



Statement on Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage

In addition to our doctrinal statement¹ the elders at Faith Community Bible Church have written several papers which articulate in further detail various areas of practical theology, Christian living, and philosophy of ministry. The purpose of providing these papers is to additional clarity to what are often times confusing issues.

The scope of these documents and their intended use at FCBC is to provide a general guideline for what we do not want to teach against. The footnotes and appendices are intended to serve the reader in explaining how these issues were studied.

We hope this document will serve our church in practically and theologically accomplishing our mission:

**We exist to glorify God by pointing the affections of all peoples to the all satisfying person of
Jesus Christ**

¹ Faith Community Bible Church's doctrinal statement can be downloaded from their website:
<http://satisfiedinjesus.org/about/doctrinalStatement.php>

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Marriage

1. Marriage as God's Gift

Marriage was instituted by God in the Garden of Eden, before sin. The first human relationship was a marriage and history will end with a marriage between Jesus Christ and His glorious bride, the church. Marriage may be defined as follows:

God has created marriage to be a lifelong union between a man and a woman, for the purpose of companionship, sexual unity, procreation and to display the love Christ has for his church.

- a) **Marriage is a lifelong union between a man and a woman.** Marriage, as intended by God, is between one man and one woman as long as they both shall live. We must reject any variations on this pattern including homosexual marriage, polygamy and serial monogamy. **Key texts: 1 Cor 7:2; Lev 20:13; Rom 1:26-27, 1 Cor 6:9-11.**

- b) **Marriage is for the purpose of companionship, sexual unity, procreation, and displaying the love between Christ and His church.** The loving relationship between husband and wife is at the heart of what God intends marriage to be. The friendship and fellowship which are part of this companionship are to be augmented and enhanced by sexual companionship as well. Though child-bearing is not the primary purpose of marriage, it is God's normal design. **Key texts: Gen 2:18; Prov 5:15; Song of Song; Heb 13:4; Gen 1:28; Jer 29:6; Eph 5:22-23.**

2. Singleness

Marriage is a precious gift from God, though it should be noted that singleness is a gift as well. Married believers and unmarried believers have equal access to God, for both come through the mediatorial work of Jesus Christ. A believer who chooses to marry is called by God to marry another believer. **Key texts: 1 Cor 7:7; 1 Tim 4:1-5; 1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14.**

Divorce

1. **God's intention is marriage, not divorce.** Divorce has existed throughout history and God has instructed us on how to deal with the heart attitudes represented in various situations. Many times throughout history God has addressed the topic of divorce making His perspective abundantly clear, that He loves marriage and opposes divorce. Many marriages suffer times of deep difficulty, but God's patience, steadfast love, and grace are to serve as a model for every spouse. **Key texts: Mat 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-9; Ezekiel 16, 23, Hos 1-3.**

2. **The OT, Jesus and Paul all provide for divorce under certain circumstances.** The practice of divorce is regulated and permitted under both old covenant and new. Any divorce is always the result of sin. While every marriage is composed of two sinners, it should be noted that guilt is not equally shared in every divorce. In fact, the situations in which God allows for a divorce typically are the result of one spouse sinning in a way that leaves them bearing the weight of guilt. We believe God permits a believer to seek a divorce when:
 - a. **A spouse is guilty of sexual immorality.** Sexual immorality includes adultery but also involves sexual contact with another person. When one partner violates the unity and intimacy of a marriage by sexual sin—and forsakes his or her covenant obligation—the faithful partner is placed in an extremely difficult situation. After all means are exhausted to bring the sinning partner to repentance, the Bible permits release for the faithful partner through divorce. **Key text: Mat 5:32; Mat 19:7-9².**
 - b. **An unbelieving spouse abandons the marriage.** When an unbeliever desires to leave, trying to keep him or her in the marriage may only create greater tension and conflict. Also, if the unbeliever leaves the marital

² It is important to notice the context of the question that Jesus was asked in this passage. In Matthew 19:3 Jesus was asked, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" This was a question intended to pit Jesus' interpretation of the law against either the school of Shammai or the school of Hillel. The School of Shammai interpreted Deuteronomy 24 as indicating that a man could divorce his wife for the cause of unfaithfulness ("indecency"); the School of Hillel understood the passage to mean that a man could divorce his wife for any cause at all. Jesus, however, circumvents their whole argument based on Deuteronomy 24. The ultimate issue should not be the right to divorce, but God's original desire for husbands and wives to be one flesh.

relationship permanently but is not willing to file for divorce, perhaps because of lifestyle, irresponsibility, or to avoid monetary obligations, then the believer is in an impossible situation of having legal and moral obligations that he or she cannot fulfill. Because “the brother or sister is not under bondage in such cases” and is therefore no longer obligated to remain married, the believer may file for divorce without fearing the displeasure of God. **Key texts: 1 Cor 7:12-15.**

It is important to note that God permits divorce in these cases, but He does not require it. The church will not encourage a spouse to divorce when he or she has faith towards God for the marriage to be restored – even when the situations listed above exist.

Separated spouses awaiting a pending divorce should consider themselves married until the day a civil court declares the divorce final and legally recognized. They should thus conduct themselves in the world as a married person.

Remarriage

- 1. A believer whose spouse is deceased is free to remarry.** The marriage covenant ends in death and a believer is free to remarry though he or she should first seek to know if God is calling him to ‘remain as he is’ and serve the Lord in an unmarried state. **Key text: Rom 7:2-3.**
- 2. A believer who is divorced for biblically acceptable reasons is free to remarry.** Any believer who is divorced under the above conditions, that is, their spouse has committed sexual immorality or has abandoned them, is free to remarry. They, too, should heed the counsel to first ask if God is calling them to serve Him in an unmarried state. **Key text: 1 Cor 7:12-16.**
- 3. A believer who is divorced for biblically unacceptable reasons should seek forgiveness from God, the restoration of the marriage, and reconciliation with the ex-spouse.** Remarriage is not an option until the ex-spouse remarries, proves to be an unbeliever or dies. Many people divorce for the wrong reasons and while this is a sin with serious consequences, like all sin, it can be washed away through the blood of Jesus Christ. Repentance from an unbiblical divorce will involve not only seeking forgiveness from God but also seeking to reconcile with the ex-spouse and, if possible, restore the marriage. The Bible also gives a word of caution to anyone

who is considering marriage to a divorcee. If the divorce was not on biblical grounds and there is still a responsibility to reconcile, the person who marries the divorced person is considered an adulterer. **Key texts: Mark 10:11-12; Mat 5:31-32.**

Divorce and Church Leadership

A one woman man. The question of whether a divorced person can serve as an elder or deacon is largely settled through interpretation of 1Tim 3:1-12; 5:9-10 and Titus 1:6 and particularly what is meant by a “one-woman man.” It seems that Paul in these passages is stressing the character and nature of a godly man in these verses rather than marking a single experience in his life for inspection. As such existing leadership should look for character and faithfulness of a “one-woman kind of man.” Divorce does not necessarily preclude a man from serving as an elder or deacon; however, extra caution is taken to determine faithfulness and strength of character.