pastors that will not allow a divorced man to teach or preach in “their” church. We also know many pastors and preachers that will break fellowship with a man who will allow a divorced man to preach in their pulpits. We also know preachers that will rant and rave about the wickedness of “double married” preachers, but they will go and preach in a church that allows divorced men to preach in their pulpit. There is a spirit of ungodly pride that lashes out from the heart of this issue and it is not coming from the divorced men. The following has been well said by Agur:

Proverbs 30:12-14<sup>12</sup>

There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness. <sup>13</sup> There is a generation, O how lofty are their eyes! and their eyelids are lifted up. <sup>14</sup> There is a generation, whose teeth are as swords, and their jaw teeth as

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knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men.

While many will not receive what we are about to say, we do believe that it is an accurate portrayal of the attitude of many preachers that would like us to believe that they are the squeaky clean, anointed ones. Here it is (I can hear the outrage already): The “Once Married Preacher” stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men *are*, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this *divorced man*. (The divorced man was here substituted for the publican. The principle is the same.). Some “once married” preachers cannot even pray that because they are extortioners, unjust, and adulterous, but thank God they are not “double married” divorced preachers even though they have broken their covenant with the wife of their youth. They are as PROUD AS A PEACOCK in all its glory. How many of you self righteous preachers out there have been guilty of allowing a man to stay in the ministry who is an adulterer and has been guilty of violating most of the standards in 1 Timothy 3 for church officers? Our churches are chock full of “once married” preachers and pastors that do not meet the standards of 1 Timothy 3. We could take the rest of the standards in 1 Timothy 3 and disqualify at least 90% of the pastors in Independent Baptist pulpits if we used the same pharisaical, blood thirsty tactics that the “husband of one wife in a lifetime” use. We see nothing of the grace of God in their tactics. It is a voracious cancer that is consuming what were good Bible believing churches. It is one of the major reasons our churches are dead and dying because we will not deal with the sins of our leaders. We will throw holy, divorced men out of our pulpits while we allow fornicators and perverts to devour the sheep that are set before them.

### **THE ISSUE FROM DOCTRINAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES**

We will now enter into a discussion of the issue before us from a historical perspective and use the King James Bible to interpret the issue doctrinally. As part of our discussion, we will talk about the practice of polygamy during the time New Testament churches were being formed. Then we will enter into a brief discussion on Jewish marriage customs as they could relate to the Sanhedrin and the apostle Paul. We will follow that by a discussion of what the Holy Ghost has recorded in the Scriptures concerning Paul and the discussion before us. Then we will get into an extended discussion on the standards for those who have been called and choose to serve as bishops and deacons in New Testament churches.

Many of those who enter into this fray do so without trying to interpret the Bible doctrinally in the context of its historical reference. This drives to the question as to what possible circumstances and problems a first century pastor might have had to deal with. One of those problems was the existence of polygamy in the Jewish culture. We dealt quite extensively with this issue in the section called “Multiple Wives” in the chapter in this book titled “A Scriptural Definition and Description of Marriage”. We will deal with it again here. We have read many commentaries that deny that polygamy was a problem in the Jewish culture during the formation of the New Testament church, but that is not true. We will document that shortly. The early New Testament church was made up of mostly Jewish converts for two very good reasons. One of those is rooted in the command from

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the Lord Jesus Christ to the twelve apostles when he stated in Matthew 10:5-6:

Matthew 10:5-6

<sup>5</sup> These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into any city of the Samaritans enter ye not: <sup>6</sup> But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Another reason that most of the converts to the early church were Jews is that commandment to go first to the house of Israel continued to be the pattern for the early disciples and the apostles, including Paul. Wherever Paul went, his first stop was always the synagogues of the Jews. Twenty-three different times the synagogues are mentioned in the book of Acts. For these reasons, it is no small wonder that most of the early churches were made up mostly of Jewish converts.

## POLYGAMY

With the Jewish converts came their Jewish customs and the Mosaic Law that had to be dealt with by the Holy Ghost in several of the Pauline Epistles including Romans, Galatians, 1 Timothy, Titus, and the book of Hebrews. The passages that we are concerned with here are 1 Timothy 1:4-7 and Titus 1:10-14 which we quote here:

1 Timothy 1:4-7

<sup>4</sup> Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: so do. <sup>5</sup> Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned: <sup>6</sup> From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling; <sup>7</sup> Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

Titus 1:10-14

<sup>10</sup> For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: <sup>11</sup> Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. <sup>12</sup> One of themselves, even a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians are always liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. <sup>13</sup> This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; <sup>14</sup> Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth.

Both of these passages state strongly that both Timothy and Titus were having trouble with their Jewish converts in the churches they were pastoring. In 1 Timothy chapter 1, the Holy Ghost rebukes those that take heed to fables and endless genealogies and those desiring to be teachers of the law. This is strictly in a Jewish context. In Titus chapter 1 the Holy Ghost rebukes those vain talkers especially those of the circumcision (Jews) and warns that church not to give heed to Jewish

## **THE MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE, AND “HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE” CONTROVERSY**

fables and commandments of men. This is strictly in a Jewish context. One further indication that these were churches dominated by Jewish converts is that when the Holy Ghost listed the standards required for bishops and deacons some of them mirrored the Jewish laws regulating membership in the Sanhedrin which we here quote:

There were ten basic qualifications for the eligibility of membership. Each member of the Sanhedrin must be a Hebrew, learned in the law, and possessing judicial experience at lower levels (there were minor Sanhedrins of twenty-three members which tried non-capital offenses in every town of 120 males or more). The member was required also to be learned in science, a linguist, modest, pious but strong and courageous, devoid of physical defects, a qualified tradesman, and, finally, he was required to be married and to be a father. [Liberty In The Balance, Russell and Colin Standish, Hartland Publishing, August 30, 1998]

The special qualifications for the office of Sanhedrist, mentioned in the Rabbinical writings, are such as remind of us of the directions of Paul to Timothy (1 Timothy 3:1-10). A member of the Sanhedrim must be wise, modest, God-fearing, truthful, not greedy of filthy lucre, given to hospitality, kindly, not a gambler, nor a usurer, nor one who traded in the produce of Sabbatical years, nor yet one who indulged in unlawful games (Sanh. iii. 3). They were called “Sekenim,” “elders”, “Memunim,” “rulers”, “Parnasin,” “feeders, overseers, shepherds of the flock”, and “Manhigei,” “guides”. They were under the presidency and supreme rule of an “Archisynagogos,” or “Rosh-ha-Cheneseth,” “head of the synagogue” (Yom. vii. 1; Sot. vii. 7), who sometimes seems to have even exercised sole authority. [From Alfred Edersheim’s work “Sketches Of Jewish Social Life”, Chapter 18, page 257 of the printed edition]

We should not appoint to a Sanhedrin a man of very old age or one who does not possess male physical attributes, for they possess the trait of cruelty, nor a man who is childless, so that the judges should be merciful. [Cited from: Halacha 3: Sanhedrin veba`Onashin haMesurin lahem, Mishneh Torah]

We are not careful to demand that a judge for a court of three possess all these qualities. He must, however, possess seven attributes: wisdom, humility, the fear of God, a loathing for money, a love for truth; he must be a person who is beloved by people at large, and must have a good reputation. [Cited from: Halacha 7: Sanhedrin veba`Onashin haMesurin lahem, Mishneh Torah]

Notice the parallels between these qualifications and the standards given in 1 Timothy 3. Not given to filthy lucre and given to hospitality are identical. Look also at the requirement to be married and a father which run parallel to being a “husband of one wife” and having their children in

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subjection. Someone who is “learned in the law” would be “apt to teach”. The Sanhedrin requirement to be modest walks hand in hand with First Timothy chapter three’s being sober. The Sanhedrin requirement to be kindly is a parallel to First Timothy chapter three’s charge to not be a brawler. The Sanhedrin requirement to be pious is equivalent to the requirement to be blameless in 1 Timothy 3. The Sanhedrin requirement to be wise is the product of not being a novice as listed in 1 Timothy chapter 3. So, why was the requirement to be “husband of one wife” included in 1 Timothy 3:2 by the Holy Ghost? Could it be that there were already problem in the churches pastored by Timothy and Titus with men who had multiple wives wanting to serve as bishops and deacons? As we have already said, We have read many commentaries that deny that polygamy was a problem in the Jewish culture during the formation of the New Testament church, but that just is not true. We have already quoted much of what follows in the previous chapter on Scriptural Marriage, but we again quote it here to refute the idea and the statements that polygamy was not a problem during the formation of the New Testament church. We quote from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia, the Works Of Flavius Josephus, and the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia. Here are the quotes:

Josephus and the Talmud.

That polygamy survived into the Christian era is, however, asserted by Josephus (“Ant.” xvii. 1, § 2); and he himself (“Vita,” § 75) seems to have had one wife in Palestine and another in Egypt (comp. Löw, “Gesammelte Schriften,” iii. 47). Such a practise is forbidden by a baraita in Yeb. 37a; and this prohibition is (with certain limitations) introduced into the Shulh.an ‘Aruk (Eben ha-‘Ezer, ii. 11). The Talmud certainly does not enact monogamy (see Bigamy); and as far as the Law is, concerned, Justin Martyr (“Dial. cum Tryph.” § 134) is not wrong in asserting that in his time (2d cent. C.E.) Jews were permitted to have four or five wives. (Cited from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia article on Monogamy: Internet Edition located at: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10949-monogamy> )

Nevertheless, having the advantage of precedent, it was long before polygamy fell into disuse in Hebrew society. Herod had nine wives at one time (Josephus, Ant, XVII, I, 2). Justin Martyr (Dial., 134, 141) reproaches Jews of his day with having “four or even five wives,” and for “marrying as many as they wish” (compare Talm). It was not definitely and formally forbidden among Jews until circa 1000 AD. It exists still among Jews in Moslem lands. [Cited from page 634 of the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia (ISBE) from the article “Marriage”; James Orr, General Editor]

He also allotted one of Aristobulus’s daughters to Antipater’s son, and Aristobulus’s other daughter to Herod, a son of his own, who was born to him by the high priest’s daughter; for it is the ancient practice among us to have many wives at the same time. [Josephus, Book 17, Chapter 1, Section 2 (14)]

Now Herod the king had at this time nine wives; one of them, Antipater’s mother,

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and another the high priest's daughter, by whom he had a son of his own name. He had also one who was his brother's daughter, and another his sister's daughter; which two had no children. [The Works Of Flavius Josephus, Book 17, chapter 1, section 3(19), page 452]

She also frequently reproached Herod's sister and wives with the ignobility of their descent; and that they were every one chosen by him for their beauty, but not for their family. Now those wives of his were not a few; it being of old permitted to the Jews to marry many wives, — and this king delighting in many; all whom hated Alexander, on account of Glaphyria's boasting and reproaches. [Josephus, War Of The Jews, Chapter 24, page 1351]

Now Herod the king had at this time nine wives; one of them, Antipater's mother, and another the high priest's daughter, by whom he had a son of his own name. He had also one who was his brother's daughter, and another his sister's daughter; which two had no children. [The Works Of Flavius Josephus, Book 17, chapter 1, section 3(19), page 452]

We would remind our readers that the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia and the Jewish historian Flavius Josephus are independent witnesses that have no stake in the subject before us. They were not Christians. That being the case, they do not have a New Testament agenda to promote that would put them on one side or the other of this argument. Flavius Josephus was born in 37 A. D. into a family of Jewish priests and was alive to witness the development of the New Testament church first hand though he was not a part of it. **From the resources just quoted, we would have to conclude that polygamy was being practiced by the Jews at the time 1 Timothy and Titus were written somewhere between 63-66 A. D and that it was a problem in the churches that Timothy and Titus pastored.** If you scream that “you are reading into the Scriptures that which is not there”, then you are being hypocritical because you read “divorce” into 1 Timothy 3:2 when it is not there. Your insertion of the word “divorce” in 1 Timothy 3:2 comes with a whole lot less plausible support than what we have provided here. At least we have proven from the secular historical record that polygamy was commonly practiced by the Jews both during and after the time when New Testament churches were being established. We have also proved from the Old Testament that polygamy was an accepted practice among the Jewish people. We have also proven that Epistles of 1 Timothy and Titus were written to churches that had a problem with Judaizers. Some would complain, “but what about those countries where polygamy is practiced and is allowed under the laws of the land and the men already have multiple wives when they get saved”. We already have scriptural precedent for that when Ezra forced the priests to put away their unscriptural wives requiring them to provide the necessary support for those that had been put away. We will deal with the phrase “the husband of one wife” in a lot more detail later. In closing this section on polygamy, our readers should know that all but two of the following believed that 1 Timothy 3:2 was to be interpreted of polygamy and had

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no reference to divorce: Harry Ironside, M.R. Dehaan, J Vernon McGee, John R. Rice, Dwight L. Moody, C. I. Scofield, Charles Hodge, Theodoret, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Daniel Whedon, Charles Spurgeon, John Trapp, A. T. Robertson, Frederick B. Meyer, Matthew Poole, Jerome, W. B. Godby, Arno C. Gaebelien, John Gill (polygamy and unscriptural divorce), Thomas Coke (polygamy and causeless divorce), Adam Clarke, Joseph Benson, John Calvin, and Albert Barnes.

### THE MARITAL STATUS OF THE APOSTLE PAUL

Was Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ qualified to pastor churches? How should, and how does, Paul's marital status affect the interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:2? While we do not believe the marital status of Paul makes one bit of difference as to how 1 Timothy 3:2 **should** be interpreted, we realize that because of the way many fundamentalists and Baptists interpret the phrase "husband of one wife" from 1 Timothy 3:2 that it is an issue that must be dealt with if for no other reason than building a foundation to destroy the heresy that says that a divorced man is permanently disqualified from entering the ministry.

Reading "divorced" and "double married" into 1 Timothy 3:2 is the seed bed of much endless speculation and confusion in the interpretation of the standards for church office. Here, we will do some "speculation". If the same hermeneutical standard that is applied to the interpretation of the phrase "husband of one wife" by those who advocate "one living wife for one lifetime" is applied to the rest of the standards listed in 1 Timothy 3, then we have ourselves a huge doctrinal mess that butchers the English language leaving no one qualified for church office. Not only does it butcher the English language, it breaks the rules of English grammar in an in your face manner. If many so-called conservative commentators and preachers would just interpret 1 Timothy 3:2 in the normal, literal, grammatical sense, we would not have all the hurt and confusion caused by their breaking every hermeneutical standard for interpreting the English Bible. But the "once married" stallions with their blinders on can only see the "once married" preachers that are dead ahead. The rest of the standards in the passage are but hurdles they must jump to get past those "double married" preachers. They cannot interpret properly in context because their doctrinal blinders will not let them see the plain English that is on all sides of them. "Must be" is a present tense phrase. "Must be" is a present tense phrase. For the third time, "must be" is a present tense phrase. Furthermore, all of the standards for church service in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are given in the present tense. In other words they are looking at present conduct: at the present qualifications for the man being considered for the office of bishop or deacon. For you Greek scholars, you will smother to death if your breath of life is one of the Greek words for divorce (apostasion and apoluo) because they are found no where in the context of 1 Timothy 3:2 or Titus 1. Do you think that the Holy Ghost did not know what the Greek word for divorce was? He used them in Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:7, and Mark 10:4. If the Greek words for divorce were in 1 Timothy 3:2 do you not think the King James translators would have supplied it as they did in Matthew 5:31-32, Matthew 19:7, and Mark 10:4.

What about the phrase "must be...husband of one wife" used in 1 Timothy 3:2? Remember, we are "speculating" here just as those who speculate that Paul meant divorced in this passage. The big difference is that our "speculation" has much support from the context, both doctrinal and historical as we will prove in the following pages. If we assume that Paul was a virgin, a widower,

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or divorced, then what the Holy Ghost said about “the husband of one wife” in 1 Timothy 3:2 does not make sense if we apply it in an absolute sense to Paul since Paul had to be put into a position where he temporarily assumed the role of a pastor in the churches he established on the mission field. If being the husband of one wife was a “must be” qualification for a church leader, then Paul was not “qualified” to pastor the churches he started on the mission field. If your doctrine interprets “husband of one wife” as “not ever having been divorced”, then if Paul was divorced, then he was not qualified to temporarily assume the position of pastor in the churches he established on the mission field. The Scriptures do not specifically state that Paul was not a widower or was not divorced. However, the Bible does plainly state that Paul was unmarried. That the term “unmarried” applies to both virgins and the divorced is proven in 1 Corinthians 7:11 which reads:

1 Corinthians 7:11

<sup>11</sup> But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.

So, was Paul’s state of being unmarried that of being widowed, or divorced, or virgin. We believe that Paul was married at one time. Are we to assume that since the only apostle who was identified as having a wife was Peter that none of the others were married? That is highly unlikely since it was an affront and even unlawful in most instances for Jewish men not to be married. That some of the other apostles were married in addition to Peter is indicated in 1 Corinthians 9:5 which states:

1 Corinthians 9:5

<sup>5</sup> Have we not power to lead about a sister, **a wife, as well as other apostles,** and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?

Note that the word “apostles” is plural. The point being that though there were other apostles who were married, their marital status is not specifically identified in the Scriptures. This passage of Scripture also puts the Roman Catholic doctrine of celibacy back into the theological crypt that it came slithering forth from. There is also proof from Matthew 19:27-29 that some of the apostles had forsaken their wives and yet the continued in the ministry. These verses state:

Matthew 19:27-29

<sup>27</sup> Then answered Peter and said unto him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed thee; what shall we have therefore? <sup>28</sup> And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. <sup>29</sup> And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, **or wife,** or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.



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Note that the Holy Ghost is quoting the Lord Jesus Christ as having said that those who had forsaken their wives for his name sake would receive an hundredfold and eternal life. Yet all the apostles continued in the ministry until well after the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ. These are they that made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Now what of the possible marital status of the apostle Paul. Let's look at some documents to ascertain whether Paul could have been married. From the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia we read:

The first positive commandment of the Bible, according to rabbinic interpretation (Maimonides, "Minyan ha-Miz.wot," 212), is that concerning the propagation of the human species (Gen. I. 28). It is thus considered the duty of every Israelite to marry as early in life as possible. Eighteen years is the age set by the Rabbis (Ab. v. 24); and any one remaining unmarried after his twentieth year is said to be cursed by God Himself (K.id. 29b). Some urge that children should marry as soon as they reach the age of puberty, i.e., the fourteenth year (Sanh. 76b); and R. H.isda attributed his mental superiority to the fact that he was married when he was but sixteen years old (K.id. l.c.). It was, however, strictly forbidden for parents to give their children in marriage before they had reached the age of puberty (Sanh. 76b). **A man who, without any reason, refused to marry after he had passed his twentieth year was frequently compelled to do so by the court.** To be occupied with the study of the Torah was regarded as a plausible reason for delaying marriage; but only in very rare instances was a man permitted to remain in celibacy all his life (Yeb. 63b; Maimonides, "Yad," Ishut, xv. 2, 3; Shulh.an 'Aruk, Eben ha-'Ezer, 1, 1-4; see Celibacy)...

(Cited from the 1906 Jewish Encyclopedia article "Marriage Laws" located at <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10435-marriage-laws> )

We should not appoint to a Sanhedrin a man of very old age or one who does not possess male physical attributes, for they possess the trait of cruelty, **nor a man who is childless**, so that the judges should be merciful. [Cited from: Halacha 3: Sanhedrin veba`Onashin haMesurin lahem, Mishneh Torah]

There were ten basic qualifications for the eligibility of membership. Each member of the Sanhedrin must be a Hebrew, learned in the law, and possessing judicial experience at lower levels (there were minor Sanhedrins of twenty-three members which tried non-capital offenses in every town of 120 males or more). The member was required also to be learned in science, a linguist, modest, pious but strong and courageous, devoid of physical defects, a qualified tradesman, and, finally, he was required to be married and to be a father. [Liberty In The Balance, Russell and Colin Standish, Hartland Publishing, August 30, 1998]

If Paul was never married, he was in a very difficult position in a Jewish culture that would

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force a man to get married by court order if he had not married before the age of 20. It must also be noted that the Talmud specifically stated: “Any Jew who has not a wife is no man” [Babylonian Talmud, Yebamoth 63a]. There is also a very strong possibility that Paul was a member of the Sanhedrin because he **consented** unto the stoning death of Stephen (Acts 7:58-8:1). Only the Sanhedrin could authorize the death penalty for religious offenses; in this case, the false accusation of blasphemy. We have already proven that members of the Sanhedrin had to be married. Many **ASSUME** that Paul was never married because he says in 1 Corinthians 7:8 that he is unmarried. We have already proven in the chapter “Adultery, Fornication, Desertion, Divorce And Remarriage” that the term unmarried applies to widows/widowers, virgins, and those who are divorced. It is no more a stretch for us to believe that Paul was once married, but now unmarried through divorce or death, than it is for you to believe that he was never married because he is unmarried. It could well be that Paul was one of the men that was made a eunuch for the kingdom of heaven’s sake (Matthew 19:12) or one of those who had forsaken their wives for the sake of the name of the Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 19:29). In closing this topic, we go back to the statement that we introduced this topic with. How should, and how does, Paul’s marital status affect the interpretation of 1 Timothy 3:2? We do not believe the marital status of Paul makes one bit of difference as to how 1 Timothy 3:2 **should** be interpreted, but it must be dealt with because of the way some preachers and pastors interpret the phrase “husband of one wife”. Furthermore, if we take the interpretation by some preachers and pastors of the phrase “husband of one wife” to its logical conclusion, then Paul could not be a missionary or pastor because he was not the husband of one wife, the Lord Jesus Christ could not be the pastor of His church because He was not the husband of one wife, and neither could God of the Old Testament qualify because He was divorced and unmarried and therefore not the husband of one wife. Now let’s take a look at the scriptural standards for church service.

### **STANDARDS FOR BISHOPS AND DEACONS**

In 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13, 1 Timothy 5:17-18, Hebrews 13:7, and Hebrews 13:17, we have God’s charge to the congregations concerning those he has set in positions of responsibility and authority in the churches. The Holy Ghost tells us:

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

<sup>12</sup> And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; <sup>13</sup> And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves.

1 Timothy 5:17-18

<sup>17</sup> Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine. <sup>18</sup> For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his reward.

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Hebrews 13:7

7 Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of *their* conversation.

Hebrews 13:17

17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that *is* unprofitable for you.

It is very important that a church latch onto the passages of Scripture just quoted if they expect God to bless them and use them for the glory of God. We are to esteem and love those that God has put over us in the Lord. In context, the phrase “double honour” means that we are to take the best possible financial care of the pastors that labour in the word and doctrine. A pastor that will not labour in the word and doctrine is not worthy of the time of day. We are to follow, obey, and submit to those that God has given the rule over us as long as they are in obedience to the Scriptures. That does not mean that we are to blindly follow a man. We are to be a Berean when it comes to doctrine. It is no shepherd who will abuse the sheep. We have already discussed Acts 6:1-7 in the context of standards for deacons. In 1 Peter 5:1-4, 1 Timothy 3:1-13, and Titus we have God’s charge to those he places in the offices of elder, bishop and deacon. In these passages the Holy Ghost says:

1 Peter 5:1-4

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over *God’s* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

1 Timothy 3:1-13

1 This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. 2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; 3 Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; 4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; 5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) 6 Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. 7 Moreover he must have a good report of them which are without; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. 8 Likewise *must* the deacons *be* grave, not doubletongued, not given to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre; 9 Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience. 10 And let these also first be proved; then let them use the office of a deacon, being *found* blameless. 11 Even so *must their*

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wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things. 12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. 13 For they that have used the office of a deacon well purchase to themselves a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

Titus 1:5-16

5 For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: 6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. 7 For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; 8 But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; 9 Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. 10 For there are many unruly and vain talkers and deceivers, specially they of the circumcision: 11 Whose mouths must be stopped, who subvert whole houses, teaching things which they ought not, for filthy lucre's sake. 12 One of themselves, *even* a prophet of their own, said, The Cretians *are* alway liars, evil beasts, slow bellies. 13 This witness is true. Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith; 14 Not giving heed to Jewish fables, and commandments of men, that turn from the truth. 15 Unto the pure all things *are* pure: but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving *is* nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled. 16 They profess that they know God; but in works they deny *him*, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.

First Peter 5:1-4 is one of the most ignored passages in Independent Baptist churches. We have too many dictators in Independent Baptist churches who abuse the flocks that God has given them to shepherd. They demand that their “authority” is not to be challenged in any way. They rule as absolute despots. The charge to the pastor is not to lord his position and scriptural authority over the congregation that he pastors. We are to respect the office, but if you as the pastor have to constantly demand respect then you are already in trouble because you have not earned the congregation's respect. We are told: “Touch not God's anointed”. Yeh, that is especially true if it applies to him if he is stealing from the church or a whoring around on his wife. Some pastors are more like unto the fallen anointed cherub. We have already stated that pastors are to be followed, to be obeyed, and to be submitted to. If you as a pastor have to constantly badger a congregation, then one or both of you is not yielded to the Holy Ghost.

One of the most neglected passages of scripture in fundamentalist and Baptist churches is the front end and the last half of 1 Timothy 3:2 and also verses 3-7 of the same chapter. It is amazing to us that God did not take husband of one wife out and make it a separate book! It is also amazing that many Baptist churches can maintain such high and holy standards for their pastors and preachers while the green fruits of their ministry rot in the pews and live like the Devil himself. They will put

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an innocent divorced man out of the ministry while they allow a whore and a whoremonger to continue in full fellowship with the “church”. They will allow a child molester, an adulterer, a thief, a liar, a heretic, an apostate, and so forth to continue in the pulpit and the pastorate. Most pastors today would choke to death on their own hypocrisy if they were required to exercise church discipline. How about you pastor? What I am talking about here is the toleration of the open sin of men and women sitting in the pews and the pastors who lead them. God is no respecter of persons when it comes to the judgment of sin. Judgment will start at the house of God and that does not exclude the congregation. If you as a congregation refuse to exercise righteous discipline over a pastor who is in open sin, you are asking God to kill your church. Most Independent Baptist churches will not deal with the sins of their pastors because they have been threatened and beaten with the fully loaded “touch not God’s anointed” pistol. Not only do many Independent Baptist pastors get blind loyalty, they demand it. It is a malignant cancer. If you as a pastor go a whoring around on your wife, then you have also gone a whoring around on the Bride Of Christ. If you as a pastor refuse to exercise righteous judgment in the house of God, you will lose the anointing of the Holy Ghost of God. Your preaching will have no power in it. You may as well take a knife to the congregation. The pastor’s charge is to feed and edify the sheep and not to go howling and ravaging after the divorced sheep seeking who he may devour. This is an issue that is also very unscripturally hurtful to the wives of men who have been divorced. An unscriptural attack upon her husband is an attack upon her also.

Most pastors in the pulpits of Independent Baptist churches cannot preach all the qualifications of 1 Timothy chapter 3 with any authority and under the anointing of the Holy Ghost of God because they are grossly guilty of not meeting many of the standards themselves. Many of them use their pulpits to be strikers of divorced people. Using the same corrupt hermeneutics that the “once married” preachers and pastors use, we can throw out the clause “husband of one wife” and take the rest of the qualifications for bishops (pastors) and deacons in 1 Timothy chapter 3 and disqualify at least 90% of the men occupying pulpits in fundamentalist churches. Soon, we will do just that by using an extended parody in the pages of this chapter. What this will prove is that the “once married” preachers and pastors already have an unscriptural and theologically corrupt hermeneutic that is filtered through their own prejudices and self-righteousness. We Independent Baptists are quick to publicly expose the “sin” of divorced men while we allow the vilest of undivorced men, many of them unsaved, to occupy our pulpits and pastorates. The three biggest qualifications we miss when considering whether to put a man into a pastor’s position or a deacon’s position, or to keep them there, is whether he is of honest report AND full of faith AND full of the Holy Ghost (You do remember that Acts 6:1-7 is still in the Bible, don’t you?). By the way, these were the only three scriptural standards for the first seven deacons. Now let’s take a look at 1 Timothy 3.

Do you believe that the so-called qualifications for church office are absolute standards or are they intended to be a general standard by which the overall present character and conduct of a man may be judged to determine his suitability to serve in the offices of bishop and deacon? Sadly, in application, most “once married” preachers have but one absolute “qualification” in 1 Timothy 3 and that is “the husband of one wife”. Most “once married” preachers interpret “husband of one wife” as meaning a divorced man is permanently disqualified from the ministry. They consistently

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read divorce into this passage. While they preach absolute qualifications for the remainder of 1 Timothy 3, you will not catch them living by them. But, if you let a divorced man step into a pulpit, it is like the abomination of desolation has appeared in the congregation. When is the last time you heard some preacher say: You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher if you do not pay your bills; or, You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher because you cannot teach; or, You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher because your children are out of control; or, You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher because you are a lazy bum (striker); or, You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher because you are too focused on money; or, You are not qualified to be a pastor or preacher because you have been guilty of fornication and adultery. If your hermeneutic is going to be consistent in interpreting this passage, then why isn't someone who will not pay their bills permanently disqualified; or, why is someone who commits adultery and fornication not permanently disqualified. To be consistent, let's extend your ludicrous hermeneutic for "husband of one wife" to the rest of this passage.

By your reasoning, if there ever was a time when you were not blameless then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were not vigilant, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were not patient, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were not in control of your children, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were greedy of filthy lucre, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were not apt to teach, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you were covetous, then you are permanently disqualified. If there ever was a time when you committed adultery or fornication, then you are permanently disqualified and so forth. All of us know how ridiculous all this sounds, but that is exactly where your method of interpretation leads us. Contending for absolute qualifications leads us into yet another trap especially in dealing with the "husband of one wife". If a man must be the husband of one wife, then no man who is single either because he has never been married or because his wife has died is qualified for the ministry. If "the husband of one wife" qualification applies to missionaries, preachers, and evangelists then neither Paul or those that he recommended staying unmarried would ever be qualified for the ministry. Then, what of Timothy and Titus who were obviously at least church planters and more likely pastors of churches. There is no mention of either of them being married. If a husband and wife cannot have children, then the husband cannot have his children in subjection to him. A lot of the problem before us is rooted in the uncanny ability of many pastors and preachers to read the word divorced into 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6.

The question arises: "Is there a Greek word used for divorce?". The answer is of course because the Lord Jesus Christ Himself used it in Matthew 5:31, Matthew 19:7, and Mark 10:4. If the Holy Ghost intended that husband of one wife in 1 Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 be interpreted of divorce, then why did He not use the Greek word for divorce which is "*apostasion*" in the context. Since every standard for bishops and deacons in these passages is in the present tense, then we must assume, that in the context, the Holy Ghost is interested in the present conduct of the individual under consideration to become or continue to be a bishop or deacon. That has to be the case because if it were not then NO man would ever be qualified to be a bishop or deacon. The problem with

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making divorce the only sin that permanently disqualifies a man from the ministry is that it makes divorce an unforgivable sin only in the context of a man's ministry. It makes the Church and God a respecter of persons. In context, the most natural sense of the phrase "husband of one wife" is having one wife, but not more than one. That is the most logical interpretation when it is read and interpreted literally. There is no mention of the word "divorced" or "widower" in the context of 1 Timothy 3. Nor can the words "divorced" or "widower" be implied from the context when it is read in its most natural sense. The words come from speculating: "Well did he mean this, or did he mean that". The answer to that question is, no, the Holy Ghost meant exactly what He said. For the words "divorced" and "widower" to appear there they have to be read into it through the prism of somebody's false doctrine. Some folks try to add the word living to 1 Timothy 3:2 to make it read "HUSBAND OF ONE LIVING WIFE". They do this because they know the implications of their doctrine for a widower. Their doctrine disqualifies a widower from the ministry. We do not for a minute believe that a widower is disqualified from being in the ministry. Neither do we believe that a divorced man is permanently disqualified from being in the ministry. Many, in a vain attempt to disqualify a divorced man, read "husband of one wife" as "having had only one wife". That is a gross misinterpretation also because it changes the Bible's present tense "must be...the husband of one wife" to the man pleasing, past tense "having had only one wife".

Furthermore, you will not find the phrases "double married", "widower", or "divorced" anywhere in either First and Second Timothy or in Titus. For you to put those words into those Scriptures, you have to read them into it because of your doctrinal bias. If you do not believe it, ask the average unsaved, Biblically illiterate person on the street what is meant by the phrase "husband of one wife" and it is doubtful they will ever say it means "the husband of one living wife" or "a man that has never been divorced". What they will tell you is that it means "a man does not have more than one wife". What we are saying is that they will **literally** assume that it means not having more than one wife at the present time. If you took the average Biblically, literate Christian who had never been taught the doctrines of "double married preachers" and "no divorced preachers" and asked them what "husband of one wife" means to them, they would tell you that it means that a husband does not currently have two or more wives or that he must be married to serve as a bishop or deacon. The word "divorce" would not occur to most folks without having been read into the passages we are discussing. You could try taking your rules for grammar to your favorite English teacher and see how fast they would run you out of their class.

We have heard the argument time and again that "husband of one wife" disqualifies a divorced man because he has set a bad example to the flock when it comes to the home. What that argument does is set up divorce as a special class of unforgivable sin. What about the other standards in the list?? For those who say "but the divorce cannot be repented of or restored", what about the guy who has murdered a man or a woman, or beat up his wife, or committed adultery, or has molested a child, or has raped a woman, or being guilty of sodomy, or filed a bankruptcy, or been guilty of public drunkenness. You cannot unmurder someone (the apostle Paul was a murderer), or unbeat up a wife, or uncommit adultery, or unmolest a child, or unrape someone, or unsodomize someone, or unfile a bankruptcy, or undo a conviction for public drunkenness. If a man cannot be an effective marriage counsellor because he has had a divorce, can he be an effective financial counsellor if he has filed a bankruptcy? If a man cannot be an effective marriage counsellor because

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he has had a divorce, then can he be an effective marriage counsellor when he is an unrepentant, undivorced adulterer? Facts are stubborn things. We could go on and on, but we have made our point.

Do you believe the timing of a man’s salvation has any effect on whether he is qualified for the offices of bishop or deacon? Do you believe that if a man gets a divorce after he is saved, that he is permanently disqualified from any position of leadership in the church including bishop and deacon? Do you believe that a man who was divorced “before” he was saved is qualified for positions of church leadership including bishop and deacon? Do you believe you have the discernment to determine whether anyone is/was saved at a particular point in time? We do not believe that the timing of a divorce, saved or unsaved, has any effect on the standards in 1 Timothy 3. Divorce is not the issue in 1 Timothy 3. Furthermore, if you try to hold an unsaved man’s past against him you run into the wall set up by the Holy Ghost in 1 Corinthians 6:6-11 where He said:

1 Corinthians 6:9-11

<sup>9</sup> Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, <sup>10</sup> Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. <sup>11</sup> **And such were some of you:** but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.

The key here is **such were some of you.** If you will not let a divorced man minister in all ministries of the church, whether his divorce took place before or after he was saved, then what you are saying is that the blood of Jesus cannot cleanse a man from the potential sins of divorce. The reason some of you will allow a divorced man to be a preacher or pastor if his divorce took place prior to his salvation is that the Holy Ghost has convicted you of your false doctrine. You also put yourself in a very dangerous position of determining when a man was saved. There is no way you can make that decision because you are not the Holy Ghost. When you will not let any divorced man into the ministry you promote the Devil’s lie that all parties to a divorce are guilty of sin. When you will not let a divorced man into the ministry you are making divorce the unforgivable sin. When you will not let divorced men into the ministry then you are saying that you would not let God minister in your churches because he has been divorced! What complicates the matter before us even more is that most “once married” preachers will not accept the scriptural fact that a divorce scripturally ends a marriage. That is our next topic.

Do you believe that divorce ends a marriage in the eyes of God so that a former spouse is no longer scripturally a spouse in any sense of the word? Your answer to that question will reveal your prejudices. Another prejudice that enters into interpreting the phrase “husband of one wife” is the stubborn insistence by many that divorce does not end a marriage. According to this false doctrine, even if you have been divorced from someone, you will always be married to them in the eyes of God. The doctrine also states that if you divorce and remarry you are living in perpetual adultery



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because you cannot divorce anyone for any reason. We dealt with the issue of perpetual adultery in the chapter on “Adultery, Fornication, Desertion, Divorce And Remarriage”. Let us allow the Lord Jesus Christ to interpret whether a divorced person is any longer a husband or wife to the person from whom they are divorced. The Lord Jesus Christ in dealing with the woman at the well had this to say in John 4:16-18:

John 4:16-18

<sup>16</sup>Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither. <sup>17</sup>The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband: <sup>18</sup>For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

Here we will repeat our discussion on this issue from the chapter on “Adultery, Fornication, Desertion, Divorce and Remarriage”. According to the Lord Jesus Christ, divorce does end a marriage. Why did the Lord Jesus Christ say to the woman at the well in John 4: “thou HAST HAD five husbands”. What was her sin? She was obviously having sex with a man who was not her husband because he was married to another woman! She was guilty of fornication and adultery and he was guilty of adultery and fornication. Also, the clear implication of this passage is that she has been divorced five times. Why would the Lord hold it against her that she had been married five times, if those men had simply died? The Lord Jesus Christ showed us that she was a sexually promiscuous woman, living with a man who was not her husband. Notice that he does not say that she is married to all five of those men. He says that she “hast had” (past-tense) five husbands. She is no longer married to those men. Therefore, it is inaccurate to speak of a divorced person as having multiple living spouses because of the divorces. If her previous divorces had not dissolved those previous marriages, the Lord Jesus Christ would have said that “thou hast (present tense) five husbands”. So much for those preachers, pastors, and teachers that state that a divorced man has more than one wife if he remarries. That whole theory is blown out of the water with this one passage of Scripture! Do you actually think the Lord Jesus Christ would change his wording if it was a man at the well who “hast had” five wives? Based upon what the Lord Jesus Christ said here, you cannot say that a lawfully divorced man or woman who is married now has more than one husband or wife. When a person is divorced from a spouse, that person is no longer their spouse in any sense of the word. Otherwise, the Lord Jesus Christ would have used the present tense to indicate that the five men were still her husbands. Divorce unequivocally and permanently ends a marriage. We have stated that all the standards for bishops and deacons are in the present tense. What does that mean?

If we take all the standards and look at them, we would have to say that all men have been guilty of not meeting at least one of them in their past before they were saved. In fact, most men are guilty of not having met many of these standards. Most saved men are guilty of not meeting all the standards at least some of the time even in the present tense. The passage is not to be interpreted as if the candidate for bishop or deacon must HAVE ALWAYS been blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, hospitable, in control of his house and his children, and patient. Neither is the passage to be interpreted in the sense that a man has never been guilty of being a drunk, a striker, greedy of filthy lucre, a brawler, or covetous. What we are interested in is, what

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is the man’s proven general conduct and character today. No one meets all the standards all the time. There are a lot of the pastors in our Baptist pulpits that are not apt to teach and the proof of it is in their interpretation of this passage.

The standards given for elders, bishops, and deacons in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1 are NOT absolute standards because if they are, they become a farce when we try to apply them. Using them as absolute standards would result in no one ever being qualified for the offices of bishop elder, or deacon. Yet, that is the way the phrase “husband of one wife” is used to the exclusion of EVERY other standard in this passage. We have already proven that if you try to interpret every standard in the present tense but then interpret “husband of one wife” in the past tense, you create an interpretive mess. All of the standards address the **present conduct** of an individual. The phrase “must be” is the key to interpreting this passage. It is an English verb form that is strictly in the present tense. It cannot be read “must have been” because that would be in the past tense. Yet, that is exactly the way it is interpreted by those “once married” preachers that want to hold a man’s divorce against him. In application, they do not believe God ever forgives a man of a divorce even if he was innocent. They will forgive a reprehensible, fornicating, whoremongering, adulterer who is guilty of multiple acts of fornication with several different women and either leave him in the pulpit with no church discipline being exercised or immediately restore him to the ministry after a few crocodile tears and then turn right around and throw a divorced man out of the ministry whose obviously devil possessed wife and Satan conspired to destroy his ministry. Then Satan recruits some fundamentalist “once married” peacocks to rubber stamp the Devil’s Satanic destruction of a really good man of God and the ministry God has called him into. What sheer and utterly wicked hypocrisy all this is. **Which leads us to the conclusion that all manner of sin shall be forgiven a man except the sin of divorce and blasphemy of the Holy Ghost.** The phrase “husband of one wife” should be interpreted as follows: “If a man is married, then he can have but one wife at a time”. The phrase “husband of one wife” cuts off polygamists from serving in the ministry: nothing more, nothing less. We have also heard the phrase “husband of one wife” interpreted of so-called serial polygamy. That interpretation denies that divorce ends a marriage. In the eyes of God, when a man or woman commits adultery they have broken the marital bond with (divorced) their mate. That is why God said to kill adulterers and adulteresses in the Old Testament under the law (That was the divorce). Do you think for a minute that a priest was kicked out of the priesthood if his wife left him, or if he was divorced? The following quote is from an email inquiry that we sent out to a rabbi:

A divorced and remarried priest can serve – the only restriction we find is that he may not marry a divorcee. A priest does not have to be married except for the High Priest on the Yom Kippur service. This is derived from Leviticus 16:6: "He shall atone for himself and his home" - where 'home' implies he has a family (see Mishna Yoma 1;1). They also could have multiple wives since this is forbidden only rabbinically. Ezekiel 44 contains more of the basic laws of priests - prophetically described in the Third Temple, but Leviticus 21 is the main source. [From Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld [aishrabbi@aish.edu](mailto:aishrabbi@aish.edu) ]

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If the priest's wife committed adultery, the problem was resolved in a pile of stones with her at the bottom of it. We have heard of cases where women have actually threatened to destroy their husband's ministry by divorcing them. Furthermore, how many times have you heard of a man's ministry being destroyed at the hands of some "once married" fundamentalists because his wife committed adultery and left him. Yet, these fundamentalist hypocrites will allow a fornicating, whoremongering (whore hopping if you prefer) adulterous preacher to continue in the ministry while kicking an innocent divorced man out of the ministry. We are sending some very, very wrong signals to the lost and to young Christians from our fundamentalist and Independent Baptist churches when we will not put a fornicating adulterer out of our pulpits, but we will put an innocent divorced man out of our pulpits. We are telling the world that we are incapable of exercising righteous and just judgment. Who do you think the young Christian will think is guilty of sin when comparing a proven fornicating, adulterous preacher with an innocent divorced man who was deserted by his adulterous wife?? You do believe that a divorced man can be innocent don't you? Or, are you one of the promoters of the false doctrine that states that all parties to a divorce are always guilty of sin? **When an individual has scriptural grounds for divorce, they are not guilty of sin in the divorce action.** You may think that the issue before us is not as serious as we make it out to be, but lets take a look at some shocking statistics from seven years ago (this is 2014) written by Richard J. Krejcir:

Here is research that we distilled from Barna, Focus on the Family, and Fuller Seminary, all of which backed up our findings, and additional information from reviewing others' research: Almost forty percent polled said they have had an extra-marital affair since beginning their ministry. ["Statistics on Pastors, © 2007 (research from 1989 to 2006) R. J. Krejcir Ph.D. Francis A. Schaeffer Institute of Church Leadership Development; cited from <http://www.intothyword.org/apps/articles/?articleid=36562>]

Did you catch that? A whopping forty percent admitted to extra-marital sexual affairs! Note that these men were still in the ministry when the research was conducted. What that indicates to us is that most churches in America refuse to deal with the issue of pastoral adultery because if they dealt with it scripturally, many of these sexually promiscuous, wicked, sinister ministers would not be in our pulpits. What about some specific cases from some very high profile Independent Baptist Churches?

It is okay for the pastor that is an adulterer and fornicator to go a whoring around on his wife just so he remains undivorced. Touched not God's anointed no matter how wickedly he behaves. Many pastors and preachers use "touch not God's anointed" to hide the vilest of sins. Some cases in point include the unholy trinity from First Baptist Hammond, Indiana, namely Joe Combs, Jack Hyles, and Jack Schaap. To that we can add Bob Grey of the then unholy Trinity Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida who was guilty of molesting children and yet remained in the ministry with the knowledge of some of his church leaders. But at least these four men were not divorced. God forbid that they should be divorced! The consequence of tolerating such conduct is that we have lost the anointing of the Holy Ghost of God in most of our Independent Baptist churches. This is what happens when so-called "men of God" will not rebuke the sin of man's anointed (wrongfully called

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God’s anointed), but will instead let them continue in their sin bringing shame and reproach upon the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and his Church. What a bane to the Independent Baptist movement! Many churches will put a man out of the ministry who divorces through no fault of his own, but they will not put a fornicating pastor, preacher, or deacon out of their pulpits or their churches. Many churches will not put an adulterer, adulteress, fornicator, or sodomite out from the membership of their church, but they go into a mad rush to get rid of that wicked and ungodly divorced man whose only sin was to be married to a woman who turned into an adulteress and a whore. Many fornicating “once married” preachers wickedly think they are still qualified to preach and pastor because they have not been given divorce papers or do not possess a second marriage license. We have news for you boys. You are a whole lot less qualified to be in the ministry than that innocent divorced man whose adulterous wife divorced him.

Let me state this unequivocally, if you have ever had any kind of sexual relationship with a woman other than the woman you are married to now, you are guilty of being at least “double married” in God’s eyes under both the Old Testament law and under New Testament Scriptures. What that means is this. If you had sex with any woman other than the woman you are married to now, and you preach against “double married” preachers and pastors, then **YOU** have permanently disqualified yourself from the ministry out of your own mouth. The Holy Ghost plainly teaches in 1 Corinthians 6:16 that if you join your body to an harlot, then you and the harlot become one flesh. The “one flesh” statement is God’s requirement from Genesis 2:24 for a man and a woman to become husband and wife. The whole idea of a sexual relationship with an harlot constituting a marriage is also addressed by Josephus when he said:

And further, no one ought to marry a harlot, whose matrimonial oblations, arising from the prostitution of her body, God will not receive; for by these means the dispositions of the children will be liberal and virtuous; I mean, when they are not born of base parents, and of the lustful conjunction of such as marry women that are not free. [Josephus, Book 4, Chapter 8, Section 23 (245) page 119]

That was the whole idea that the Holy Ghost was presenting in 1 Corinthians 6:16 when Paul said that if you join yourself to an harlot you have married her (became one flesh). There is no ceremony, no marriage license, no priest, or no pastor there. None is required in the eyes of God or the eyes of the Scriptures. Nor was there a justice of the peace or a magistrate in 1 Corinthians 6:16. Neither is any required in the eyes of God or in the eyes of the Scriptures. Read it for yourself. You will not find a scriptural mandate or commandment in either Testament that requires a marriage ceremony in order for a couple to be married in the eyes of God. Again, the reason that the interpretation that becoming one flesh constitutes a marriage does not sit well with a lot of our preachers and pastors is because many of them are guilty of adultery and fornication. If they are guilty of adultery and fornication, then they are guilty of becoming one flesh with multiple women thereby making themselves husbands of multiple wives. If they are husbands of multiple wives, then they are disqualified from the ministry by their own preaching and teaching of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. It

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never ceases to amaze us how we can leave an adulterer, child molester, and a fornicator in the pulpit and permanently disqualify a man who has had a divorce.

A woman is guilty of being a whore and a harlot when she commits her first act of fornication and/or adultery. A man is guilty of being a whoremonger when he commits his first act of fornication and/or adultery. What that means is that if you come together sexually with multiple partners, then you have had, or do have, multiple (living) spouses. Many pastors scream against acts of fornication being called marriages because they are guilty of fornication and/or adultery after their marriages. The act of adultery also constitutes an act of fornication. If the sexual act(s) constitute a marriage (and it does), then they are guilty of having multiple wives which by their own twisted interpretation and application would permanently disqualify them from the ministry. Again, the Holy Ghost plainly states in 1 Corinthians 6:16 that when a man joins himself unto an harlot that they become one flesh. That is the definition of a scriptural marriage. Some of the men we are talking about here were guilty of fornication before they were saved and some of them were guilty of fornication after they were saved. Many were guilty of both. God does not give a different set of qualifications for the ministry based upon whether a man was saved or lost. When a mere man tries to make that judgment, then they are trying to judge that which only the Holy Ghost is capable of judging. Many self-righteous “once-married” peacocks take what they consider to be the “safe” route by not allowing anyone who has ever been divorced, saved or lost, to enter into the ministry. While we partially agree with that interpretation that salvation is not the issue, we totally disagree that divorce is the disqualifying issue. The issue is how many scriptural living wives does a man have in the present tense. If a man is scripturally divorced from a woman, that woman is no longer his wife.

Fornication and adultery make a “fundamentalist” pastor and preacher no less disqualified to be in the pulpit than a man who has had a divorce that his sin caused. However, we do believe that the Devil has taken many innocent men from our pulpits whose divorces were no fault of their own. We also believe that the Devil has used many “fundamentalist”, self-righteous hypocrites to accomplish that which rightly dividing the Scriptures could not have done. We also believe that the “fundamentalist” doctrine of throwing divorced men out of the pulpits has allowed the Devil to use many ungodly pastor’s and preacher’s wives to control and destroy many thriving ministries. Many ungodly, high profile preachers and pastors have set themselves above rebuke because they believe they are untouchable.

The phrases “husband of one wife” and “touch not God’s anointed” are the two most abused phrases in the Independent Baptist movement. The two unforgivable sins in the Independent Baptist movement is divorce and touching God’s anointed. The phrase “touch not God’s anointed” in 1 Chronicles 16:22 and Psalm 105:15 is almost always preached and taught from the wrong context. The context is to touch not God’s anointed people. In other words, in context, its emphasis is on God’s chosen people. God the Holy Ghost added the phrase “and do my prophets no harm” almost as an after thought, but the emphasis was on the PEOPLE. If we wanted to attempt to make a New Testament application of the passage it would be much more true to context if we applied it to the CONGREGATION (the spiritual seed of Abraham) rather than to some unscriptural dictator whose sin cannot be questioned and who openly mocks the men that God has put there to support the ministry. We are not advocating rebellion against a **holy** man of God that has been called of God to pastor, but we are calling for him to be held to the same standard of holiness that God holds the

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congregation to. God said in 1 Peter 5:1-4:

1 The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed: 2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; 3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

We see it all over the internet where unholy, blind loyalty leads deceived church members to defend the wicked conduct of unholy preachers and pastors who have violated the trust that God and their congregation has placed in them. We have heard of and read many cases where blind church members and church leaders will wickedly defend unholy, fornicating, adulterous, once married pastors while condemning a divorced man who, both before and after his divorce, has lived a model Christ honoring Christian life. Some of these unholy Baptist popes are even guilty of child molestation and yet they continue in the ministry. The scriptures do not teach blind loyalty, but rather a loyalty that is enlightened by the scriptures and the Holy Ghost of God. When pastors and other church officers will not repent of their sin they are just as subject to rebuke and church discipline as other church members. If you are deacon, or a church member, that will allow a pastor to continue in known sin, then you become a partaker in that sin. If you are a pastor that goes a whoring around on your wife then you are guilty of prostituting the mercy and grace of God to feed your flesh. We believe that God calls that presumptuous sin. Let me say this. If an innocent divorced man can be permanently put out of the ministry, then a once married pastor that is guilty of fornication, or adultery, or child molestation must be permanently put out of the ministry. In fact, that once married whoremongering preacher and pastor is much more deserving of being permanently put out of the ministry than that innocent divorced man. You do believe that a divorced man can be innocent don't you? Or, are you one of those that believe he must have done something wrong too or God would have protected him and the ministry from his wife's ungodly conduct? Really!? Will you also deny freewill?

### MEN PLEASERS, FLATTERING TITLES, AND DOCTORS OF THE LAW

The biggest problem in the issue before us is pride. We are not going to give up on what we have been taught because we would have to admit we are wrong. All the wimpy men followers would have to took their tails under and run from their doctrinal dictators and taskmasters like scalded dogs. God forbid they should study this issue through for themselves! We have also seen pastors that not only reject counsel, but also openly rebuke counsel. **A man that will not take counsel is a fool that is right in his own eyes (Proverbs 12:15).** Most men openly reject the whole counsel of God on the issue before us choosing instead to take the counsel of great men. The fear of men bringeth a snare. Great men are not always wise. In many of our Independent Baptist

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churches, we have become promoters of men instead of promoters of the Lord Jesus Christ. Many Independent Baptist pastors have taken a peacock's stroll down lover's lane walking hand-in-hand with themselves. We have put unholy and wicked Doctors into our pulpits who are into self exaltation and consider themselves to be above rebuke and all the while forgetting the warning and counsel of Job and Jeremiah:

Job 32:21-22

21 Let me not, I pray you, accept any man's person, neither let me give flattering titles unto man. 22 For I know not to give flattering titles; *in so doing* my maker would soon take me away.

Jeremiah 9:23-24

23 Thus saith the LORD, Let not the wise *man* glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty *man* glory in his might, let not the rich *man* glory in his riches: 24 But let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that *I am* the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these *things* I delight, saith the LORD.

What that tells us is that we are to neither give flattering titles or receive flattering titles. To do either is SIN. Many of these doctors have become the priest class in our Baptist churches who seek the highest seats and honours in the synagogues. A case in point is the following advertisement quoted verbatim from the back page of the August 31, 2012 edition of that Independent Baptist bastion of humility, the "Sword Of The Lord":

*There is not a man alive who has personally won more souls to Christ than **DOCTOR** Bob Gray, Sr. He has been in the ministry for 39 years and daily wins souls. Last year he personally led 404 souls to Christ, with 107 of those following the Lord in baptism. He has been used of God to see 1,116,887 souls come to Christ while pastoring the Longview Baptist Temple of Longview, Texas. It grew from a low of 159 to averaging 2,046 the last year he was pastor, with high days over 10,000. They ran 40 bus routes and had a large Sunday School program. He led the church to give \$9,328,835.69 to missions. I want you to come hear this man of God who can help you.*

**DOCTOR** Russell Anderson

Wow, what vainglory! There is nothing like a vain attempt to steal the glory from God! That is enough to make us want to puke! Bob Gray has received his reward in the praise of men. We would be ashamed to have such unadulterated worship published concerning us. Not only would we be ashamed, we would not allow it. Shame on the "Sword Of The Lord". We cannot believe that the "conservative, fundamentalist" "Sword Of The Lord" would publish such vainglory! Uh, uh, uh we retract that statement. A search of the August 2012 issue of "The Sword" reveals that Independent Baptists are very fond of the title DOCTOR. It appears no less than 105 times in the 24 pages of

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“The Sword”. Just in case you have forgotten the sinner’s prayer they also include it with a copy of a decision form that may put your converts on the road to confirmation. There is also an equally effusive trip down glory road in the endorsement given to “Pastor” Terrell Hopkins on the back page. This whole paper reeks of the filthiness of the flesh and the vileness of self-esteem and self-exaltation. There is definitely no glory left there for the Lord Jesus Christ. Maybe they need to rename their newspaper “The Independent Baptist Glory Corner”. It is definitely not the sword of the Lord because in its pages man is high and lifted up. **God forbid that we should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!**

### **DIVORCE COMMANDED UPON THE PRIESTHOOD**

The next to the last issue we will deal with in this chapter is the situation where God commanded the Levitical priests to put away their pagan wives. This drives to the issue of whether divorce disqualifies men from ministering in the service of God. In Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 13 we have the record of the cleansing of the priesthood that included putting away their strange (pagan) wives. These events are recorded in Ezra 10:2-3, Ezra 10:10-11, Ezra 10:18-19, and Nehemiah 13:27-30. These Scriptures state:

Ezra 10:2-3

2 And Shechaniah the son of Jehiel, *one* of the sons of Elam, answered and said unto Ezra, We have trespassed against our God, and have taken strange wives of the people of the land: yet now there is hope in Israel concerning this thing. 3 Now therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the wives, and such as are born of them, according to the counsel of my lord, and of those that tremble at the commandment of our God; and let it be done according to the law.

Ezra 10:10-11

10 And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. 11 Now therefore make confession unto the LORD God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives.

Ezra 10:18-19

18 And among the sons of the priests there were found that had taken strange wives: *namely*, of the sons of Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren; Maaseiah, and Eliezer, and Jarib, and Gedaliah. 19 And they gave their hands that they would put away their wives; and *being* guilty, *they offered* a ram of the flock for their trespass.

Nehemiah 13:27-30

<sup>27</sup> Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our



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God in marrying strange wives? <sup>28</sup> And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me. <sup>29</sup> Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites. <sup>30</sup> Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business;

**What about that?! A commandment from God to the people and the priesthood to divorce (put away) their pagan, unbelieving wives.** If you study all of Ezra chapter 10, you will find that not only had the people corrupted themselves with pagan wives but that priesthood had also. When the priests defiled themselves by taking profane (strange or pagan) wives they disqualified themselves from the priesthood according to Leviticus 21:7 which says:

Leviticus 21:7

<sup>7</sup> They [the priests] shall not take a wife that is a whore, or profane; neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God.

It was therefore necessary that they put away (divorce) their pagan wives so that they might be ceremonially clean for service in offering up sacrifices unto the LORD. Nehemiah makes it plain that the priests were cleansed **“from all strangers”** before they were appointed into wards. This cleansing was the subject of all of Ezra chapter 10 where the divorces were commanded and carried out. So, if divorce disqualifies a man from service unto God, then why did God command the divorces of the priests and then return them unto service in the Temple? If you teach that divorce disqualifies a man from the ministry, then you are going to have a hard time reconciling that doctrine with Ezra 10 and Nehemiah 13. You cannot explain it away dispensationally. You cannot explain it away as being a difference between law and grace. We close this section with a statement that we quoted earlier:

A divorced and remarried priest can serve - the only restriction we find is that he may not marry a divorcee. A priest does not have to be married except for the High Priest on the Yom Kippur service. This is derived from Leviticus 16:6: "He shall atone for himself and his home" - where 'home' implies he has a family (see Mishna Yoma 1;1). They also could have multiple wives since this is forbidden only rabbinically. Ezekiel 44 contains more of the basic laws of priests - prophetically described in the Third Temple, but Leviticus 21 is the main source. [From Rabbi Dovid Rosenfeld [aishrabbi@aish.edu](mailto:aishrabbi@aish.edu) ]

Note that the priests in this quote were allowed to have multiple wives. Could that give us some insight into the necessity for the use of the phrase “husband of one wife” by the Holy Ghost in 1 Timothy 3:2?

## DIVORCED HUSBANDS AS PASTORS OF THEIR HOMES

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Our final question is: Is a divorced and remarried man disqualified from being the pastor of his home? While on the surface this might seem to be a ridiculous question, it really is not because many men have been put in situations where they are in remote locations where there is no established church and they must pastor their families. Are you going to try to tell us that they should forego any assembly for the purpose of worship, preaching, and teaching because the father in the family has been divorced. The Lord Jesus Christ said in Matthew 18:20: “For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them”. That is given in the context of a church. As a reminder, a church is an organized assembly of baptized believers. That assembly does not have to take place in a church building. That is a definition that applies to families in locations where there are no churches or no scriptural churches. Are you going to tell us that a family cannot meet the commandment “not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together”? The charge has been given to the husband to be the spiritual leader in the home regardless of whether he is divorced. Are you going to tell us that that divorced man cannot preach to and teach the members of his family? Are the family members any less church members because they are not assembled in a church building? The rate at which the wicked, apostate, heretical church is falling away there will come a time when people will have to hold church in their homes. In many locations, that is already an absolute necessity. We would remind you that many of the early churches were organized in homes. We are not here advocating families pulling out of good Bible believing churches. This paragraph is yet another illustration of how utterly unscriptural the doctrine is that permanently disqualifies a divorced man from being a preacher, pastor, evangelist, missionary, or deacon. That doctrine is an affront to “rightly dividing the word of truth”. Put bluntly, it is heresy.

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### APPENDIX I QUOTES FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS AND COMMENTARIES

We strongly state the following disclaimer on the quotes that follow: We in no way endorse the doctrine or theology of most of the individuals we quote below. Many of them are Calvinists and Roman Catholics. In fact, most of them we would disagree with on some major point of doctrine. They are only quoted here to show the breadth of opinion and interpretation of the phrase “husband of one wife”.

#### QUOTES FROM VARIOUS AUTHORS

**Albert Barnes:** (Presbyterian; born 1798): Polygamy: (1) It is the most obvious meaning of the language, and it would doubtless be thus understood by those to whom it was addressed. At a time when polygamy was not uncommon, to say that a man should “have but one wife” would be naturally understood as prohibiting polygamy. [Albert Barnes, Notes, Explanatory and Practical, on the Epistles of Paul: To the Thessalonians, To Timothy, To Titus, and to Philemon, Harper & Brothers, 1845, Page 162]

**Ambrose:** And the Apostle has established a law, saying: “If any man be without reproach the husband of one wife.” So then he who is without blame the husband of one wife comes within the rule for undertaking the priestly office; he, however, who has married again has no guilt of pollution, but is disqualified for the priestly prerogative. [Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Ambrose: Select Works And Letters. Christian Literature Company, 1896, Page 466]

**Joseph Benson:** (Methodist; born 1748): Polygamy: The apostle’s meaning, therefore, in these canons, is, that such persons only were to be intrusted with sacred offices who in their married state had contented themselves with one wife, and with one husband at a time; because thereby they had showed themselves temperate in the use of sensual pleasures; through the immoderate love of which the Asiatic nations universally practised polygamy. [No Locate On Reference]

**William Burkitt:** (Anglican; born 1650): Polygamy And Divorce: The husband of one wife; that is, one at a time; not guilty of the sin of having many wives, or of putting away the wife by divorce, as the Jews frequently did for frivolous causes. [William Burkitt, Expository notes, with practical observations, on the New Testament, Volume 2 ,1832, Page 522]

**John Calvin:** (Calvinist; born 1509 ): Polygamy: The only true exposition, therefore, is that of Chrysostom, that in a bishop he expressly condemns polygamy, (50) which at that time the Jews almost reckoned to be lawful. [John Calvin, Commentaries on the Epistles to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, Calvin Translation Society, 1856, Page 77]

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**John Chrysostom:** “A Bishop then,” he says, “must be blameless, the husband of one wife.” This he does not lay down as a rule, as if he must not be without one, but as prohibiting his having more than one. For even the Jews were allowed to contract second marriages, and even to have two wives at one time. [**John Chrysostom, A Select Library of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: Christian literature Company, 1889, Page 438**]

**Adam Clarke:** (Methodist; born 1760): Polygamy: Second - must be the husband of one wife. He should be a married man, but he should be no polygamist; and have only one wife, i.e. one at a time. [Adam Clarke, The New Testament of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ: Volume 2, Peter C. Smith, 1831, Page 612]

**Thomas Coke:** (Methodist; born 1747): Polygamy And Causeless Divorce) the husband of one wife; that is, “one who has not causelessly divorced his wife, and married another;” much less ought he to have more than one wife at a time. [No Locate On Reference]

**Stanley L. Derickson:** A Divorced Man Is Disqualified: One other possibility has been taught in recent years. “Not a loose type man,” or “a one woman at a time man,” which of course allows for divorce and remarriage of elders. This is a recent addition to the menu of excuses to skirt Scripture and allow people the freedom to do as they please rather than as the Lord directs. [Stanley L. Derickson, Derickson’s Notes On Theology, Copyright 1992, Page 1061]

**Jameson, Fausett, and Brown:** (published 1871): No Divorced Men: Though the Jews practiced polygamy, yet as he is writing as to a Gentile Church, and as polygamy was never allowed among even laymen in the Church, the ancient interpretation that the prohibition here is against polygamy in a candidate bishop is not correct. It must, therefore, mean that, though laymen might lawfully marry again, candidates for the episcopate or presbytery were better to have been married only once. [Robert Jamieson, Andrew Robert Fausset, David Brown J. B. A Commentary, Critical, Practical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments, Volume 2, Names & Company, 1882, Page 434]

**Arno C. Gaebelein:** (Methodist; born 1861) Polygamy: “He must be the husband of one wife.” This has been explained as excluding all who had been married twice. This is incorrect. It may refer to those who were as pagans married to more than one woman, for polygamy was practiced among the heathen in that day, as it is still. [Arno C. Gaebelein, The Annotated Bible, Publication Office “Our Hope”, 1917, Page 162]

**John Gill:** (Baptist; born 1697): Polygamy And Unscriptural Divorce: The husband of one wife; which is not to be understood in a mystical and allegorical sense of his being the pastor of one church, since the apostle afterwards speaks of his house and children, that are to be ruled and kept in good order by him, in distinction from the church of God; but in a literal sense of his conjugal

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estate; though this rule does not make it necessary that he should have a wife; or that he should not marry, or not have married a second wife, after the death of the first; only if he marries or is married, that he should have but one wife at a time; so that this rule excludes all such persons from being elders, or pastors, or overseers of churches, that were “polygamists”; who had more wives than one at a time, or had divorced their wives, and not for adultery, and had married others. [John Gill, Exposition of the Old and New Testament]

**W. B. Godbey:** “The husband of one wife;” i.e., polygamy prohibited. [W. B. Godbey, Commentary On The New Testament, Volume 3, Ephesians-Philemon, Page 190]

**Matthew Henry:** (Presbyterian; born 1662): No Polygamy And No Divorce: He must be the husband of one wife; not having given a bill of divorce to one, and then taken another, or not having many wives at once, as at that time was too common both among Jews and Gentiles, especially among the Gentiles. [Matthew Henry, An Exposition of the Old and New Testament, Volume 6, Bell and Bradfute, J. Dickson, and J. McCliesh, 1791, Page 674]

**Jerome:** (Roman Catholic): To what does all this tend, you ask. I reply; you remember the question that you proposed. It was this. A Spanish bishop named Carterius, old in years and in the priesthood has married two wives, one before he was baptized, and, she having died, another since he has passed through the laver; and you are of opinion that he has violated the precept of the apostle, who in his list of episcopal qualifications commands that a bishop shall be “the husband of one wife.” I am surprised that you have pilloried an individual when the whole world is filled with persons ordained in similar circumstances; I do not mean presbyters or clergy of lower rank, but speak only of bishops of whom if I were to enumerate them all one by one I should gather a sufficient number to surpass the crowd which attended the synod of Ariminum. [Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Jerome, Christian Literature Company, 1893, Page 142]

**Jerome:** (Roman Catholic): The text quoted by the objector, “a bishop must be the husband of one wife,” admits of quite another explanation. The apostle came of the Jews and the primitive Christian church was gathered out of the remnants of Israel. Paul knew that the Law allowed men to have children by several wives, and was aware that the example of the patriarchs had made polygamy familiar to the people. Even the very priests might at their own discretion enjoy the same license. He gave commandment therefore that the priests of the church should not claim this liberty, that they should not take two wives or three together, but that they should each have but one wife at one time. [Philip Schaff, Henry Wace, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Jerome, Christian Literature Company, 1893, Page 144]

**Jerome:** (Roman Catholic): “The husband of one wife.” Concerning this requirement I have spoken above. I will now only warn you that If monogamy is insisted on before baptism the other conditions laid down must be insisted on before baptism too. For it is impossible to regard the remaining obligations as binding only on the baptized and this alone as binding also on the unbaptized. [Philip

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Schaff, Henry Wace, A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church: St. Jerome, Christian Literature Company, 1893, Page 147]

**Leo The Great:** [Caution: this was the first Roman Pope!]: A man who has married twice or a widow is not eligible as a priest....For it is well known that the husbands of widows have attained to the priesthood: certain, too, who have had several wives, and have led a life given up to all licentiousness, have had all facilities put in their way, and been admitted to the Sacred Order, contrary to that utterance of the blessed Apostle, in which he proclaims and says to such, “the husband of one wife,” and contrary to that precept of the ancient law which says by way of caution: “Let the priest take a virgin to wife, not a widow, not a divorced woman.” All such persons, therefore, who have been admitted we order to be put out of their offices in the church and from the title of priest by the authority of the Apostolic See....But if all the requirements of the holy Fathers are found in them, and if they have observed all that we read the blessed Apostle Paul to have enjoined on such, viz., that he be the husband of one wife, and that she was a virgin when he married her, as the authority of GOD’s law requires, [then ordain them]. [Philip Schaff, Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: Second Series, Volume XII Leo the Great, Cosimo, Inc., Jun 1, 2007, Page 3]

**Frederick B. Meyer :** (Baptist; first pastorate 1870): Polygamy And Unscriptural Divorce: Such was the facility of divorce among the Jews that it was a common thing for a man to have more than one woman living who had been his wife: but by Paul’s ruling this would debar him from holding office, unless his divorce be for cause as provided in Matthew 19:9. [Meyer, Frederick Brotherton, Commentary on 1 Timothy 3, Through the Bible Commentary, 1914]

**Matthew Poole:** (Presbyterian; born 1624): Polygamy: The husband of one wife; none who at the same time hath more wives than one, as many of the Jews had; nor was polygamy only common amongst the Jews, but amongst the other Eastern nations; but this was contrary to the institution of marriage. [Matthew Poole, Annotations Upon the Holy Bible, R. Carter and Brothers, 1852, Page 779]

**Pulpit Commentary:** (Published 1890): Polygamy And No Divorce: It seems, then, to mean that the pastor was to be “the husband of one wife,” avoiding the polygamy that was then so common among the Jews, and the system of divorce still so common in that age, and remaining faithful to the wife of his choice. [ H.D.M. Spence and J.S. Exell, Henry Donald M. The Pulpit Commentary, 1 Timothy, ed. by Spence- Jones 1887, Page 58]

**A. T. Robertson:** (Southern Baptist, born 1863): Polygamy: Of one wife [mias gunaikos]. One at a time, clearly. [A. T. Robertson, Word Pictures in the New Testament, Volume 4, CCEL, 1930, Page 659]

**Charles C. Ryrie:** Interprets No Divorced Pastors: “husband of one wife (may mean only one wife

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ever, since the Greek is the same as in 1 Ti 5:9 and since polygamy was unknown among the Greeks and Romans, or it may bar those who remarry after divorce)". [Charles C. Ryrie, A Survey of Bible Doctrine, Moody Publishers, June 8, 1989, Page 88]

**C.I. Scofield:** (Congregationalist; Published The Scofield Bible in 1909): He avoids the issue of "the husband of one wife" entirely in his notes. It is important to note that he was a divorced pastor and that he was Dwight L Moody's pastor and Moody knew he was divorced.

**Charles Spurgeon:** (Baptist; born 1834): Seemed To Interpret of Polygamy: "For there were many converts there who had two or three wives. Whatever position they might be permitted to occupy in the church, they could not become officers, they must keep in the rear rank". [Charles Spurgeon, Tabernacle Pulpit Volume 41, Page 728, Exposition of Titus 1 and 2) The phrase "husband of one wife" occurs but twice in all of Spurgeon's published works: the one in Volume 41 and the one Sword And Trowel, Volume 5, Page 138].

**John Trapp:** (Anglican; born 1601): Polygamy: The husband of one wife] sc. At once. The Egyptian priests were forbidden also polygamy. [John Trapp, Commentary on 1 Timothy 3, Trapp Complete Commentary, 1865-1868]

**John Wesley:** (Methodist): Polygamy And Divorce: This neither means that a bishop must be married, nor that he may not marry a second wife; which it is just as lawful for him to do as to marry a first, and may in some cases be his bounden duty. But whereas polygamy and divorce on slight occasions were common both among the Jews and heathens, it teaches us that ministers, of all others, ought to stand clear of those sins. [John Wesley, Notes On The Whole Bible, The New Testament, Page 693]

**Daniel Whedon:** (Methodist; born 1808): Polygamy: Polygamy, in St. Paul's time, was usual with both Jews and Gentiles. It was demoralizing both races. Rabbis had four and five wives. Converts to Christianity involved in polygamy would often present themselves for admission to the Church, and the peculiarities of their case might be considered in the instance of private Christians; but Paul forbids any such entanglement for an elder. Alford admits that the early commentators, Theodoret, Chrysostom, Theophylact, each made the text forbid only polygamy. [Daniel Denison Whedon, Commentary on the New Testament, Volume 4, Hunt & Eaton, 1903, Page 423]

**Wayne Gruden:** However, the following reasons cause most interpreters to reject this view. First, this view ignores the over all context of 1 Tim 3, which emphasizes post conversion character rather than preconversion sins. "All the other qualifications listed by Paul refer to a man's present status, not his entire past life. For example, 1 Timothy 3:1-7 does not mean 'one who has never been violent' but 'one who is not now violent, but gentle.' It does not mean 'one who has never been a lover of money' but 'one who is not now a lover of money.' It does not mean 'one who has been above reproach his whole life' but one who is now above reproach." If we made these qualifications apply to one's entire past life, then we would exclude from office almost everyone who became a

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Christian as an adult, for it is doubtful that any non-Christian could meet these qualifications.” [Wayne A. Grudem, Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Biblical Doctrine Zondervan, 1994, Page 917]

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**John Rice** says in his Book, DR. RICE HERE ARE MORE QUESTIONS, pgs. 339-340;

“I believe that any of these major sins (wrong divorce, drunkenness, murder, etc.) can be forgiven and are forgiven when there is honest repentance. Then when God has forgiven and when one has done all he can do to repudiate and undo the sins of the past (which of course, can never be undone entirely and sometimes not at all), and when he has taken time to live it down and proved himself a dependable, trustworthy Christian so that his usefulness is not hindered by the past, then he might do whatever God calls him to do and whatever God’s people trust him to do....I do not believe in passing a rule that one who has ever been drunk can never be a deacon or preacher; likewise, I do not believe in passing a rule that one who has ever been divorced cannot be a deacon or preacher. And my reason is very simple; there is no such rule in the Bible.” [John R. Rice, Dr. Rice, Here are More Questions ..., Sword of the Lord Publishers, 1973, Pages 339-340]

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**Stanley A. Ellisen** gives a few good thoughts from his book DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE:

“..One’s past history may not necessarily portray his present character. It is possible to have a good marital history of single marriage and have a ‘cat-calling’ character of wandering affections at the same time...On the other hand, it is also possible to have a sorrowful marital history of a broken marriage while having a personal character that is above reproach. The tragedy may not have been of his own making, as noted with the prophet Hosea...The passage in 1 Timothy 3:2....puts the emphasis where Jesus put it, on the heart and present character, rather than on outward record of marital history. The emphasis is not so much on what a man ONCE was, but what he NOW is.... [Stanley A. Ellisen, Divorce and Remarriage in the Church (Grand Rapids, 1980), p. 83]

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**J. Vernon McGee** says in his book QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

“Can a man who is divorced and remarried still be eligible for a position, such as deacon or pastor?” Answer: “...If the deacon (or pastor) has scriptural grounds on which he got a divorce, and the circumstances are pretty generally known, then I see no reason for his not occupying the office of deacon (or pastor).” [J. Vernon McGee, Questions and Answers, Published by Thomas Nelson Inc, 1991]

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**M.R. Dehaan** says in his book, DEAR DOCTOR, I HAVE A PROBLEM, pg. 109);

“If a man is saved after making the mistake, and sees and confesses his fault, I would be the last one to put up a hindrance to his ministry.” [M. R. DeHaan, Dear Doctor: I Have a Problem, Answers to Bible Questions Volume Two, Published by Zondervan, Grand Rapids MI, 1961, Page 109]

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**H.A. Ironside** says in his book WHAT IS THE ANSWER? (question 36);

Is it permissible for a man who has been twice married, the first wife having been divorced because of immorality....to hold the office of a deacon (or pastor)?” Answer: “....in the case such as you mention, the first wife has been divorced both legally and scripturally, ....the man is qualified for the office of a deacon if the life is otherwise right.” [H.A. Ironside, What Is The Answer? (Question 36), Grand Rapids, MI, Zondervon, 1944]

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## QUOTES FROM COMMENTARIES

**Husband of one wife.** (On Titus 1:6) The traditional and most widely accepted view of Bible-believing, soul-winning preachers has been that a pastor must not be divorced and remarried. History has shown it almost never works for a pastor to be divorced. If he cannot rule his own house how can he rule the church? [Ed Hindson, King James Version Commentary Thomas Nelson Inc, Sept. 20, 2005] [**Note from the author of this book:** So, if you think that it is okay for a divorced man to be a pastor, then you are not a soul winning preacher?? Incredible !!]

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Polygamy was not practiced in the Roman world outside Palestine, though illegal bigamy and certainly adultery were. “Husband of one wife” no doubt means a faithful husband and presupposes marriage; such a man would be helpful in standing against the false teachers who opposed marriage (4:3). (The injunction that married leaders be used would not apply to all situations; cf. comment on 1 Cor 7:8.) “Husband of one wife” refers to one’s current marital status and behavior; validly divorced people who remarried were considered married to one spouse, the second one, not to two spouses. [The IVP Bible Background Commentary : New Testament on 1 Timothy 3:2]

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**husband of one wife** — confuting the celibacy of Rome’s priesthood. Though the Jews practiced polygamy, yet as he is writing as to a Gentile Church, and as polygamy was never allowed among even laymen in the Church, the ancient interpretation that the prohibition here is against polygamy in a candidate bishop is not correct. It must, therefore, mean that, though laymen might lawfully marry again, candidates for the episcopate or presbytery were better to have been married only *once*.

## THE MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, REMARRIAGE, AND “HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE” CONTROVERSY

[Jamieson, Robert; Fausset, Andrew Robert ; Brown, David J. B. A Commentary, Critical, Practical and Explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments, Volume 4, page 200]

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***The husband of one wife (v. 2b).*** All of the qualifying adjectives in this passage are masculine. While there is ample scope for feminine ministry in a local assembly, the office of elder is not given to women. However, a pastor’s home life is very important, and especially his marital status. (This same requirement applies to deacons, according to 1 Tim. 3:12.) It means that a pastor must not be divorced and remarried. Paul was certainly not referring to polygamy, since no church member, let alone a pastor, would be accepted if he had more than one wife. Nor is he referring to remarriage after the death of the wife; for why would a pastor be prohibited from marrying again, in the light of Genesis 2:18 and 1 Timothy 4:3? Certainly the members of the church who had lost mates could marry again; so why penalize the pastor?

It’s clear that a man’s ability to manage his own marriage and home indicate ability to oversee a local church (1 Tim. 3:4–5). A pastor who has been divorced opens himself and the church to criticism from outsiders, and it is not likely that people with marital difficulties would consult a man who could not keep his own marriage together. I see no reason why *dedicated* Christians who have been divorced and remarried cannot serve in other offices in the church, but they are disqualified from being elders or deacons. [Be Faithful (1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon): Warren W. Wiersbe, Jan 1, 2009 Page 48]

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**Husband of but one wife**, literally, a “one-woman man.” This ambiguous but important phrase is subject to several interpretations. The question is, how stringent a standard was Paul erecting for overseers? Virtually all commentators agree that this phrase prohibits both polygamy and promiscuity, which are unthinkable for spiritual leaders in the church. Many Bible students say the words a “one-woman man” are saying that the affections of an elder must be centered exclusively on his wife. Many others hold, however, that the phrase further prohibits any who have been divorced and remarried from becoming overseers. The reasoning behind this view is usually that divorce represents a failure in the home, so that even though a man may be forgiven for any sin involved, he remains permanently disqualified for leadership in the congregation (cf. vv. 4-5; 1 Cor. 9:24-27). The most strict interpretation and the one common among the earliest commentators (second and third centuries) includes each of the above but extends the prohibition to *any* second marriage, even by widowers. [Roy B. Zuck David C. Cook, The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures, Volume 1, 1983 on 1 Timothy 3:2, Page 736]

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**Husband of one wife:** it does not mean “one at a time” (polygamy was unknown among Greeks and Romans); he has not been divorced and remarried. [Paul P Enns, The Moody Handbook of Theology, Moody Publishers, Feb 1, 2008, Page 367] (**Note from this author:** That this statement from the

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Moody Handbook Of Theology is not accurate can be ascertained from statements by the Jewish historian Josephus, from statements by Jerome rebuking the Jews for having multiple wives, and by the fact that multiple wives for Jewish men did not become formally prohibited until about 1,000 A. D.)

\* See the important discussion by Homer A. Kent, Jr., *The Pastoral Epistles*, rev. ed. (Chicago: Moody, 1982), pp. 122–26. Kent discusses the variant views and concludes Paul is prohibiting remarriage after divorce. The argument on divorce usually centers on the exceptive clause of Matt. 19:9. For a careful, biblical study of the entire subject of divorce see J. Carl Laney, *The Divorce Myth* (Minneapolis: Bethany, 1981). Perhaps the most important book that has been recently written on the subject is William A. Heth and Gordon J. Wenham, *Jesus and Divorce: The Problem with the Evangelical Consensus* (Nashville: Nelson, 1984). They conclude that the common suggestion that Jesus allowed the “innocent party” to remarry after divorce is a recent view first espoused by Erasmus and is biblically deficient and erroneous. No study of the subject will be complete without consulting this important work. [Paul P Enns, *The Moody Handbook of Theology*, Moody Publishers, Feb 1, 2008, Page 380, on 1 Timothy 3:2] **[Note from this author:** This is inconsistent with the fact that D.L. Moody’s pastor, C.I. Scofield, was a divorced man. We have no idea who Homer A. Kent is, but Paul nowhere mentions divorce in 1 Timothy and Titus. It is once again read into the passage by someone who has an unscriptural agenda]

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The qualifications for the elders are spelled out in great detail in 1 Timothy 3:1–7 and Titus 1:5–9. The former passage (which is the more detailed one) lists them as follows: blameless (not open to criticism), husband of one wife (may mean only one wife ever, since the Greek is the same as in 1 Ti 5:9 and since polygamy was unknown among the Greeks and Romans, or it may bar those who remarry after divorce) [Charles C. Ryrie, *A Survey of Bible Doctrine*, Moody Publishers, June 8, 1989] **(Note from this author:** That this statement from “A Survey Of Bible Doctrine is not accurate can be ascertained from statements by the Jewish historian Josephus, from statements by Jerome rebuking the Jews for having multiple wives, and by the fact that multiple wives for Jewish men did not become formally prohibited until about 1,000 A. D.)

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It has, indeed, been inferred from 1 Timothy iii. 2, where the Apostle says, a bishop must be “the husband of one wife,” that a private member of the Church might have more wives than one. But this is in itself a very precarious inference; and being inconsistent with Christ’s express prohibition, it is altogether inadmissible. The meaning of the passage has been much disputed. What the Apostle requires is that a bishop should be in all respects an exemplary man: not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; the husband of one wife, *I. e.*, not a polygamist. This no more implies that other men may be polygamists, than his saying that a bishop must not be greedy of filthy lucre and not a brawler, implies that other men may be covetous or contentious. According to another and widely accepted interpretation of the passage in 1 Timothy iii. 2, and the corresponding passage in Titus I. 6, the injunction of the Apostle is that a man who has been married more than once, must not be appointed a bishop or presbyter. If this be the true meaning of the Apostle, his language

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affords still less ground for the argument drawn from it in favour of the lawfulness of polygamy in church members. If even second marriage was forbidden to presbyters, *a fortiori* must polygamy be regarded as inconsistent with the law of Christ. [Charles Hodge, Systematic Theology, 1871, Page 388]

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Husband of one wife: A one-wife kind of man, not a philanderer (doesn't necessarily rule out widowers or divorced men). [Lawrence O. Richards, David C Cook, Bible Teacher's Commentary, 2002, Page 973]

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“The husband of one wife.” This can be interpreted two ways. It could mean that he ought to be married. I feel that Paul had this in mind. You may say, “Well, Paul was not married.” I take the position that Paul had been married and his wife had died. He could not have been a member of the Sanhedrin without being married. He simply had not married again, perhaps because of his travels as an apostle.

When I first became a pastor I was not married and I was frequently kidded by a friend who said I had no right to be a pastor if I wasn't married. Using this verse, he would say, “You should be the husband of one wife.” However, I think that the primary meaning here is that the bishop or elder should not have *two* wives. Polygamy was common in Paul's day, and bigamy was certainly prevalent. The officer in the church should be the husband of one wife. [J. Vernon McGee, 1 Corinthians through Revelation, J. Vernon McGee, Thomas Nelson Inc, Jan 6, 1984, Page 441-442 on 1 Timothy 3:2 ]

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**A. T. Robertson on Matthew 19:9: Except for fornication....** Those who deny Matthew's report are those who are opposed to remarriage at all. Jesus by implication, as in 5:31, does allow remarriage of the innocent party, but not of the guilty one. Certainly Jesus has lifted the whole subject of marriage and divorce to a new level, far beyond the petty contentions of the schools of Hillel and Shammai. [A. T. Robertson, The Gospel According to Matthew and the Gospel According to Mark, Kregel Academic, April 1, 2003, Page 163]

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