

GCC Position on Divorce and Remarriage

One of the core values of Grace Community Church is biblicism – we believe that the Bible is God’s inspired Word, and through it and His divine power He has given us “everything pertaining to life and godliness” (2 Pet 1:3,4). Where the Bible is clear we want to stand firm, and where it is unclear or uncertain, we want to encourage the most loving action that is consistent with the character of God. God’s intent is for marriage to be indissoluble - God is pro-marriage. Our posture will always be one of restoration, healing, compassion, and help. We also have the assurance that if we have transgressed God’s commands, we can come to Him in true repentance and He will forgive us of our sins (1 Jn 1:9).

After carefully considering the Scriptures, the elders of GCC have come to the following conclusions concerning the topic of divorce and remarriage. There is much more involved in this topic than can be presented here. Those interested in more detail, or who wish to discuss a particular situation should contact the elders or pastoral staff of GCC.

1. God created marriage, not man (Gen 2:18-25). Therefore the meaning of marriage, its purpose and governing principles are first and foremost to be found in God’s Word. God’s laws about marriage and the state’s laws can differ, but there are consequences for disobeying God’s laws, even when such actions are allowed by the state’s laws. Man’s laws may change; God’s don’t.
2. God’s design for marriage is multifaceted:
 - it’s a covenant (Mal 2:14);
 - it’s intended to be indissoluble (Matt 19:6);
 - it’s for the purpose of companionship (Gen 2:18), procreation and production of godly offspring (Gen 2:24), child rearing (Deut 6:7, Eph 6:4), and pleasure (Deut 24:5); and
 - it’s a visible demonstration of Christ’s relationship with the Church, His Bride (Eph 5:22-32, Rev 19:7).
3. The Bible mentions two circumstances where divorce is permitted, though even in those cases it isn’t commanded:
 - Adultery (Matt 5:32, Mk 10:11,12) – this includes all kinds of sexual immorality (e.g., homosexuality, incest)
 - Desertion by an unbelieving spouse (1 Cor 7:15). In the specific case where one partner in a marriage becomes a believer and the other does not, if the unbelieving partner wishes to leave, this is permissible.
4. The Scriptures allow for a temporary separation of marriage partners for unspecified reasons (1 Cor 7:11). We interpret this as God providing an option for a marriage partner who is in a dangerous situation, either physically or mentally. This separation is intended to allow the partners to pursue reconciliation safely, and often a Christian counselor can serve a couple in that process. The partners must remain faithful to each other, or else they commit adultery; the separation is not a divorce.
5. Remarriage is permitted (to a believer) following a divorce that was permissible on biblical grounds. If a divorce was obtained for non-biblical reasons, either spouse who becomes involved in a sexual relationship with someone else, even marriage, commits adultery (Matt 5:32, Mk 10:11,12). If one spouse of a divorce remarries, the original marriage is dissolved, and the other spouse is free to remarry (Deut 24:4)
6. God’s principles concerning divorce and remarriage apply to everyone, whether they are believers or not. As believers, we have the sure knowledge that following God’s commands is better than following our own desires (Prov 3:5,6), and we show our love for Christ by following His commands (Jn 14:21) We also have the assurance that if we transgress God’s commands, we can come to Him in true repentance and He will forgive us of our sins (1 Jn 1:9). This applies to the area of divorce and remarriage just as it does to other areas of life. If a believer persists in sin, God has provided for a graduated course of discipline whose goal is to lead the believer to repentance (Matt 18:15-17, 1 Cor 5:1-13)
7. The spouse of a biblically permissible divorce and a repentant spouse of a non-biblical divorce are free to serve in the church in the same way as any other believer (1 Pet 4:10, Rom 12:6ff). Other parties of divorce and/or remarriage will be encouraged to put their energy into understanding God’s principles in this area of their life, and then putting them into practice in accordance with God’s Word.