

Options That Married People Do **Not** Have

by Bill Crews

When two people are married legally (according to the civil laws they live under, Rom. 13:1-7), and in the eyes of God (according to the law of God who originated marriage, Gen. 2:18-24; Rom. 7:2-3; Matt. 5:32; 19:3-6, 9 -- and the law of God supersedes the ordinances of men), they often vow to love, honor, and cherish one another for better or worse, in sickness and in health, and in prosperity and in adversity until death parts them. In fact, whether such vows are made a part of the wedding ceremony or not, such obligations inhere in the marriage relationship, and husbands and wives are expected by God to live up to them.

So many couples, both young and old, think they just have to get married (and they are in such an emotional romantic mood that hardly anyone can talk them out of it), but they (either both of them or one of them) soon decide that they don't have to (or should that be "want to") stay married. But God has given them no such option! Jesus said, *"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder"* (Matt. 19:6).

Some decide that they want a divorce from a mate because they are "no longer in love" with that mate. They should have been certain about their love before the marriage. And they need to know that God commands husbands and wives to love one another, Eph. 5:25, 28, 33; Titus 2:4 (and these passages were written during a time that in many cultures parents arranged the marriages of their children). Husbands and wives do not have the option of deciding to stop loving one another. Some decide that they want a divorce because a mate has contracted a debilitating disease or has been paralyzed by an accident. They don't want to be tied down by "a cripple," but God has not given them that option. The unfortunate mate needs them more than ever, and they need to show the nobility of their love, their character, and their commitment. Some decide that they want a divorce because they have found someone else that they "truly love" (or like better), someone who also shows greater love for them (their perception) than their mate. But what kind of person would become romantically involved with another man's wife or another woman's husband? Could such a person ever be trusted as a husband or a wife? (And could they be trusted?) But, again, God did not give them any such option. Marriage is for life, and not "until you find someone you like better."

Some decide that they want a divorce because they "just don't get along well" with their mate, or they "really weren't ready for such a commitment," or they have found that "they are no longer compatible" with their mate, or they "don't feel loved and important," or they "argue all the time," etc., but God has given them no such option. Grow up, mature, get help, but work out your problems. The majority of divorced and remarried people admit that they were better off in their first marriage than they realized. Marriage is of God; He who originated it has a right to regulate it. He has done so in the Bible, the revelation of Himself and His will for mankind. God's plan is one man and one woman for life with one exception. That one exception is fornication (sexual immorality). The innocent and faithful mate has been given the right (not the duty) to divorce the guilty mate [and] marry another. The guilty mate has been given no such right. When two people marry, they have entered a serious relationship. Both need to be sure that they are both ready for such a commitment. People may change their minds and go back on their promises, but God's law does not change.

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