

POSITION PAPER

Marriage, Divorce & Remarriage

The Elders of Fellowship Bible Church
Tulsa, Oklahoma

Introduction

This document addresses the important and sensitive topics of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. It is intended to provide direction rooted in Scripture while encouraging you to process these matters thoughtfully and in community with trusted believers.

We, the Elders of Fellowship Bible Church, recognize the challenges of discussing such topics, as words can sometimes be misunderstood or interpreted through the lens of personal desires. While the Holy Spirit provides guidance to every believer, Scripture reminds us of the wisdom found in the counsel of many, especially in the context of a challenging marriage. This document is not a replacement for pastoral care, shepherding, or the input of Elders, but a resource to guide you toward God's truth.

Readers approach this topic from different perspectives:

1. Those exploring marriage, divorce, and remarriage for the first time.

Now is the best time to establish convictions based on God's Word before circumstances or emotions take hold.

2. Those actively considering divorce or remarriage.

We encourage you to prayerfully process this document, actively pursue community, and seek help from others.

3. Those who have experienced divorce or remarriage.

Our aim is not to bring shame but to point you toward the hope and grace found in the gospel.

Finally, we ask you to engage with this material prayerfully and involve trusted leaders as you process it. While other interpretations of marriage, divorce, and remarriage exist, this document reflects the Elders' understanding of Scripture and the responsibility entrusted to us at Fellowship Bible Church. May it serve as a helpful tool to guide you in truth, wisdom, and grace.

Marriage

The Bible teaches that God created marriage as a sacred and covenantal union between one man and one woman, intended to reflect his image and design, and to display Christ's love for his bride—the Church. Marriage is described as a lifelong covenant based on mutual love, respect, and selflessness. It is built on the foundation of two image bearers who possess inherent dignity, worth, and value. The union of marriage is established through a covenant that mirrors the covenantal relationship between God and his people. Passages such as Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 highlight the divine intention for marriage to be a one-flesh union, symbolizing the deep, inseparable bond designed by God.

In the New Testament, Jesus emphasizes the permanence of marriage, teaching that it should never be dissolved casually. He addresses contemporary Jewish debates on divorce, correcting misconceptions and highlighting the importance of marital faithfulness and the sanctity of the marriage covenant. Paul further reinforces the sanctity of marriage by instructing spouses to love and honor one another, fulfill their marital duties, and remain committed even in challenging circumstances with the ultimate purpose of reflecting and glorifying Christ (e.g., Ephesians 5:22–33; 1 Corinthians 7:10–16). Marriage, therefore, is depicted as a divine institution meant to mirror—though imperfectly—God's unwavering commitment to his people, encouraging mutual care, fidelity, and respect.

SUMMARY

The biblical view of marriage is a profound reflection of God's covenantal relationship with humanity. It is a union characterized by commitment, love, mutual respect, and selflessness intended to last a lifetime by the grace of God and the empowerment of His Spirit.

SCRIPTURE ADDRESSES

Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:24; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:31–32; Matthew 19:3–9; Mark 10:2–12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10–16; Ephesians 5:22–33

Divorce

The Bible acknowledges the painful reality of divorce, recognizing it as a result of human sinfulness and hard-heartedness. Divorce is seen as the breaking of a sacred covenant, a tragic disruption of

the one-flesh union that God intended to be lifelong. When divorce occurs, it is always the result of sin, but this does not mean divorce is always sinful.

While God's ideal for marriage is permanence, the Bible provides provisions for divorce in certain circumstances to protect the innocent and vulnerable. In the Old Testament, Deuteronomy 24:1-4 regulated divorce practices to protect women from being unjustly abandoned and left without means of support. Moses permitted this regulation due to the hardness of people's hearts, ensuring that women received a certificate of divorce. This certificate allowed them to remarry and regain social and economic stability. Such a provision offered significant protection for women in a patriarchal society, preventing them from facing destitution or marginalization.

In the New Testament, Jesus reiterates the sanctity of marriage and condemns the practice of casual or easy divorce, as was common in the interpretations of some Jewish teachers of his time. Jesus emphasizes that divorce should not be sought lightly and underscores that marriage is a divine institution meant to reflect God's unbreakable covenant with his people. However, he acknowledges that due to the hardness of human hearts, divorce is permitted in specific, severe circumstances. Paul's teachings in 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 also emphasize that believers should strive to remain married and work toward reconciliation whenever possible, highlighting the importance of maintaining the marital bond.

We strive to interpret Scripture in biblical and God-honoring ways. We never want to permit something that God forbids, nor do we want to forbid something that God permits. While we understand Scripture to permit divorce in rare and severe circumstances, the vast majority of difficult marriages do not meet these biblical criteria. Rather, we see reconciliation as the faithful and primary path for most couples, which glorifies God and reflects his covenant love and redemptive grace. We believe that a marriage can survive any sinful behavior with God's help. God's desire is always for reconciliation and preservation of the current marriage whenever possible.

With these points in mind, this document will explore two categories where Scripture explicitly permits divorce—sexual immorality and abandonment by an unbelieving spouse—as well as how abuse may, in certain cases, functionally amount to abandonment. Each is addressed in the sections that follow.

Sexual Immorality

The Bible regards sexual immorality, the Greek word *porneia*, as a severe breach of the marriage covenant. This term encompasses a range of illicit sexual behaviors, including adultery,

prostitution, incest, homosexuality, and bestiality—all of which violate the trust and sanctity inherent in marriage. In Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, Jesus acknowledges the gravity of such actions by making an allowance for divorce in cases where the covenant has been profoundly violated. Sexual immorality is more than just a physical act; it is a profound violation of the spiritual and covenantal relationship within marriage, undermining the bond meant to mirror the faithful and exclusive relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31–32). Further clarity on the topic of pornography is provided in the FAQ section.

Though divorce may be permitted in certain cases of sexual immorality, it is never mandated. The Bible consistently calls for forgiveness, reconciliation, and the pursuit of restoration whenever possible. Jesus' teaching challenges both the permissive view of the Hillel school (which allowed divorce for nearly any reason) and the strict view of the Shammai school (which often saw divorce as obligatory for sexual sin). Instead, Jesus addressed divorce by pointing back to the Creation account in Genesis, emphasizing God's original design for marriage as a lifelong and unbreakable union. We see Jesus reinforcing the biblical teaching that reconciliation and restoration should always be the primary goal.

We encourage anyone in this situation to prayerfully consider Scripture and to seek biblical guidance from church leaders, biblical counselors, and trusted believers as they navigate this extremely complex scenario.

Abandonment

As in all circumstances, God's heart—even in cases of abandonment—is reconciliation. In 1 Corinthians 7:15–16, Paul specifically addresses the situation when an unbelieving spouse deserts (abandons) a believing spouse, stating that the believer is "not enslaved" and is free to let the marriage end.

This principle may also apply in cases when a "professing Christian" persists in behavior that flagrantly violates their covenantal responsibilities, such as sustained patterns of unrepentant sin, hardness of heart, or a refusal to pursue reconciliation, effectively abandoning their spouse. In such situations, the church and its leaders may, after careful shepherding and church discipline, recognize the unrepentant spouse as functionally acting as an unbeliever. When this occurs, the abandoned spouse may view 1 Corinthians 7:15–16 as a biblical basis for dissolving the marriage.

However, as we shepherd those navigating difficult marriages, we must also consider Paul's instruction in 1 Corinthians 7:10–11, where he exhorts believing spouses to remain married and, if separation occurs, to pursue reconciliation rather than immediate divorce. This reminds us that

while abandonment may, in certain circumstances, provide grounds for divorce, the goal should always be restoration when possible. A hasty or overly broad application of this principle could lead to situations in which a struggling spouse is too quickly labeled as an “unbeliever” to justify ending the marriage. Instead, there should be a careful and prayerful process of discernment, seeking biblical counsel, and exhausting all reasonable efforts for reconciliation before concluding that abandonment has truly occurred in a way that aligns with Scripture.

Abuse

Abuse, encompassing physical, emotional, sexual, and spiritual harm, violates the core commitments of love, honor, and protection that are fundamental to marriage. While the Bible does not explicitly list “abuse” as a stated ground for divorce, it consistently upholds the dignity and protection of individuals, condemns oppression and violence, and calls husbands and wives to love and care for one another (Ephesians 5:25–29; Colossians 3:19; Malachi 2:16).

While reconciliation is always God’s heart, it does not mean returning to an abusive situation. The safety of the abused spouse is paramount, and immediate separation is often necessary while the church provides care, protection (including the potential involvement of law enforcement), and shepherding.

In 1 Corinthians 7:15, Paul permits divorce if an unbelieving spouse abandons a believing spouse. While this passage does not explicitly address abuse, a persistent and unrepentant pattern of abuse may functionally amount to abandonment when the abuser’s actions destroy the marital covenant and forsake their responsibilities. In such cases, the church must carefully assess the situation, ensuring that accountability, biblical discipline, and clear steps toward safety and healing are in place.

Recognizing abuse requires careful discernment, and church leadership has a responsibility to provide a thorough and compassionate process. Repentance in the context of abuse must be more than words; it requires genuine, long-term change, demonstrated through tangible actions, accountability, and the rebuilding of trust. When true repentance is absent, church leaders may conclude that the abuser is acting as an unbeliever (Matthew 18:17). In such cases, church leaders may reach a place where they view the abuse as a form of abandonment, which could constitute biblical grounds for divorce.

Our commitment as the church is to protect the vulnerable, provide biblical guidance, and ensure that no one is pressured to remain in an unsafe situation under the guise of reconciliation.

SUMMARY

The Bible acknowledges divorce as a painful reality resulting from human sinfulness and hard-heartedness. While always a consequence of sin, divorce is not always sinful. Though God's ideal is lifelong marriage, Scripture permits divorce in certain cases of sexual immorality and abandonment by an unbelieving spouse. In some cases, abuse may be understood as a form of abandonment or neglect that rises to the level of covenant-breaking. Even then, reconciliation should always be the first pursuit, where safe and appropriate, reflecting God's grace. Before considering divorce, every effort should be made to seek repentance, reconciliation, and healing with church support. Some of the best lessons God has to teach His children are learned while working through marital difficulties. Upholding the sanctity of marriage and striving for reconciliation honors God's original design for a lifelong covenant.

SCRIPTURE ADDRESSES

Genesis 2:24; Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Malachi 2:16; Matthew 5:31-32; Matthew 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16; Ephesians 5:25-29, 31-32; Colossians 3:19; Exodus 21:10-11

Remarriage

When divorce is not justified according to biblical teachings, entering into a new marriage (with someone other than the original spouse) is considered an act of infidelity according to Scripture (Matthew 5:32, 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18). 1 Corinthians 7:10-11 exhorts believers to remain in their marriage or, if divorced, to remain unmarried or be reconciled. This principle underscores that divorce does not automatically grant freedom to remarry—rather, every situation must be carefully evaluated through the lens of Scripture and godly counsel.

When reconciliation is truly not possible, we believe that remarriage is a permissible option. Determining when reconciliation is no longer possible is a weighty matter. Historically, two clear biblical markers indicate the end of reconciliation:

1. The death of a former spouse (1 Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2-3)
2. The remarriage of a former spouse, which permanently severs the possibility of reconciliation (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)

Beyond these, if a divorce occurred on biblically justified grounds—such as unrepentant sexual immorality, abandonment, or abuse that destroyed the marriage covenant—remarriage may be permissible. However, it should be pursued with wisdom, patience, and the guidance of biblical

community. Reconciliation should always be earnestly pursued when possible before moving toward remarriage.

To ensure clarity, we have provided further guidance on remarriage in the FAQ section.

SCRIPTURE ADDRESSES

Matthew 5:32; Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; 1 Corinthians 7:10-16; 1 Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2-3; Deuteronomy 24:1-4

The Role of the Church

Believers who pursue divorce on unbiblical grounds and remain unrepentant are subject to church discipline because they openly reject the Word of God and are sinning. The one who obtains an unbiblical divorce and remarries is guilty of adultery since God did not permit the original divorce (Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11-12). That person is subject to the steps of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17. The goal of church discipline is the repentance and restoration of the sinning individual and, in the case of the pursuit of divorce on unbiblical grounds, the restoration of the marriage.

The leadership in the local church should also help single believers who have been divorced to understand their situation biblically, especially in cases where the appropriate application of biblical teaching does not seem clear to them. For example, the church leadership may at times need to decide whether one or both of the former partners could legitimately be considered believers at the time of their past divorce, because this will affect the application of biblical principles to their current situation (1 Corinthians 7:17-24). A further example could emerge because people sometimes transfer to or from other churches where biblical church discipline has not been practiced properly, which might make it necessary for the leadership to evaluate whether a member's estranged or former spouse should currently be considered a Christian or treated as an unbeliever because of continued disobedience (1 Corinthians 7:15; 2 Corinthians 6:14). These determinations are made only through the grid of Scriptural guidelines with much prayer, and they require wisdom and discernment that are only available from God through the direction of the Holy Spirit.

Overall Summary

Our view on marriage, divorce, and remarriage is grounded in the biblical ideal of lifelong, monogamous marriage between one man and one woman as a sacred covenant reflecting Christ's love for the Church. While divorce is permissible in certain cases of sexual immorality, abandonment, and abuse, it is far from mandated, and reconciliation should always be the first pursuit, both before and after divorce, when possible. The Bible calls us to forgive and seek restoration, recognizing that marriage is meant to reflect God's enduring love and commitment. The overarching principle is to uphold the sanctity of marriage while providing compassion and justice in circumstances when the covenant has been gravely violated.

Frequently Asked Questions

Is marriage God's plan for everyone?

Absolutely not. If you are single, take heart in knowing that singleness and marriage are both reliable paths to an abundant life.

While marriage is a divine institution that reflects God's unwavering commitment to his people, it is not ultimate nor is it required for everyone. Jesus makes this clear in Matthew 19:10–12, and Paul affirms it in 1 Corinthians 7, teaching that singleness can be a gift that allows for undistracted devotion to the Lord.

Marriage is a shadow of God's love for his bride, the Church, not a perfect reflection of it. It is a good and God-ordained covenant, but it is not the answer to our deepest needs. Marriage, or even remarriage, cannot fix what is broken in our hearts—that restoration comes only through Christ.

Whether single or married, every believer is called to pursue faithfulness, holiness, and contentment in Christ, knowing that our ultimate fulfillment is found in him, not in any human relationship.

How should we view separation?

Keeping in mind the Lord's desire for couples to remain married (Matthew 19:6), we acknowledge that in some cases, separation may be necessary for the safety and well-being of one or both spouses. However, separation should not be viewed as a step toward divorce but rather as a season for healing, reflection, and possible restoration.

Reconciliation should remain the goal as both the husband and wife seek the Lord's will, receive the counsel of mature believers, and address personal issues that contributed to their separation. To ensure separation is intentional and purposeful, we encourage couples to follow the 4 Ps of Separation:

1. **Plan:** Establish clear goals for the separation.
2. **Purpose:** Define the reason for the separation and what it hopes to accomplish.
3. **People:** Involve trusted community, care teams, and counselors for support and accountability.
4. **Period:** Set a specific time frame to reassess progress and next steps.

When done wisely and with godly counsel, separation can serve as a tool for restoration rather than dissolution, providing space for healing, trust-building, and biblical reconciliation.

Briefly explain the audience when Jesus was asked about divorce by the Pharisees.

When the Pharisees attempted to trap Jesus with a question about divorce, he confronted their distorted view by pointing back to God's original design in Genesis 1:27 and 2:24—that marriage is a lifelong, unbreakable covenant. At the time, Jewish thought was heavily influenced by the Hillel and Shammai schools. The Hillel school interpreted "some indecency" in Deuteronomy 24:1 broadly, allowing a man to divorce his wife for almost any reason—even something as trivial as burning his dinner—while the Shammai school permitted divorce only in cases of sexual immorality.

Jesus did not align himself with either school. Instead, he transcended their debate by pointing back to God's original design for marriage as a permanent, covenantal union. While Jesus acknowledged sexual immorality (Matthew 19:3–9) as grounds for divorce, he did not require divorce in such cases, emphasizing reconciliation and restoration whenever possible. His strict stance on the permanence of marriage surprised even his disciples, who responded, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry" (Matthew 19:10).

Later, Paul builds on Jesus' teaching in 1 Corinthians 7, maintaining the high view of marriage while also addressing situations such as abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (1 Corinthians 7:15).

How should I interpret the phrase "God hates divorce"?

The phrase "God hates divorce" comes from Malachi 2:16 and is often cited to underscore the seriousness of divorce. However, recent scholarship and (some solid) translations (including the ESV) suggest a more nuanced understanding. Some interpretations argue that the verse actually refers to a man who hates and divorces his wife, emphasizing the treachery and injustice involved. This perspective aligns with the broader biblical context, which acknowledges the deep pain and societal disruption caused by divorce. Rather than indicating that all divorces are morally wrong, it highlights God's grief over the harmful consequences of divorce. This understanding encourages believers to approach marriage with a deep commitment to reconciliation and restoration, recognizing the profound impact of divorce while also making compassionate allowances for situations involving severe breaches of the marriage covenant.

Should we really consider the Matthew 19 “exception clause” when we don’t find it in Luke or Mark?

The “exception clause” refers to Jesus’ statement in Matthew 19:9 (and also Matthew 5:32), where he allows for divorce in certain cases of sexual immorality. The absence of the exception clause in Mark and Luke does not negate its validity, as each Gospel was written with different audiences and emphases in mind. Matthew’s inclusion of the exception clause addresses a specific debate among Jewish teachers of the time regarding grounds for divorce. The absence of the clause in Mark and Luke likely reflects the assumption that their audiences were already aware of such exceptions, highlighting the need to interpret Scripture holistically rather than in isolation.

Does my spouse’s viewing of pornography constitute biblical grounds for divorce?

Pornography is a sin that is deeply harmful to the individual and the marriage. It undermines trust, intimacy, and the integrity of the marital relationship. Therefore, pornography addiction or use should be addressed with urgency, repentance, and accountability. It is a serious issue that requires intentional steps toward healing, including biblical counseling and community support. However, we don’t believe it automatically should be considered biblical grounds for divorce.

That said, prolonged, unrepentant engagement in pornography, especially if it leads to a refusal to pursue reconciliation or restoration, could signal a deeper rejection of the marriage covenant. This is why it’s essential to seek pastoral guidance, involve one’s community, and approach the situation prayerfully. The focus should always be on pursuing healing, accountability, and restoration wherever possible, reflecting God’s redemptive heart.

Does *porneia* refer exclusively to premarital sex during the betrothal period (engagement)?

Very unlikely. While some interpretations suggest that *porneia* in Matthew 5:32 and 19:9 could refer specifically to sexual immorality during the betrothal period, the broader scholarly consensus is that *porneia* encompasses a wide range of sexual sins. This includes adultery, fornication, homosexuality, and other forms of illicit sexual behavior. Importantly, in Matthew 19:3–9, Jesus is addressing a question about divorce, which implies he is speaking within the context of marriage, not engagement.

If people get divorced, are they still married in God’s eyes?

According to Scripture, divorce does legally and relationally end a marriage, but it does not mean that remarriage is automatically permitted. Jesus emphasizes the seriousness of divorce in

Matthew 19:6 (“What God has joined together, let no one separate”), yet he and Paul also acknowledge legitimate grounds for divorce (see Divorce section). 1 Corinthians 7:10–11 provides further clarity, stating that if a woman separates from her husband, she should “remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband.” Paul uses the Greek word *agamos* (meaning “unmarried”) to describe her status, indicating that divorce does, in some sense, end the marriage covenant. However, the priority remains reconciliation where possible rather than assuming freedom to remarry.

If someone has gotten a divorce for illegitimate reasons, can he/she still get remarried biblically?

Jesus teaches that remarriage after an illegitimate divorce constitutes adultery (Matthew 19:9; Mark 10:11–12). This implies that the original marriage covenant is still recognized by God. However, once remarriage has occurred, breaking up the new marriage would not be advisable, as it would constitute further sin by destroying another marriage (1 Corinthians 7:10–11). Repentance and seeking forgiveness for the illegitimate divorce are crucial, and moving forward, the individual should adhere to biblical principles regarding marriage and divorce. The overarching principle is to honor the sanctity of marriage and strive for reconciliation whenever possible.

Does Romans 7:2–3 imply that remarriage is only allowed after a spouse’s death?

Romans 7:2–3 emphasizes the lifelong commitment of marriage by using the example of a woman being bound to her husband until his death. This passage primarily serves as an analogy to illustrate believers’ release from the Law through Christ. While it underscores the permanence of marriage, it does not address specific exceptions for divorce and remarriage found elsewhere in Scripture. Therefore, while Romans 7:2–3 highlights the ideal of lifelong marriage, it does not negate the biblical grounds for divorce and remarriage in certain circumstances.

When is reconciliation no longer possible, and when is remarriage biblically permitted?

Reconciliation should always be the first goal in any situation involving divorce. Remarriage should never be pursued lightly. However, the Bible presents clear instances where reconciliation is no longer possible, and remarriage becomes a permissible option:

- **The death of a former spouse** (1 Corinthians 7:39; Romans 7:2–3)
- **The remarriage of a former spouse**, which permanently severs the possibility of reconciliation (Deuteronomy 24:1–4)

- **Divorce that occurred on clear biblical grounds** (e.g., sexual immorality or abandonment), after reconciliation has been prayerfully pursued and efforts toward restoration have been exhausted. In such cases, 1 Corinthians 7:15–16 suggests that the abandoned spouse is “not enslaved”. Remarriage in these circumstances is not considered a sin and reflects a biblically permitted freedom.

Who determines when reconciliation is no longer possible?

This is a decision that should not be made in isolation. Scripture, godly counsel, and church leadership should all be involved in discerning whether remarriage is biblically appropriate. No one should presume that remarriage is automatically the next step after divorce. Patience, prayer, and wise counsel are critical in processing such a significant decision.

When abuse has occurred in a marriage, how does the abuser’s repentance factor into determining whether a divorce is permitted?

1 Corinthians 7:15 applies when an unbelieving spouse abandons—or, by implication, abuses—a believing spouse. In such cases, for the believing spouse to be considered “free,” the church must determine that the offending spouse is acting as an unbeliever, meaning they persist in unrepentant sin, refuse correction, and reject biblical accountability.

Repentance is not just a one-time confession but an ongoing turning away from sin, demonstrated by consistent actions over time. True repentance includes acknowledgment of wrongdoing, willingness to submit to spiritual authority, and clear, measurable change. Where repentance is absent, church discipline (Matthew 18:17) should take place. If the offender remains unrepentant, they should be treated as a non-believer, at which point divorce may be biblically permissible.

This process takes time, and the safety of the victim must be prioritized while the abuser is called to repentance. While the church supports the victim in healing, care must also be taken to shepherd them toward biblical faithfulness in their own actions without excusing sin or fostering bitterness. The goal in all cases is to uphold both protection and biblical integrity, ensuring that decisions about divorce are made with wisdom, accountability, and a heart aligned with God’s design for marriage and justice.

What does the Bible say about gender?

We believe God created mankind in his image, forming each person in the womb from conception (Psalm 139:13–16; Isaiah 44:2; 49:5; Jeremiah 1:4–5) until the point of death when they breathe their

last (Genesis 25:8; Luke 23:46); and assigning gender to his people, male (man) and female (woman), as he created them sexually and biologically different, but with equal personal dignity and value (Genesis 1:26-28).

Can I be in leadership at Fellowship if I have been divorced?

At Fellowship, we believe divorce is serious because marriage matters deeply to God. At the same time, we deeply believe in the grace, forgiveness, restoration, and transforming power of the gospel. We evaluate leaders not merely by past failures, but by present character, faithfulness, repentance, and spiritual maturity. Different leadership roles may carry varying levels of responsibility and qualifications, especially in Elder and Deacon offices. However, we do not believe that someone is automatically beyond God's ability to restore and use because of divorce.

Practical Steps

For those facing challenges in their marriage, we encourage you to take the following steps as you seek God's wisdom and guidance:

1. Trust God to help you do what feels impossible.

God empowers us through the Holy Spirit to follow his Word, even in difficult circumstances. Seek him in prayer and rely on his strength rather than your own.

KEY SCRIPTURE

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)

2. Invite others whom you trust to offer godly counsel and support.

Do not walk through this alone. God provides the body of Christ—friends, mentors, community, and church leaders—to help guide and support you. Fear, shame, or self-reliance can delay the help you need most. Be aware that in challenging circumstances, we tend to want friends to tell us what we want to hear instead of the biblical truth we need to hear.

KEY SCRIPTURE

"Where there is no guidance, a people falls, but in an abundance of counselors there is safety." (Proverbs 11:14)

3. Seek wisdom from Scripture and prayerfully apply it.

God's Word provides clear direction for how to love, forgive, and navigate challenges in marriage. Spend time in prayer and Scripture, asking God to soften your heart and shape your actions.

KEY SCRIPTURE

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." (Psalm 119:105)

4. Pursue reconciliation whenever possible.

Marriage is designed to reflect God's commitment to his people. If reconciliation is possible, take intentional steps toward healing with the help of trusted community and church leadership.

KEY SCRIPTURE

"If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all." (Romans 12:18)

5. If separation or divorce is being considered, seek wise, biblical counsel.

Major decisions should never be made in isolation. Before taking any steps toward separation or divorce, seek guidance from church leaders, biblical counselors, and trusted believers who will walk with you in truth and love.

KEY SCRIPTURE

"Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed." (Proverbs 15:22)

By taking these steps, you are inviting God into your marriage and allowing him to work in ways that may be beyond what you can see or imagine.

Closing Prayer

A PRAYER FROM THE FELLOWSHIP BIBLE CHURCH ELDERS

Father, thank You for creating marriage and calling it good. Your design for marriage is wise, beautiful, and perfect. Help us as a church to honor marriage as a sacred covenant and a gift from Your hand.

Jesus, thank You for loving us with a faithful, sacrificial love. May every marriage at Fellowship increasingly reflect the love You have for Your church—full of grace, truth, forgiveness, service, and covenant faithfulness.

Holy Spirit, work powerfully in the marriages of our church. Strengthen husbands and wives to love one another well. Bring humility where there is pride, healing where there is hurt, repentance where there is sin, and reconciliation where there is division. Protect marriages from bitterness, selfishness, and temptation, and help couples pursue one another with Christlike love.

We pray especially for struggling marriages—that You would restore what is broken and renew hope where there is discouragement. For those affected by divorce and deep relational pain, bring comfort, healing, wisdom, and grace.

We ask that You would use this document to guide our church in truth and love. Give us biblical conviction, compassion, and wisdom as we seek to honor You in our marriages and relationships.

May every marriage at Fellowship point people to the beauty of the gospel and the glory of Christ.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

This position paper is adapted from the excellent *Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage* statement by Watermark Community Church in Dallas, Texas. We are grateful for their faithful biblical work and partnership in the gospel. Fellowship Bible Church has adapted the document for our context, including an additional section on the role of the church.

Original document: [Watermark Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage Statement](#)