

Are Non-Christians Amenable To God's Law On Marriage?

Introduction: The covenant relationship we enjoy in marriage is a beautiful blessing of God, but unfortunately with the divorce rates soaring there are few of us who have not been touched in some way by the tragedy of divorce. There are some that have experienced the pain of divorce in a deeply personal way, while there are others who have witnessed the destruction of divorce in the lives of loved ones and brethren. Regardless, the anguish of the division of a marriage and family leads us to appreciate the Lord's perspective, when He said, "*I hate divorce*" (Malachi 2:16).

There can be no doubt that Satan has attacked our families through divorce and we must not only work diligently to guard and protect our marriages, but we must also consider what the Bible teaches concerning the subject of marriage, divorce and remarriage. Far too many pulpits, elderships, and churches have been silent either in teaching or practice on this subject.

In order to "*honor marriage*" (Heb. 13:4) we must give our hearts and minds to offer compassion to those who have been hurt by divorce, while at the same time expressing committed resolve to uphold the word of God on the subject of marriage, divorce, and remarriage. As we strive to share the gospel this will be a question we must consider from a biblical standpoint!

I. What Standard Will We Use?

- a. We must put Christ before all of our closest relationships (Luke 14:26).
- b. There is great danger in allowing our emotions to determine our understanding of biblical teaching.
 - i. Reasoning from consequences is unwise.
 1. "It seems to me..." (Pro. 14:12).
 2. "That is not fair..." (Isa. 55:8-9).
 3. There are difficult and complicated scenarios that may arise, which require wisdom and discernment, however, such situations cannot dismiss biblical teaching (Jeremiah 10:23).
 - ii. H.E. Phillips said it well: "The marriage, divorce and remarriage issue will probably never be resolved for all. It is not because the

word of God is not clear on the matter, nor does the real issue hang on the definition of some words used in the Bible. The issue is difficult to resolve because of human involvement and situations with emotional overtones that cry out for some favorable answer from the word of God to justify the human element. Many doctrines reign from that same background.” (“Introduction” to *Smith-Lovelady Debate*, i).

c. Our standard must be the word of God (2 Timothy 2:15; 3:16-17).

II. **Understanding the Position: *Are Non-Christians Amenable To The Law of Christ?***

a. The question of the application of Jesus teaching to non-Christians.

i. The position under consideration is the notion that Jesus’ teaching concerning marriage, divorce, and remarriage only applies to those who are Christians.

ii. Therefore, those who are not Christians, according to this view, do not commit adultery when they violate the principles of the New Covenant concerning marriage, divorce and remarriage (Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11-12; Luke 16:18; and Matthew 19:9).

b. Examples of this teaching:

i. E.C. Fuqua:

1. “All His law and legislation are exerted in the church, and over its members exclusively; so that the world is in no sense under the law of Christ.”¹ (Fuqua, 5).

2. While in the world, people cannot be with or without ‘a Scriptural cause’ for anything, seeing they are not under Christian law, but under *Civil Law* exclusively.” (Fuqua, 6).

3. “Thus if a man marries a woman, then leaves her in destitution for another, he sins against civil law—God’s only law in the world.” (Fuqua, 6).
4. “They were not ‘living in adultery’ in the world, because adultery is a violation of God’s specific law; and people in the world are not under any specific law from God. They are not therefore required to repent of any specific sins.” (Fuqua, 3).

ii. Homer Hailey²

1. “In considering Matthew 19:3-9, it should be carefully noted that Jesus is talking to Jews, men in covenant relationship with God...Gentile people out of covenant relationship with God are not under consideration” (Hailey, 55).
2. “It appears that nothing could be clearer than that Matthew 19:3-10 referred not to the world, but to the citizens of ‘the kingdom of heaven’, the kingdom He came to establish.” (Hailey, 55).
3. “The alien, not being under Christ’s covenant, is not judged by its laws, but is judged by the universal moral law under which he lives” (Hailey, 25).

c. Thus, our primary question is, “Are non-Christians accountable to the Law of Christ?”

III. Non-Christians Are Amenable To The Law of Christ.

a. What does it mean to be amenable?

- i. The term “amenable” simply refers to being accountable and responsible to the law of Christ.
- ii. One is responsible before the law of Christ regardless of whether or not they choose to submit to His teaching.

² Many of us have been the beneficiaries of brother Homer Hailey’s writings. The reference to men who have taught different views regarding this issue is for the sake of clarity concerning what I consider to be unscriptural teaching and it is intended to serve as an encouragement to weigh what any of us teach by what the Scriptures present.

- b. Jesus Christ has sovereign authority over the entire world.
 - i. Jesus has been given “all authority in heaven and in earth” (Matt. 28:18).
 - ii. Christ has “power over all flesh” (John 17:2).
 - iii. He will “judge the world in righteousness” (Acts 17:30-31).
 - iv. Christ is the “blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords” (I Tim. 6:16).
 - v. The world will be judged by the word of Christ (John 12:47-48).
- c. The world is responsible to obey the law of Christ.
 - i. The gospel was to be preached to “all nations” and “every creature” (Matt. 28:19-20; Mark 16:15).
 - ii. Jesus will return from heaven “with his mighty angels in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God...” (2 Thess. 1:7-8).
 - iii. The alien sinner is under obligation to obey “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 8:2).
 - iv. Therefore, non-Christians are accountable to the law of Christ.
- d. How did the non-Christian initially become a sinner?
 - i. Where there is no law, there can be no transgression or sin (Rom. 4:15).
 - ii. Sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4).
 - iii. What law defines sin and unrighteousness if it is not the law of Christ (I John 5:17)?

IV. God Has One Body Of Truth For Both Non-Christians and Believers.

- a. God does not have one set of laws for the non-Christian and another set of laws for the Christian.
- b. The doctrine of Christ is directed to both Christians and alien sinners.
 - i. The gospel is preached to alien sinners (Mark 16:15-16; Rom. 10:14-17) and to Christians (Gal. 2:14).
 - ii. The word of God is addressed to the alien sinner (Acts 13:5-7) and the Christian (2 Tim. 4:2).

- iii. The faith was delivered to the non-Christian (Acts 6:7) and the Christian (Jude 3).

V. What Law Is The Alien Sinner Under?

a. Civil law alone?

- i. This is the argument that Fuqua presented in his written debate with Thomas B. Warren in 1954.
- ii. However, the Athenians were commanded to repent of their idolatry in order to be saved. Such idolatry was not a violation of civil law, but God's law (Acts 17:22-31).
- iii. The Gentiles were guilty of all kinds of sins prior to their conversion to Christ, which were not against the civil law of their day (I Cor. 6:9-11; cf. I Pet. 4: 2, 3).

b. Are All Non-Christians Under Universal Moral Law?

- i. Advocates of the position under review labor to build their case as follows (1) There was a universal moral law that condemned the Gentiles; (2) the universal moral law is still in effect for all alien sinners, and (3) non-Christians are not under the law of Christ (Warnock, 12).
- ii. The Gentiles from Adam to Christ were under law or they could not have sinned, but the issue is what law are they under today?
- iii. Some have contended that this "universal moral law" of Romans 2:13-15 constitutes the "law in the heart" of the Gentiles presently.
 - 1. What is this "law in the heart"?
 - a. The Gentiles did not have a codified law like the Jews and, therefore, are described as those "without the Law" (Rom. 2:12).
 - b. We must recognize that Paul is not describing all Gentiles in light of Romans 1:18-32, but rather the situation when Gentiles did carry out actions that were commanded in the Law of Moses.

- c. It is noteworthy that the text says that it was “the work of the law” that was written on their hearts.
- d. Donnie Rader comments, “Though the Law of Moses was not given to the Gentiles, they had adopted some of those moral principles found in it... They were guided by what their nature prompted them to do and thus became a law to themselves” (Rader, 93).
- e. Moses Lard also writes, “Some have supposed the reference to be a natural sense of right inherent in all men, a sense either innate in the soul or springing up spontaneously in it as the inner life unfolds. The reference certainly is to a sense of knowledge of right relative to certain duties. But how came the Gentiles by that sense? I should rather think it formed on unperished traditions of the divine will, communicated to the early fathers of mankind ... a natural or inborn sense of right ... I deem a very hazardous assumption” (Lard, 88-89).
- f. Yet, it must be recognized that the moral law for Gentiles was before the gospel of Christ. Paul proclaims, “On the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus” (Rom. 2:16).

iv. The real issue is decided upon the question of whether or not the universal moral law is still in effect?

- 1. If one argues that the universal moral law under which Gentiles were living prior to the gospel of Christ is fully revealed in the gospel, does it not follow that such a law would condemn “covenant breaking, fornication, adultery, and all other sins of a moral nature?” (Warnock, 15). If not, why not?

2. An evaluation of passages advanced in defense of the position that there is a universal moral law distinctive from the gospel which applies to non-Christians today:
 - a. Romans 8:2: “For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death.”
 - i. “The law of sin and death” does not refer to a universal moral law or the Law of Moses, but rather the ruling principle of sin and death (Rom. 7:23).
 - ii. The Law of Moses was powerless to free us from the ruling principle of sin and death, whereas, the law of the Spirit of life (the gospel) does free us from sin and death (Rom. 8:3, 4; Heb. 2:14).
 - iii. It is Biblically irresponsible to argue that this phrase refers to a universal moral law distinct from the gospel, which continues to apply today from this phrase.
3. I Corinthians 15:56-57: “The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law; but thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
 - a. The argument is asserted that the law from which Christians are rescued in this passage is not the Law of Moses or the Law of Christ, but a universal moral law.
 - b. This argument is based on the assumption that the law of Christ cannot bring death or condemnation, but this argument is fallacious.
 - c. Simon the sorcerer was spiritually dead because of his sin as a new Christian (Acts 8:19-24); James warns Christians of spiritual death (James 5:19-20);

the sexually immoral man was in a condemned state (I Cor. 5:1-13).

d. Obviously the law of Christ can both save and condemn (John 12:47-48; 2 Thess. 2:10-12).

4. "Not under law" (Rom. 6:14)

a. Paul argues that we are not under "the law of works," but rather "the law of faith" (Romans 3:27).

b. When he denies we are "under law," but "under grace" he is denying that we are in a works based system of justification.

c. However, he is not denying that we are under "the law of Christ" (I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; James 1:25).

d. There is nothing in the book of Romans that indicates that a universal moral law applies to all non-Christians today.

c. All of humanity is subject to Christ's law on marriage, divorce and remarriage.

i. Jesus' teaching about MDR is universal.

1. Although, many divergent views on marriage, divorce, and remarriage attempt to do so, Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:3-9 cannot be restricted to only those under the Law of Moses, nor can it be limited to Christians.

2. The question Jesus was asked was, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" (Matt. 19:3).

3. When He answers the question, He grounds His response in God's creation of marriage (Gen. 2:24).

4. When the Pharisees bring up the question of Deuteronomy 24 the Lord does not debate with them about the Law of Moses, but He emphasizes, "from the beginning it was not so" (Matthew 19:8).

5. The Lord was not simply explaining the old Law, but He was stating His law, which was rooted in the original intent of the Creator for the marriage relationship.
 6. “The current disposition of some to justify divorce for any reason if there is no remarriage causes me to stress that the sin Jesus speaks of here rests in divorce, not remarriage. Such a divorce is wrong on three counts. It is wrong because it shows no love for the mate. It is wrong because it could push the divorced mate into a damning relationship. And it is wrong because it could involve another otherwise innocent person in adultery...” (Earnhart, 48).
 7. Christ’s usage of the term “whosoever” in the application of teaching regarding marriage and divorce is significant (Matt. 5:32; 19:9; cf. 7:24; 11:6; 12: 32, 50; 21:44).
- ii. Consequences of a denial of the alien sinner being amenable to the law of Christ:
1. Rader insightfully notes, “...Some of those who argue that Jesus’ teaching doesn’t apply to the alien are the same ones who argue that baptism washes away their sin of adultery. How could there be adultery if they are not subject to the law of Christ on divorce and remarriage?” (Rader, 181).
 2. Kyle Pope responds to those who argue that Matthew 19:9 does not apply to alien sinners when he writes, “This conclusion is curious. Could we apply the same rationale to Jesus’ conversation with Nicodemus? He told him, ‘unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God’ (John 3:5). He was a Jew, in covenant relationship with God – does that mean baptism does not apply to Gentiles? Is the alien sinner not addressed?” (Pope, 616)

3. Does Jesus really have more permissive guidelines regarding marriage for the unbeliever, then other more restrictive guidelines for the one in Christ? Certainly not!
4. Where does the universal moral law teach the terms of pardon such as faith, repentance, confession, and baptism into Christ?
5. Where does the universal moral law condemn the use of instrumental music in worship to God?
6. Should we, therefore, fellowship alien sinners who refuse the terms of pardon or participate in unscriptural worship because they are not amenable to the law of Christ?
7. If an exception is made in part, why not in the whole?
8. To ask these questions is to answer them, but they reveal the logical conclusions of such a teaching.

VI. The Nature of a Covenant.

a. Misunderstanding of covenant accountability.

- i. The foundation of the view that the alien sinner is not amenable to the law of Christ is the notion that in order to be accountable to the New Covenant one must submit to its demands.
- ii. Homer Hailey writes, “The alien is not under the covenant law of Christ until he brings himself under it by obedience to its terms” (Hailey, 52).
- iii. Again he states, “The alien is not under the covenant of Christ, having never submitted to its conditions or demands” (Hailey, 60).

b. Defining “Covenant”

- i. “In God’s case, covenant indicates not a mutual agreement but a sovereign unilateral dispensation of grace by God, a command, an obligation imposed by the Creator on His creatures” (Earnhart, 227).
- ii. New Bible Dictionary: “The first occurrence of the term in Scripture is Gn. vi.18, where the reference is to the prediluvian Noahic

covenant. In this brief reference we have already an intimation of what covenant is. **The thought is as far removed as can be from that of compact, or agreement between God and Noah.** God announces to Noah that He will establish His covenant with him. It is a sovereign dispensing of grace on God's part, and the security arises from action of God. It is God's covenant, and He establishes it. Flowing from this dispensation to Noah there are corresponding obligations" (Murray, 264).

iii. Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament: **The original meaning of the Heb. *Berith* ...is not "agreement or settlement between two parties," as is commonly argued.** *Berith* implies first and foremost the notion of "imposition," "liability," or "obligation," as might be learned from the "bond" etymology discussed above. Thus we find that the *berith* is commanded....("he has commanded this covenant," Psa. 111:9; Jgs. 2:20), **which certainly cannot be said about a mutual agreement.** As will be shown below, *berith* is synonymous with law and commandment (cf. e.g., Deut. 4:13; 33:9; Isa. 24:5; Psa. 50:16; 103:18) and the covenant at Sinai in Exod. 24 is in its essence an imposition of laws and obligations upon the people (vv.3-8)" (Vol. 2, Weinfeld, 255).

- c. Biblical examples of the term "covenant" referencing a "command," "law," or "promise."
- i. God's promise to not destroy the earth by a flood again is described as a covenant (Gen. 9:8-17).
 - ii. Genesis 17:2-8 uses the term covenant to refer to God's promise to Abraham to multiply his seed and make a great nation.
 - iii. The Ten Commandments are called a covenant (Exodus 19:5; 34:27-28; Deut. 4:13; Heb. 9:4).
 - iv. In Exodus 24:12 YHWH describes His covenant as "the law and the commandment which I have written for their instruction."

- v. The Lord uses the term “law” and “covenant” interchangeably (Jer. 31:33; Heb. 10:16).
 - vi. Joshua 24:25 shows that a statute and ordinance can be described as a covenant
 - vii. A covenant is a command (Joshua 23:16).
- d. Application of the term “covenant” to this question.
- i. Our amenability to the New Covenant is not based on our agreeing to submit to its demands, but our reception of the benefits of the New Covenant is dependent on our willingness to surrender to its obligations.
 - ii. Some will ask, “Are alien sinners sinning by not partaking of the Lord’s Supper?” The ultimate answer is “yes,” in the sense that God would have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth (I Tim. 2:4).
 - iii. The Lord desires that all repent and worship Him (2 Pet. 3:9; Acts 17:26-27).
 - iv. It is very important that we not confuse the enjoyment of the privileges of a covenant with being accountable to the covenant.
 - v. All of humanity is accountable to the law of Christ!
 - 1. Paul wrote, “To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though **not being myself under the Law**, so that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, **though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ**, so that I might win those who are without law...I do all things **for the sake of the gospel**, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it” (I Cor. 9:20-21, 23).
 - 2. The apostle makes it clear that the “law of God” under which he was living was “the law of Christ.”

3. So it is today – all men and women are under the law of Christ.

VII. What About the “R” Word – REPENTANCE?

a. Defining repentance:

- i. It is required for the alien sinner (Acts 2:38; 17:30-31) and the Christian who sins (Acts 8:22-23).
- ii. Repentance is motivated by godly sorrow, inclusive of a change of mind, and productive of reformation of life (Matthew 3:2, 8; 2 Cor. 7:8-11; I Thess. 1:8-10).
- iii. We must cease from sin (Rom. 6:11-13; 2 Cor. 1:20-21; I Pet. 4:1, 2) The heart of the issue is not undoing the past but it is ceasing the sin!
- iv. In preaching repentance John the Baptist was imprisoned for telling Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his brother Philip’s wife (Matt. 14:3, 4; Mark 6:18).³
- v. Earnhart again writes, “...It is no more conceivable that penitent hearts should continue in fornication, adultery, and homosexuality, than that they should go on hating, lying, or stealing. The Lord is merciful indeed, but only to those who repent with a broken heart and turn from their transgressions. Grace will not abound to those who continue in sin (Rom. 6:1-2)” (Earnhart, 151-52).

b. Is the sin merely in the breaking of the covenant or can one live in adultery?

- i. Hailey declares, “To demand that a remarried couple break their marriage covenant on the basis of repentance rests on the assumption that their marriage is ‘an adulterous marriage’ or ‘they are continuing to live in adultery’ ... The sin was in breaking the covenant by the wife (or husband) in order to marry another and not

³ Some argue that the only thing John was condemning was that Herod had his brother’s wife while his brother was still living in violation of Leviticus 18:16; 20:21. Would it have been acceptable for him to have taken his “neighbor’s wife,” but not his brother’s wife? Is this not a violation of the principles of Genesis 2:24 as expressed by the Lord in Matthew 19:4-6.

in a 'continuous sexual adulterous condition.' Therefore, repentance demands that they do not break such a covenant again" (Hailey, 71-72)

- ii. The concept that the sin is merely the breaking of the covenant, therefore, one who has unscripturally divorced and remarried can repent of that action, but continue in the resulting marriage is nowhere taught in the word of God.
- iii. The term "adultery" is not used in that way in the Scriptures:
 1. When Jesus warned of a man who looks on a woman with evil desires and commits adultery with her in his heart is he describing one who is fantasizing about breaking his marital covenant or one who is fantasizing about sexual activity with a person to whom he is not married (Matt. 5:28)?
 2. In Matthew 5:32 the Lord speaks of a woman who is divorced by her husband for a reason other than sexual immorality, who then remarries another man.
 3. When she does so we find that she commits adultery. She commits adultery when she enters into a sexual relationship with another man.
- iv. Can one live in adultery?
 1. Whether "adultery" is used literally as is the case in Matthew 5:32; 19:9; Mark 10:11, 12; and Luke 16:18 or in a figurative sense regarding Israel committing spiritual adultery with idols the concept always includes a third party.
 2. Grammatically, all of the preceding verses indicate that when one enters into an adulterous marriage he or she continues to engage in sexual immorality whenever there is sexual intimacy with a person to whom one is not bound biblically" (Warnock, 31-32).

3. Ray Summers comments, “The present tense indicates progressive action at the present time...” thus indicating that one can live in an adulterous relationship (Summers, 11).
4. Paul illustrates justification by faith by appealing to the marital bond when he writes, “For the married woman is bound by law to her husband while he is living; but if her husband dies, she is released from the law concerning the husband. So then, if while her husband is living she is joined to another man, she shall be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from the law, so that she is not an adulteress though she is joined to another man” (Rom. 7:2, 3).
 - a. The term *chrematisei* translates into the phrase “she shall be called.”
 - b. It is a term that refers to a warning, admonition, or revelation from God (Matt. 2:12, 22; Luke 2:26; Acts 10:22; 11:26; Heb. 8:5; 11:7; 12:25).
 - c. Therefore this woman is called an “adulteress” by the law of God so long as she is married to another man while her rightful husband lives (1 Cor. 7:39).
 - d. Were her husband to have died she would not be an “adulteress.”
5. Paul clearly teaches that one may “live in adultery.”
 - a. The apostle specifies several sins, “sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amount to idolatry” (Col. 3:5).
 - b. He warns that God will bring wrathful judgment on these types of sin (Col. 3:6; Heb. 13:4).
 - c. Then he says, “and in them you also once walked when you were living in them” (Col. 3:7).

- d. Why would Paul warn us of the danger of living in such sins if it were impossible to do so?
- v. What about David and Bathsheeba?
 1. Attempts to use this case in order to dismiss the notion of repentance demanding the separation of a marriage because of Jesus' teaching.
 2. Hailey wrote, "The contention that Genesis 2:18-24 was recognized as law which demanded that a person who takes the wife of another must give her up as demanded by repentance is disputed in the case of David... Surely, no one would deny that David repented, yet he was permitted to keep the woman as his wife. Repentance did not demand that she be put away or that the two live apart for the remainder of their lives" (Hailey, 72, 73).
 3. Observations of this illustration:
 - a. David was not an alien sinner, but a child of God. How does David's example as a child of God, establish the right for remarried divorced alien sinners to remain together?
 - b. David was guilty of several sins, but he married Bathsheeba after Uriah was dead (2 Sam. 11:27).
 - c. The example of David is often used to establish a broader view of grace in justifying those who remain in adulterous relationships.
 - i. Hailey again argues, "Will not the same God of loving kindness and tender mercies forgive and blot out sins under a system of grace as He did under a system of law?" (Hailey, 73).
 - ii. There was grace available under the Old Covenant and there is a law aspect in the New

Covenant of grace (Gen. 6:8; Psa. 51; I Cor. 9:21; Gal. 6:2; James 1:25).

- iii. Grace does not permit a sinful way of life, but leads us to be a new creation (Titus 2:11-15; Jude 4).
 - d. David lived during a time when God made concessions due to the hardness of hearts (Matt. 19:7-9). The question is not what David did, but what does Jesus allow?
 - e. David also engaged in polygamy – the argument that whatever was good enough for David under the Old Covenant is good enough for me under the law of Christ is absurd.
- c. Are Adulterous Marriages Washed Away At Baptism?
- i. It is true that through the grace of God and the blood of Christ sins are washed away when we are baptized (Acts 2:38; 22:16).
 - ii. However, baptism does not permit one to continue to live in sin, but requires a heart of repentance (Rom. 6:3, 4).
 - iii. If one can continue in an adulterous marriage then they may also continue in polygamy once baptized.
 - iv. What sin can one continue to live in simply because they have been baptized? This is a misunderstanding of the transformation of conversion to Christ.

VIII. How Serious Is This Teaching?

- a. It is dangerous error that will impact the salvation of souls.
 - i. Interestingly Hailey characterizes what he calls “the generally accepted view”⁴and “traditional teaching” as “dangerous error” (Hailey, 9) that is “solely of man” which is more akin to the

⁴ By phrases such as “the generally accepted view” (9) and “traditional teaching (74) brother Hailey references the position that I have presented in this lecture as the truth regarding marriage, divorce, and remarriage as taught by Christ and as applying to all of humanity.

“doctrine of penance than to the doctrine of grace,” which is “not by the word of God” (Hailey, 74).

- ii. Yet, it is here that we must take a stand against a teaching that is indeed dangerous and contrary to the word of God and the very words of Christ.
- iii. This is not a doctrine we can afford to simply ignore, but it is a teaching that we must be aware of in order to share the fullness of Christ’s teaching concerning our marriages and families (2 John 9-11).

b. What must we do as disciples of the Lord?

- i. Study: When there are differences, we must study lovingly, honestly and openly with a view toward the authority of the Scriptures (Acts 15:1-22; 17:10-11).
- ii. Live: Give our all to submit to the application of God’s truth (Matt. 7:24-27; James 1:22-25).
- iii. Preach: The people of God have a responsibility to instruct one another in the truth. How could we be silent on an issue of this magnitude (Acts 20:27; 2 Tim. 4:2)?
- iv. Respect and support the truth (2 Thess. 2:10-12; 2 Tim. 2:15).
- v. Love one another enough to share the truth even when it is difficult (1 Pet. 1:22).

Conclusion: It is my prayer and hope that we can help each other to always examine our understanding of the Scriptures and devote ourselves to help each other be with the Lord in eternity. It is also my hope that my brethren in the Lord would love me enough to correct me if I were to depart from truth. May we all strive to the live to the “praise of His glory” (Eph. 1:6, 12, 14)!

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