

When a Marriage Dies - How Should We Respond?

by Shane Idleman

The sermon addresses the complexities of divorce and emphasizes the importance of seeking God's guidance and restoration in troubled marriages.

Duration: 58:43

Scripture: 1 Corinthians 7:10

Topics: "Seeking God's Guidance", "Marriage Restoration"

Description

Shane Idleman addresses the complex issue of responding to a dying marriage, emphasizing the importance of seeking God's wisdom rather than cultural loopholes. He highlights that both married and single individuals should understand the gravity of marriage commitments and the potential for restoration, even amidst pain and divorce. Shane shares personal experiences to illustrate the struggles and the need for humility and prayer in navigating marital challenges. He encourages individuals to contend for their marriages and to seek God's guidance in difficult situations, while also acknowledging the reality of abuse and the necessity of separation in certain cases. Ultimately, he calls for a deeper reliance on God for healing and restoration in relationships.

Transcript

It is a difficult message this morning, I'll be honest with you. We are still in the book of 1 Corinthians, 1 Corinthians 10, if you have your Bibles, turn to there. 1 Corinthians 10, I'm sorry, 1 Corinthians chapter 7, verse 10.

And here's the topic. When a marriage dies, how should we respond? When a marriage dies, how should we respond? And now I know what all the singles are doing right now, they're getting ready to check out mentally. How does this apply to me as a single? Well, let me tell you what, you better listen up big time, because the most important decision you'll ever make, apart from salvation, I believe is when you say, I do.

Or you say, I don't, and I must move on because we're unequally yoked and I can't continue dating you. Or if you've been through the fires of divorce, you know exactly what I'm talking about, the pain there. So the wisdom of God's word, let that direct you as a single, not worldliness, not what the culture promotes.

So this message is very applicable to those who are married and also those who are single. And this topic is a big one, is it not? Especially in the church. When a marriage dies, how should we respond? Because what is the question many people are asking? You might not know this, but a lot of Christians are looking for loopholes.

A lot of people are looking for loopholes. How can I get out of this versus how can I make this work? And just, I went on YouTube recently and I've given some messages in the past. One is, can I divorce my spouse because of adultery? You can look that up on YouTube, 70,000 views so far.

Another one, can I divorce my spouse because of abandonment or abuse? Another 70,000 views. I'm thinking this must be a hot topic out there. Now here's why I want to be careful.

It's an important topic. And as pastors, we have to be careful to not go beyond what God's word says. But at the same time, we have to offer biblical counsel, wisdom.

I will just tell you personally, I don't know of the last time I've recommended divorce. I think the heart of God is restoration. I think we can contend for our marriages.

I think we're to call to persevere and stand with our mate and allow God to work in that. However, I'm not naive. Experience teaches you a great deal, doesn't it? I love to hear people teach on parenting they have no kids or divorce.

They lecture a 26-year-old because they're going through a divorce and they say, oh, now you're single for the rest of your life. Doesn't matter, your husband cheated on you, left you, doesn't matter, you need to be single. But they have never experienced the pain of divorce.

They've never experienced the pain of abandonment or your wife having or your spouse having an affair. They've never experienced. Now experience doesn't change God's truth, but it softens your heart.

It humbles you. It makes you say, well, maybe I don't have it all together and maybe I don't quite understand. And the reason this is a hard topic is because the Bible, in my opinion, is fairly clear.

However, there are Christian leaders that are divided on this topic. They would say that if you experience a divorce, one group would say you can never, ever remarry again unless your spouse dies, regardless of the situation. There's another group that says no in the case of adultery.

And then Paul talks about abandonment. What do we do with all that? So just pray maybe quietly to yourself and just that God would give me the wisdom, the grace, the gentleness, the kindness. All week I've been really struggling because I don't want to go beyond what God's word says and give people permission to divorce.

But at the same time, I see in Scripture that there are grounds for divorce and remarriage if adultery occurs. If a person has committed adultery on a consistent basis and they don't want to have anything to do with the marriage, is that person free to marry again? And the church is divided. I probably will get emails for the rest of my life telling me I should repent to the congregation and never preach again and pastor again.

There are denominations who would not, I think of the assemblies of God, if we're throwing out names, might as well throw out names, that I could never preach or pastor because of my past in the 1990s. I

mean, you can be a former homosexual, you can be a former drug addict and be a pastor, but God forbid you carry the big D on your shirt in your early years and you can never pastor again. It doesn't make a lot of sense.

Now depending on the marriage, did someone recently get a divorce and they have no biblical grounds? Yeah, I don't think they can be put in a position of leadership any time soon. So there are so many variables and so many people like to just put a big umbrella over everything and just take that paintbrush and just say, well, you can never pastor again. If you want to hear my story, hopefully I can explain it at some point or many of you have heard it before.

It is somewhat, you know, embarrassing to bring up your past, is it not? Anybody have a bad past? Oh, not too many in the 9 a.m. Okay, come on, everyone in this room, most of you should get your hands up. But the irony is I would not be preaching today. I would not have a tremendous amount of humility because of what God has done in my life.

I'm not a humble person, I'm a prideful person working on humility on a daily basis. But God used my past to break me and to crush me. Without that I wouldn't be here.

Lord knows where I would be. But a long story short, 1990s, I was running in the wrong direction, many of you, some of you know my past, chasing everything but God. And boy, that feels good for a season, doesn't it? It reminds me of a person way up on this river and they're relaxing on their float tube or whatever, or they're tubing this river and they're drinking beer and, oh, this is so relaxing, see, this is fun.

And they maybe have a joint, who knows, and they're just having, oh, this is so much fun. And I'm like, what is that noise? What is that? And somebody says, oh, that's called Niagara Falls. You better get off that river quickly.

See, so sin feels good for a season until that season is over. And long story short, I was a prodigal son, I was married in my 20s, committed, she committed adultery. But once that happened, then we just all, okay, well, if this is over, then I'm going crazy.

Bars, the party scene in my 20s, and it ended up in her filing and leaving and never wanting to have anything to do with the marriage. So that, after a year, broke me. The first year, you know, you thought, okay, I'm gonna have fun, and then you realize how depressing life is.

And that broke me at a state where I finally cried out to God. I remember the house in Quartz Hill, I remember the floor, I remember everything that morning. And I just repented and cried out to God and was filled with the Spirit of God that morning.

The Bible became alive. Back then, I was picking up beer and watching CMT, is it still on? Country music television? You remember Tim McGraw, George Strait, Conway Twitty, George Jones before he died? Oh, there's some great drinking songs, great country songs hitting the bars in Bakersfield and Las Vegas, and it was depressing. And God gave me a love for His Word.

I began to love His Word and put on worship. So everything started to change. Oh, now I love God.

I love the Lord. Look at what happened. And I wanted to go and contend for my marriage, obviously.

And contended for months and years, for a few years. So don't tell me, I don't need to be lectured by people online thinking they know the whole story. They know that, well, then you should remain single.

Well, that means I wouldn't be married, I wouldn't have kids. And they don't understand the context of what happened according to God. Again, it doesn't change God's Word.

My experience doesn't change God's Word, but God's Word lines up with it. So after a season of seeking Him and feeling released, I began to, and that's when I met Morgan. And God began to just confirm so many different things.

So I have experienced that pain. I have experienced a lot of what people are going through. I can relate to them.

I think people get divorced way too easily. They don't contend. They don't seek God.

They move on to plan B and plan A isn't even over yet. So there needs to be a heart of restoration and renewal. But Scripture is clear in certain areas.

I believe when Jesus said that you should not divorce your spouse except for the case of pornea, P-O-R-N-E-I-A, I believe in the Greek, it's any sexual activity outside of marriage. Sex binds the marriage together. And when a spouse decides to break that and cut the commitment off and begins to give their heart to another and begins to be bound to this other person like harlotry, adultery, that breaks that covenant that the couple made.

Now, there's still hope. There's still redemption. God can still work.

But there are clear-cut teachings. Now, it does get difficult. Mental abuse, angry homes, physical abuse.

And I get really upset sometimes when I hear people tell, like, for example, a wife, well, just look at the word, trust God, and just stick with it, honey. Yeah, while you're being beat every other week and belittled and put down and manipulated and lied to, I don't think that's the heart of God. Now, divorce, I don't recommend it.

But I think Paul gives a season where you separate. Because when separation occurs, the partner realizes what they're doing, that they're destroying this marriage. And so people who haven't experienced a difficult marriage, it's like telling somebody, have any of you went through serious depression? And you love when someone tells you, well, just read the Bible.

Just think positive thoughts. Come on, pull yourself up. Get over this.

Like you're just supposed to snap out of it. But wait till they go through it. Wait till they go through it.

Then their heart changes. So that's why this is a hard topic, because just to be honest with you, the majority of the church is getting divorced, and I'd say 90% of them do not have grounds. I have friends I've shared before.

Recently, the divorce just went through. I know Christians moving on, going on with their lives. But thank God I know marriages that are being restored as well.

So that's why we have to be careful in this area, and my encouragement is, I tell the people, please take it to God. If there's plan B, remove plan B. What do you mean by plan B? You know what I mean by plan B. You're dating somebody in your mind, hoping this doesn't work out. That never works out.

You have to say, I'm focusing on God, and what is your will for my life? God, please show me. Let me start by reading an excerpt from the book Sacred Thirst. The bride and the groom are standing in front of everyone, looking better than they have ever looked before, getting so much attention and affirmation.

Everyone even stands when they walk in. So it's easy to think this marriage is about them. It's not.

Just look at the worn out parents sitting in the first pew. They understand this. The only reason these parents are still married is because long ago, they learned how to handle the hurt they caused each other.

They know that the last thing you ever want to do with hurt is to let it define you. That's really what happens with broken marriages. We allow hurt to define us, and the walls we build to protect us end up imprisoning us.

So what is the answer? Well, this might take me two Sundays. I'm hoping to get through it today. So how can we undo the emotional pain that we've experienced from failed relationships? First, understand that our mind is where the battles are either won or lost.

Those who do not forgive or release bitterness, anger, and hurt never experience freedom, happiness, or true restoration. It all starts here. So the only thing you can do, you can't change the heart of the person.

It takes two to marry, but I think it takes one to divorce. You can't change the decisions. You can't change the heart of another person.

So as a believer though, see there's so many different variables. I could take this in so many directions. What about if a believer has forgiven? They're not holding on to bitterness, but they're still in a terrible marriage.

They're still in abusive marriage. What do you do? Ephesians, as you know, let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you with all malice and be kind to one another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, even as God and Christ forgave you. So there's a couple lessons here.

If a person's already doing this, then they need to just continue doing it and allow God to continue to rebuild and redirect them in certain areas. If a person hasn't done this before, then I would encourage you to really look at your heart because most marriages are not fixed or renewed because the person or both parties are holding on to that bitterness, to that animosity and bringing up the past and different things and to have a marriage work, the offender must realize their fault and apologize and repent and work on it. The person who was hurt has to also release and work on forgiveness and see how the two come back together and renew that.

But if you have one over here not willing to participate, it's hard for reconciliation to happen, if at all. So what's the answer? The answer, the short answer is take it to God in prayer and fasting. God knows your situation.

Don't go to a pastor and say, do I have grounds for a divorce? Go to God and say, well God, what are you doing? What are you ministering in my heart? Is separation okay? Can I separate from my spouse during

this season and just seek you? God, I need to know you. I need to show you. And what the wonderful thing that God does is through that pain, through that adversity, he picks you up and he holds you.

That shepherd holds you, it reminds me of the story of the shepherd who would break the lamb, break the leg of the lamb that was wandering from the flock and then he would hold that lamb and through that broken and dependent relationship, that lamb would learn to rely on the shepherd. And see, that's what happens often. Allow that brokenness to create just a thrive and a love and a desire for God.

See, I believe also the greater the brokenness, sometimes the greater the anointing. The greater the brokenness, the more God can use you. The greater the brokenness, the greater level of humility.

The greater the brokenness, the greater the dependence upon God. Oh, those who have been forgiven much love much. You go talk to the prostitute in Jesus' time.

She wept and she loved God. The Pharisees who knew the law of God, they knew the word of God, had no love and no humility. But you go to the person broken by life and just a deep desire for God and saying, God, you restore me.

You restore me. That person has a deep and abiding relationship with God. Yes, there's pain, but wouldn't you rather live in God's arms of forgiveness and restoration and have that relationship and have him get you through the pain than live outside of that? So yes, there is pain, but most people I've talked to who have had a challenging marriage say either two things, and there's some here this morning.

There's going to be some at the second service. They say, but Shane, my relationship with God is good. And they begin to cry.

My relationship with God is so good. I look forward to worship mornings. I look forward to, oh, and they just love that.

See, they have tremendous pain, but they have this love for God and this relationship with God that you couldn't, you couldn't buy if you wanted to. They've got more peace than the CEO with a content marriage and kids and the white picket fence and all that. Or you have the person who is bitter and angry, bitter and angry at God, bitter and angry at life, and they stay bitter and angry.

Can you imagine the 26, 27-year-old going through divorce, remaining bitter at 38, at 48, at 58, and they die, that bitter person. That's one reason I want to preach this message is to encourage you to turn it over to God and let God rebuild that brokenness. I don't quote this person too much, but I might a little bit more.

Johnny Cash. I'm reading his book right now that Greg Laurie recommends, and it is good. Talk about a story of redemption and falling forward and getting back on track.

And he said the most, and I highlighted it last night, I want to share this with you, the most miserable men and women in the world are the ones who know the will of God, but don't do it. And that was his demons. He knew the will of God, but still would turn back to that lifestyle.

And I believe so many Christians are miserable because they know the will of God. They know. Have you ever been there? God, I know what you want me to do.

This is what you want me to do, but I'm over here. I'm miserable. I'm depressed.

And you're over here, but the good thing is God says, just jump back over. Just repent and come back. Thank God for God and his heart.

Just come back. Aren't you glad he's not like us? I'm going to watch for a year. And when I see some real change, and when you go to church every Sunday and you begin to tithe, we check your tax records, you begin to do all these things, you read the Bible, then I'll consider it.

He doesn't do that. He just says return, come home. Michael Reagan, the son of Ronald Reagan, he wrote of his parents' divorce, divorce is where two adults take everything that matters to a child, the child's home, family, security, and a sense of being loved and protected, and they smash it to pieces, and leave it in ruins on the floor, then walk out and leave the child to clean up the mess.

So, here's why this is challenging for a preacher. On one hand, people are listening, they're going to feel convicted, they're going to feel bad because of their past, they can't redo what they've already done. Let me encourage you to turn it over to God.

If this is your situation, give it over to God. He can rebuild, He can renew, He can give you hope again, He can rebuild that relationship. If you're on the brink of divorce, and you think kids are resilient, they'll bounce back, trust me, that's not the case.

It's a lie from the pit of hell. It affects them at a very deep level. God created man and woman to marry, to raise children in that nurturing home where the man's influence and the woman's influence complement each other, not better than, they complement each other.

That's why this big, huge LGBT movement, gay marriage, and saying, well, two men, two women, that is not a good idea for children. That is not a good idea. And I could even get in trouble for saying this, I believe that's a form of child abuse.

When you subject little kids to something that is not of God, is not godly, and is perverted, yes, that will get me in trouble. I don't care anymore. Somebody's got to speak the truth.

Somebody's got to say what the truth is. See, I can love people that struggle with that, but disagree with their lifestyle. I can love, I love the kids, I love the families that struggle with, but it's not how God designed it.

And when are we as a culture going to stop fighting God, stop shaking our little fist at God, and saying, nope, this is how we want to do it. There's beauty in the home where a husband is surrendered to Jesus, not perfect, loving his wife like Christ loved the church, not perfectly, and the wife is there nurturing the children, the father's there. The kids grow and flourish like a well-watered flower in a garden.

And you see all the, everybody's like, mass shootings, and what's going on? I'll tell you what's going on. The family deteriorated decades ago, and we are reaping the whirlwind of what has started in the family. You go back to the 50s, you look at the family unit and how it's been dissolving, and this is the price we are paying.

Is there hope? I believe so if we turn to God. Now to the message. Introduction, how'd I do? I kept the introduction under 30 minutes.

Don't worry, this might take two Sundays. 1 Corinthians 7.10, here we go. But really on something like this you have to set the stage.

You can't just, you know, jump right into this without giving some backdrop of what's going on in marriages and in our culture. 1 Corinthians 7.10, now Paul is writing to the church in Corinth just like he would write to us because they had some questions. Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord.

In other words, Paul you'd see sometimes transitioning from, hey, I think this is a good recommendation. I mean we do that sometimes as a pastor. I'll say, hey, I think this is the direction you should go.

I think this is good advice. Here's what I would do, but God's word isn't clear. You know, there's a gray area on this, but, or you would tell someone, hey, this is what, this is a command from God's word.

This is what God says, and this is very important. So he's saying this is a command from God. If a wife is not to depart from her husband.

See, that's the idea. The two become one flesh. And see, I think if scripture was elevated more and people were taught more about marriage, they might not say I do so quickly.

They might not pick the person they met at the bar after a six pack. Oh, but Shane, he's my soulmate. We just love each other.

No, you've known each other for three days. It's called lust. Let's just, we're shooting each other straight, aren't we? Come on.

You don't date people you aren't attracted to. You should date people you're attracted to. So that attraction is initially what happens.

And then the lust of the flesh starts to take in and take over and you start to compromise. Hmm. They're not, I think they're a Christian.

They said they were. Hmm. There goes a compromise.

They said they'll go to church. If I go, isn't that encouraging? Well, if they're not already going. Red flag.

Ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding, ding. I, I, he's got an anger problem, but I can fix that. That usually multiplies.

It doesn't. I've had people like, well, he chucks a cell phone against the wall and breaks my stuff, but I love him. I know he has an issue with pornography, but he told me I can help him with that when we get married.

See, see how deceptive the lust of the flesh is, the attraction? Use wisdom. That's what we should learn from scripture. Use wisdoms.

So when we say I do, we're saying I don't to a lot of other things. But I know in a group this size, many people listening now live, you've have a past like I had, and you can't rewind it. But let me just give you that encouragement.

You plus God is a majority. God looks at your heart. Like God told David, you've shed too much blood.

You can't rebuild the temple. You can't rebuild the temple. Or David, you can't rebuild it, actually.

That was the first one. But he said, but I see your heart. I see your heart, and I'll count it to you as if you did.

And that scripture really helped me many years ago. It's like, you know, I can't, I can't fix my past. But God, God says, I see your heart and that you would do that.

Even though you can't, I see your heart. I'm going to count it to you as if you could. I'm going to honor that.

I'm going to bless you. And see how it's always getting back on track with God. So he said, a wife is not to depart for her husband.

But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife. Now, pretty clear.

However, there's a lot of gray area, so let's talk about that. So we have two options from 1 Corinthians, right? Remain single or reconcile. Not remain, not separate, go meet someone else, and then think about what your options are.

Do you know that's what most people do? I'm not going to throw out numbers as direct numbers here, but 80% of the people I've talked to who are separated, they already have a girlfriend or boyfriend. I want to shape my divorce as a final, yeah, but you know, I meant such and such, and this might work out good if this doesn't. Like, well, no, God's not going to, God doesn't negotiate.

You have to get everything in your favor. Break off that distraction, is what I call it. Break off that hindrance to prayer and let God do what God does.

You can't have backup plans. It can't be, but God, if you don't do this, I've got this over here. That's not faith.

That's not trust. That's disobedience. You have to say, God, I'm giving up everything, and you show me what to do.

You bring the right person at the right time, in the right setting, with the right environment. I'm trusting you. That's how you trust God.

So you either remain single or you reconcile. Now, if I could interview all of you, I would probably have a hundred different scenarios. Remain single, what does that mean? Well, let's say somebody's in an abusive relationship, and there's some things I could share that would break your heart.

Break your heart to how people talk to their children, talk to their spouse. I remember hearing of one person who, his brother died. Oh, it was actually Johnny Cash's book.

Told you I might quote him more. But when his brother Jack died in a farm accident, his dad said, I wish it was you that died and not Jack. Can you imagine living with that? See, the words we say.

So if you're living with someone like that, abusive, it's hard. I don't have a problem personally with a person saying, I have to step out of this. I have to separate from this toxic, dangerous environment with the kids.

And I have to separate. I have to go to my mom. I have to go somewhere.

See, you're not running to plan B. You're not going to go date. You're not hitting the bar scene. You are separating for the health of your marriage and your mental and emotional health.

I don't have a problem with that. And the people who get mad at me, actually, for suggesting this, are usually the husbands who don't like my advice. I think, yeah, I think she needs to move out because you're being a jerk.

You're being mean spirited. You're nasty. You're selfish.

We don't separate with divorce as the goal. We separate for healing and restoration as the goal. So when you separate, the spouse wakes up and say, look where I'm about ready to lose.

Hopefully, hopefully. But this time of being apart is when I encourage people to seek God even more. Pray more, seek God more, see what God does.

So I don't have a problem with people, according to Scripture here, separating with the hope of reconciliation. Well, how long do I have to remain single? Well, you're asking the wrong person. I only know one person who knows the answer.

And that's who you need to be seeking. Because there's so many variables. What about the spouse isn't changing? What about the spouse now has a girlfriend that would be considered adultery or boyfriend? What about their filing for divorce? How long do I remain single? How long do I contend? Until there's peace.

Seek God. Let him show you that answer. I would never give anyone the answer because I don't know.

I thought there was recently I thought there's no way this is going to work out. Just recently, I thought there's no way this is going to work out. This is going to divorce.

I guess what's working out? What happens when both men and women are filled with the Spirit of God and they're broken, and they're humble? Restoration. See, the Holy Spirit's never divided. So to get restoration of marriage, the Holy Spirit and the believer and the Holy Spirit and the other believer has to be submitted to the work of the Spirit and God brings that relationship back together.

So without that, it's a tough journey. It's hard because you're forcing the flesh to do something. And then there's ulterior motives.

How many times have I heard divorce is going to cost me a boatload of money? Guess I better stay and work it out. Well, that's not going to work. See, humble hearts broken before God.

So two options. You remain single or you reconcile. But people I believe can depart.

What about if there's abuse, mental anguish, unhealthy environment, addictions? There's places where a mom might have two young kids and the guy's coming home or vice versa. This has happened before where the woman coming home always maybe taking speed or crystal meth or heroin or fentanyl now the big thing and they're coming home and they're not a good parent. They're not going to, they're destroying.

What am I supposed to do? Well, the Bible says just stay there and contend with it, deal with it. No, you might need to separate, put your kids in a good environment, maybe with their grandkids and you get healing and wholeness while this joker gets broken before God and repents. So you've got to get bold sometimes on these kind of messages.

I'm tired of families disintegrating and being destroyed because we have this playboy mentality and we think that we can just do whatever we want. God says, he told Malachi, I believe it was the prophet Malachi, I hate divorce. God said I hate it.

I create a male and female to come together in union and bring forth godly offspring and be an example of Christ in the church. I hate divorce. And we need to look at it that way, the same way God looks at it.

So I told you this would be relevant for singles as well. Look for red flags now. The best advice I can give to singles is follow completely after Jesus and see if that person you're considering dating is keeping up.

Are they pushing you towards Christ or are they pulling you away? You start dating, you start dating and you say, listen, I'm committed to sexual purity until I get married. Watch what they do. All right, well if you insist, red flag.

Red flag. Or are they on the same page? You watch them. How do they act? How does a man act around his mom? How does a woman act around her husband or father? Watch them in good settings and bad settings, financial difficulties.

You watch because you're using wisdom. You're using wisdom. God, is this who you, is this, should I date? Should I court? You know, there's big debates out there.

Just whatever you do, is it God honoring? Is it God honoring? I don't think people should date in the sense of let me try this one out. Let me try this one out. Let me try this one out.

Let me try this one out. You meet somebody at church or a good environment. You say, you know, there's a possibility here and you pray.

You pray to God and maybe God will open that door and you use wisdom and you allow God to bring that together. So if you want to call that dating or courting or whatever, you know, there's a time you need to spend with them and their family to see. Now, let me just tell you up front, you're not going to find perfection in anything.

You're going to, if you, if you want to, you will find red flags. It depends how big are the red flags. You know, what, what, what do we not agree on? What do we agree on? Are these, are these hills to die on? Are these big deals or are these not big deals? So singles, just be very careful.

Look for, look for red flags, pray to God and don't let the lust of the eye and the lust of the flesh dictate your, your, your decisions. They should be the caboose of the train, right? Not the engine, not driving it. Verse 12, but to the rest, I, not the Lord say, okay, so now Paul's saying, well, here's a good recommendation.

If any brother has a wife who does not believe and she is willing to live with him, isn't that interesting? Let him not divorce her. So if any brother has a wife who does not believe and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with

her, let her not divorce him.

So in other words, here we go, unequally yoked. Isn't this interesting? God's word says, do not be unequally yoked. But when you are, here's how to handle it.

So what, when God gives us his word, commandments, he's trying to avoid a lot, trying to have us avoid a lot of pain and do things the right way. So if you have an unbelieving spouse, the Bible encourages you to stick with them if they're willing to stay, willing to be in the marriage. So in other words, if unequally yoked, don't unyoke.

Don't say, well, we're not, we're unequally yoked. I'm, I'm just going to break this off. If they're willing to stay there, God encourages us to allow that relationship to continue.

Why? Well, let me get to that in a minute. Basically what this means is if the person is willing to accept your lifestyle and beliefs, I don't think this is, gives a picture of a person saying, I hate your God. I hate church.

You never go into church. It's a picture of like, well, okay, I'm not a believer. I don't really agree necessarily.

You can go to church. I'll try to go sometimes, but I want to live with you. I want to stay married.

You stay in that environment. Why? Well, he says in verse 14, for the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband. Now this doesn't mean saved because they were just called an unbeliever.

So what is he talking about here? Otherwise your children would not be, they would be unclean, but now they're holy. So let's just unpack that for a minute. Sanctified, the word, if you look it up, means set apart, means set apart.

So if you have a believing spouse in the home, there is, there is hope for that home. There is more of God than in a godless home. So in a home where there's no believer, that's a godless home.

But if you have a home where there's a believer, a believing spouse, and they're contending for their marriage, they're contending for their children, they're praying for their children, they're going to church, there's a covering there of God's blessing and honor that's not going to be found in the house of all unbelievers. That one person, remember you plus God is a majority. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart.

A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases. Uh-oh. You ready to get controversial? Don't get tired just yet.

Don't get hungry, we're almost there. But if the unbeliever departs, let him depart. Is that what he's saying? Bye, don't let the door hit you on your way out.

Get out. Let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.

See, this is the big controversial one. But God has called us to peace, for how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife? So starting at the sanctified part, they are set apart for God, even if there's an unbeliever. The godly

influence may lead to salvation.

So if you have godly influence in the home, it could lead to salvation in your children and your spouse. The spirit is working in that house, is it not? You get a wife or a husband that gets up in the morning, they pray for their family, they read a word of God, they do the best they can, they serve God, God's going to honor the prayers of that people. So that home is sanctified, there's a special covering there that you're not going to find in an unbelieving home.

Now it's not the same, I believe, as two believers in the same house, but the spirit of God is working there, that spouse is supposed to stay there for the sake of their husband and their children. Now the kids are holy, I looked at five different commentaries and they're all divided. The bottom line to me is the kids are blessed when one parent contends for their faith and for their household.

The kids are blessed, there's a holiness there. What is the age of the kids? Two years old versus 12. Age accountability, there's a lot.

We could spend a half hour there if you'd like, but I'm assuming most of us agree that the children are better off in a home where even one parent is contending versus no one contending at all. So the encouragement is don't give up, look up, because there's many people here, even listening, that will hear this. I'm the only one in my home standing for faith.

My kids don't respect me, they listen to garbage, my husband won't support me. God says you plus me is the majority. You keep seeking me even though you don't see the fruit.

You don't know what's being grown underneath. You don't even know the water that I've been watering. I'm about ready to explode on your house and open doors that no man can shut and let the spirit of the living God go and convict your children and your husband.

Don't give up, look up, stay on your knees before me, stay in the prayer closet, stay worshiping me. Man looks at the outer, but God sees what's going on in the heart. Oh, I feel that strongly.

That's got to be for someone. If not, I just wasted two minutes. Don't give up.

I've seen God work and work. Often he'll get you to a point of brokenness and tears. Say, God, I see nothing, but I'm trusting in you.

That is real faith, is it not? It's easy. Oh, I have great faith in God. Sure, your kids are in church, your husband's reading the Word, I would too.

But what kind of faith do you have when it seems like life is falling apart? That's where faith, that's where rubber meets the road. The real faith is God, I trust you even though I don't see it. That's faith.

Same thing in our families, in our marriages. So the big question, here we go. I'm only halfway through, I guess we're going to have to do part two.

The big question, when to hold on and when to move on. When do I hold on and contend and when do I move on? I had to fight that one. And there's a lot I want to share with you.

How many can make it back next week? How many can make it back? I see every hand go up. There we go. It's a lot better in person than watching online.

But this is so important that I don't want to rush through it. If an unbeliever departs, let him depart. A brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases.

What does that mean? So can I divorce my spouse? Can I divorce? I mean, if they just leave me, I'm not under bondage, what does that mean? And again, I want to take time, I don't want to rush through that. But let me answer the question first and before I get to the rest of this next week, which the good part about this is I already have next week's sermon done. So now I can work on Psalm, the Psalm study, which I'm so excited to be.

I'm reading, in addition to preparing for Psalm, I'm reading Spurgeon's commentaries on the Psalms. Man, talk about heavy, hard-hitting, good, godly information. These guys in the 1800s could write.

1700s, they weren't distracted by the phone and the media and they could just sit and seek God, sit by a creek and read their Bible for four hours. Don't you get jealous? But anyway, I'm going to talk about that Spurgeon's, I believe it's called Treasures of David and I'm reading commentary. So Psalm next Wednesday is going to be good for those who maybe have hurt through divorce, make sure to be here.

But the big question, when to hold on, when to move on? Maybe this will be for someone. What I had to do, I was coming back to God on fire for God. God was calling me to preach.

Can you imagine that? Even late 29, God's calling me to preach. I'm like, what is this? I hate public speaking. I stutter, I can't read well, I can't public speak.

But when the living God begins to pour out into your heart and that boldness becomes real in your life. So I'm contending that my spouse was like, I'm out of here. It's okay, me and Morgan have talked about this before.

It's actually a good story. So three years go by, what am I doing? Plan B's? No, no plan B's. Now through that time, did I live perfectly? No, of course not.

Like David, I would repent and Lord. It's hard when you go out of a certain lifestyle to immediately, you know, just change everything. Sometimes that lifestyle calls your name.

Johnny Cash book. And it just calls you back and you have to fight that. What is that? What is that Delilah calling me back? And you fight this.

But I was contending for my marriage. That's what I believe God calls us to do. I was contending, I was praying, I was fasting, I was doing everything right.

But I just felt often this sense of release and moving forward. I'm like, how can I do what God's called me to do? I feel he's calling me to preach. I feel, but this, but we're unequally yoked at this point.

They're going this direction. I'm going this direction. So wait and wait and wait.

And I remember I'll never forget the day I went up for prayer and I left so depressed. I left so depressed. I'll never forget their words.

This is a year, a couple of years into it. I'm on fire for God. I'm ready to start my life now.

I'm 29, 30, maybe 20. And they said, you have to wait and contend until the day you die. Even if it's never restored, you can never get remarried.

But she's living with her boyfriend getting married soon. It doesn't matter. And I remember I was so confused.

Now, if that's what God's word says, that's what God's word says, and we live with it. But I don't think it does. I'm going to explain that next week.

I believe there are certain situations where God releases a person. And we need to stop beating people up and acting like divorce is the unpardonable sin. Rejecting Christ is.

We need to have a lot more love and grace in the church. Isn't it funny how the person hooked on pornography and is a glutton, is mean to his spouse, or put down somebody divorced 20 years ago? It just cracks me up. It's just like, you just want to slap them.

I know it's not right. So anyway, anyway, you never want to slap somebody? No. Like, just wake up.

Not hit, but slap. Wake up, wake up. So anyway, three years now.

This is a funny story. I don't know if I should tell this story. In case this person's listening, they might be listening.

I don't know. Anyway, this couple invited me, like a blind date, to go to church. It was a Sunday night in Lancaster.

So here's this guy, I'm at church, on fire for God again. Oh, you've got to meet my sister. You set it up, you know.

I get there, I'm like, oh no. No. But then I'm convicted, like God, I'm going to church for the wrong reason.

I'm on fire for you. So now I'm at this evening service for young adults. I'm just worshiping God, you know, and I'm just, oh, we'll just work.

And then I see Morgan, I'm like, holy smokes. Don't do that. No, no, no, no.

But see, that's the dilemma, because you should be attracted to who you're married to, I think. God forbid you're not. So I see her, I'm watching, is she really worshiping? Is she bringing guys to church? And just watched, you know.

And the pastor's wife at that time, I'm like, hey, have you met that Shane guy? And no, yeah. Oh, actually, we went on a date a year and a half prior, and just didn't work out. She was still kind of not fully surrendered.

I wasn't fully surrendered. I'm like, no, didn't work out. So a year and a half later, God brought us back, and we went to dinner.

I think it was El Trio at the Palmdale Mall. And we sat there for three hours, and I mean, just like, whoa, this is incredible. But again, what does God's word say? Not experience.

So I go back, I'm struggling with like, my ex is in a different state, moving on. I'm like, what do I do? I haven't talked to her in a year. And I said, I told Morgan, I said, I need to at least email her and say, I've met someone, I'm moving on.

I need to know. I need to know. Has God been working your heart? Is there any, you know, where are you at with all this? And I'll never forget the email.

It was like, and paraphrasing, leave me alone. I'm done. Move on with your life for the love of God.

Okay. Okay, hotshot, I can play that game. Now granted, the week prior, my mom said exactly what I've been feeling.

She goes, why don't you email this person and just see where they're at? It's been almost a year. And that was exactly what I had registering in my spirit to do. So I look at scripture as released, not under bondage in such cases, not only release and you're not bound.

I think there's Paul saying you're not bound up, but Jesus didn't say it. Paul did. Well, we'll get to that next week.

But if they leave, they depart, they say, I'm out of here. You're no longer, what does bound mean? Slavery, right? You're no longer tied to that relationship. So if I'm sitting there waiting year in and year out, I'm still bound to that relationship.

I'm still tied to it. He goes on to say that he wants his children to live in peace. So there's no peace.

I'm going to be bound to this for the rest of my life. See, the person, myself in this case, and I was a terrible husband, so I'm not trying to, you know, it was not good. So I never want to blame another person.

I take responsibility actually as a man. I have to take responsibility for that failure, hands down. But there was, I forgot where I was at.

Where was I just going? What point? You all forget, there's different answers out here. Anyway, so there was, it was a good point too. Lord, bring it back.

Bring that point back. Oh yeah, so under bondage. So if I'm under bondage, okay, so the person, let's say, let's use a different example.

The person whose spouse walked away, divorced them, committed adultery, but now they can't go remarry. They're a double victim. Not only are they the victim of a failed marriage and somebody who's left them, now they're bound and they can never move forward for the rest of their life.

That doesn't make any sense to me. And again, we're going to unpack Scripture because you do have two sides to this. Some people say, well, again, next week, that'll be another 10 minutes.

So at that point, so that means now meeting Morgan, God calling us to plant the church and having five wonderful kids, people say that's not of God. You're in sin still. That doesn't make any sense to me.

God called me to pastor. We're changing lives. There's tons of fruit.

Did you follow me the three years before that, when I was single on my face before God, weeping, crying, contending, asking God, show me, taking drives, hours long, going to different churches, saying, God, you

need to answer. I need to hear what your word is. I'm not going out getting drunk and carousing.

I'm on my face before God at four in the morning till eight in the evening. Sometimes, God, I'm seeking you. And he sought and he delivered me and he directed me.

See, they don't tell you all that. They just look at your life. Divorce in your past, disqualified.

Now, if somebody leaves their spouse without biblical grounds, they are disqualified from leadership. There is that, but you can't just put everyone in the same camp without understanding the story, fully unpacking things, how much time has went by, hello. What about if you were all judged on what you did in your 20s? Come on, let's see more smiles than that.

But that's what people like to do. They like to go back to your past, but I know at the core, it's demonic. When people want to harass you or the ministry or what God's going to do and they want to go, anytime people want to go back to your past, way back to your past, I think we should learn from it.

But anytime they want to go back, that's called condemnation. And you don't know how many times the enemy has condemned me. Who do you think you are? How can you talk to people about this subject? You weren't a good, how can you do this? But I often answer, I say I can't, but God can.

Devil, haven't you read the Bible? I have this, we are these earthen vessels, which means broken, fragile pottery, that the excellency and the power is of God and not of us. So God takes the broken and rebuilds them. He takes the pieces that have been shattered and rebuilds it.

That song that they sing, out of the ashes, I will arise. That's when God, when you are the most broken, that's when God does his best work. And you wonder how many people are missing the blessings of God, missing that powerful relationship because they're not broken enough.

They're not humble enough. So this morning, we're going to pray specifically next door. It's been, I don't know if you guys are, you know, if it's, well, we've been gone, but the last couple weeks before we left, the prayer room has been incredible.

People are lined up out in the hallway. We're seeing marriages restored. We're seeing people come to know the Lord.

Just saying, hey, let me pray with you. Let me pray with you. I was at Grace Fest last night.

I just did a five minute announcement, just real quick. And I said, I would love to pray with you if you want to meet us over at the booth. I had no idea.

People would be stopping by for the next hour, praying. One gentleman came up and said, I don't think I know God. I need to know Jesus.

Would you pray with me? You don't know what God does through the power of prayer. So we're going to be praying. Does anyone know a marriage that needs to be prayed for? Every hand needs to go up in this room.

If we want to pray for your marriage, for a friend's marriage, meet us next door. If you're a single who needs direction, you don't know what God's will is, let us pray with you. Even if you're kids, if you're kids and you want to pray for your marriage, your parents, meet us next door.

We want to contend for our families. We want to contend for what the enemy is trying to ruin. Do you see how it starts at the family? That's where it's going.

You preach messages like this and people get upset, but you can have transgenders read at libraries and that's okay. God help us is right. What's going to move this? Protesting? I know, 2020, that'll fix this.

You don't see the writing on the wall? Whoever it is in 2020 is going to be the next civil war in America if we're not careful. Tension is very high. Our only hope, and I'm all for voting.

I'm going to be preaching voting, so get used to it. I'm all for contending for things like that, but the bottom line is prayer is our most powerful weapon. You can protest, you can sign petitions, you can register to vote, all good stuff, but prayer has got to be, because then it's targeted.

Then the spirit of the living God goes forth and does change in our nation. We're going to pray. We're going to be a praying church every Sunday morning at 6 a.m. We are here praying and worshipping.

We'd love to have you join us. I know it's hard to get out of bed. I had the first time in a couple years I had to set my alarm this morning because I was up late.

When that thing beeped, I'm like, oh, golly, and then I have to preach. But once you get here, it's so rewarding. If you're tired, lay on the floor.

I did this morning. Lay on the floor and just cry out to God, God change me. See, guys, we have to get serious now.

Church as normal isn't going to cut it. Just coming to church now and then and quick devotionals. In these dire times, we have to do warfare.

That means a few hours of praying sometimes. That means not being in a hurry. That means saying, I'm not getting lunch.

I'm staying for the second service. Let's go into extended worship and let's pull down heaven. You need to leave, that's fine, but some of us want to pull down heaven and contend for our families.

So we are going to be next door if you want prayer, but I also want to remind you that we're going to have communion as well. It's up front, up in the balcony. Communion, what is communion? We're remembering what Jesus did.

What did Jesus do? Well, if you're a believer, communion is for believers. God, Jesus reconciled us. We're talking about reconciliation in marriage.

Isn't that interesting? God reconciled us through Christ Jesus to a relationship with him. And that's what we're, we take communion. I'm not going to come back up.

We're going to take it at your leisure during the next few songs. We also have baptisms after the second service. So if you want to get baptized, let us know.

We'd love to have you just get baptized after the second service. But I'll leave you with this question for some of you. Are you reconciled with God? See, I meet people sometimes.

They have a decent marriage, but they're not saved. Many AA meetings across our nation are meeting this morning sober, but not saved. They're content.

Like Ray Comfort, when he spoke here, he said he was content. Things were going good, but they're not saved. So think about that question.

Think about that question. Do you truly know Christ? Do you truly know Christ? I got permission to mention this briefly, but I'm kind of going back and forth. I prayed with a man right before we left for vacation.

I prayed for him right there in that prayer room. He took his life this week, and it broke me. Why didn't I ask him if he knew Jesus? Sure, I prayed.

We prayed. Loved the church. God, brevity of life.

Church, we've got to be a praying church.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31868.mp3>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/when-a-marriage-dies-how-should-we-respond/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net