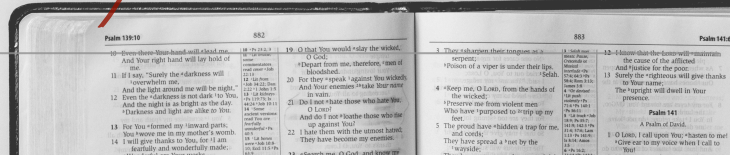


# WORDS *of* TRUTH

## Dealing with Difficulties



### Theme Articles

**Don Blackwell** is a veteran of the US Air Force. He graduated from MSOP in 1996. He holds a BA in Biblical Studies from Southern Christian University (Amridge), and an MA from Liberty University. He has done mission work in Australia, Germany, Africa, and India. He is currently the Executive Director of the Gospel Broadcasting Network and pulpit minister for the Willow Avenue Church of Christ in Cookeville, TN. He is the host of the World Video Bible School series "The Truth About..."

**Ryan Frederick** serves as the preacher for the Lake Forest Church of Christ in Jacksonville, FL. He has been with them since 2007. He is a 1998 graduate of Faulkner University.

**Bobby Gayton** is a 1975 graduate of Memphis School of Preaching. He received his ThD in Theology from Bethany Theological Seminary in 1999. He preaches for the church in Fairmount, GA, and teaches in Cartersville, GA. He also teaches classes for the Georgia School of Preaching.

**Terrell Manasco** is the editor of 78 Magazine. He studied communications at Walker College. He is a member of the Sixth Avenue Church of Christ.



## What Do We Do?

Tragedy, grief, and emotional turmoil are all sad realities of life. There is no escape and there is no immunity. We all experience difficult times in life. Christians have faith, hope, and fellowship to help them bear and endure such times. The Word of God instructs and prepares us for just such events. It is never easy to go through loss or heartbreak, but as a child of God, it is bearable.

All of the writers in this edition of *Words of Truth* have experienced some form of personal difficulty in their lives. They have the experience to write with authority, tenderness, and understanding on these matters. It is our hope here at *Words of Truth* that these articles will help you in dealing with the difficulties in your life.

No one endured as much tragedy in as short a time frame as Job. He lost everything. And yet he endured. It is as if he had prepared ahead of time for the possibility of just such a catastrophe. He struggled with depression, anger, and God's reasons for permitting his peril, but he never charged God foolishly or sinned with his lips

# Adjusting to Tragedy

*Don Blackwell*

On Saturday, May 4, 2019, my wife Sheri and I arrived in Salem, Virginia, where I would be preaching the next week. I spoke to the West Side congregation on Sunday, followed by a meal at Cracker Barrel with Sheri. The trip had started off as a fun and relaxing get-away for us. On Monday, May 6, we were to go to the home of some friends to spend the day before I preached again that night. They had promised to take us to a local “diner” for lunch. After a brief visit inside their home, Eddie and Jeannie told us it was time for lunch. We walked outside, and they invited us to get on their four-wheelers. I wondered to myself, “What kind of diner are we going to that we need to take four-wheelers?” We traveled across their farm through a beautiful green pasture to a table set up under the shade of overhanging trees. They had prepared a homemade meal in their picnic-style “diner.” After lunch they asked us if we would like to take a tour of their farm. We readily agreed. We rode to the top of a hill on their farm, looking down at the green valley below. We stopped for picture of the hillside and a quick selfie of me and Sheri on the four-wheeler, not knowing what was about to happen. As we started down the hill, I was letting our friends get ahead of a bit, and then I’d accelerated to a high speed to scare my wife. The grass was high, and the terrain was bumpy, and it made me nervous at such a high speed, so I slowed down. That’s the last thing I remember. I woke up a day or two later in the hospital, the doctor at my side. I remember asking him, “Where am I?” He told me that I was in the hospital. Puzzled, I asked, “Why?” He told me that I had been in a four-wheeler accident. I then realized that something didn’t feel right. I couldn’t move my body. I inquired as to why. He explained, “You’ve damaged your spinal cord, and you’re paralyzed.” I asked if I’d ever walk again. In a rather straight forward manner, he said, “Probably not.” I thought it was a dream. Have you ever had one of those dreams that’s horrible, but you know you’ll wake up, and it will be okay? That’s what I thought. After a day or so of falling asleep and waking up again, I finally realized that it was not a dream. It was the most devastating thing I’d ever experienced. I later learned the details of what had happened. Somehow the four-wheeler flipped four times. My wife was thrown one direction, while I was thrown another direction. When I hit the ground, I was knocked unconscious. My friend ran to me and thought I was dead. Sheri said she could hear him talking to me, but I wasn’t answering. She was praying that I wasn’t dead, or brain damaged. Eventually I woke up (though I still don’t remember it), and began mumbling, “I can’t breathe. Please move me.” Eddie’s wife called 911, and an ambulance was dispatched. The EMS crew realized that I needed an emergency evacuation, so they radioed for a helicopter that flew me to the hospital in Salem. A team of doctors determined that I had a broken back, a broken sternum, a cracked C1 vertebrae and a severely damaged spinal cord. They operated and fused 5 vertebrae together. I was then flown to Atlanta, Georgia, where I spent the next 10 weeks in rehab. It has now been over 2 years since the accident. I’m a paraplegic, completely paralyzed from the mid-chest down. I’ve spent the last two years in a wheelchair.

The entire experience has been life-shattering. The emotional pain has been worse than the physical pain and limitations. If you’ll allow me, I’d like to share some thoughts from my experience.

## **#1 – God’s Will**

Since the accident, I have repeatedly had people tell me that “It happened for a reason,” or “It was God’s will,” or words to that effect. I don’t believe that. The fact of the matter is God has given us free will, and He allows us to suffer the consequences of our actions. It simply is not the case that everything that happens is God’s will. Sometimes a drunk driver will hit and kill a young child, and a well-meaning person will say, “God must have wanted him in heaven.” No wonder people get angry with God! That wasn’t God’s will. That was a violation of God’s will that took that young child’s life. We need to be very careful, and we need to understand that not everything that happens is God’s will. That does not, however, mean that God can’t use it. After my accident, we were converting my bathroom to make it handicap accessible, and I was able to study with and baptize all four of the contractors who were working on the house.

## **#2 – Prayer**

I will admit to you that in the last two years I’ve struggled with my prayer life. Why? Because it didn’t seem like God was answering me. I begged God to heal me. I asked Christians all over the country to pray for me, but the months just kept passing with no healing. I’m ashamed to say that it made me doubt prayer. But it also caused me to study prayer like I had never studied it before. The result was the strongest faith I’ve ever had in prayer, and I’d like to share with you some of the things that helped me. First, I realized some of the most faithful men who ever lived pleaded in prayer, and they received a negative response. In 2 Corinthians 12 the apostle Paul said he prayed repeatedly that his “thorn in the flesh” be removed from him. Many presume this was some sort of health problem, perhaps related to his eyes. Whatever it was, God did not remove it. Why not? Paul said the thorn was there lest he “be exalted above measure by the abundance of revelations.” In some sense, this issue would help to keep Paul from exalting himself. Secondly, God told Paul that his grace was sufficient for him. Could it be the case that if the thorn had been removed that pride could have grown in Paul which may have resulted in him becoming unfaithful? It seems so.

*(continued on page 7)*

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# Family Difficulties

*Ryan Frederick*

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Problems are, unfortunately, part of life. James speaks of the understood surety of problems in James 1:2. Job said it like this in Job 14:1, “Man, who is born of woman, is short-lived and full of turmoil.” Certainly, Job understood not only problems, but family problems as well. As we travel down the road of life, we will certainly find ourselves facing problems. Many of those problems will not only affect us, but our families also. How do we handle these problems? There are two types of responses we can offer. We can be proactive or we can be reactive. There are times when we can only be reactive, when a problem arises that we could not foresee. However, the best kind of response is usually a proactive response. Let’s consider some proactive responses to family problems and some reactive responses to family problems.

The best proactive response to any problem is God. What do we mean by that? Having your life centered around God is the best thing you can do before a problem arises. Walk in the light, raise your children in the Lord, put God first in all you do, and pray! These are things that can certainly help with the sin problems we face in life. Every problem we encounter should begin and end with prayer. Asking for God’s help as the problem arises (1 Pet. 5:7; Phil. 4:6), being persistent in prayer throughout (Luke 18:1), and thanking God for any answer He provides in regards to a solution (Eph. 5:20; 2 Cor. 12:8-9). Job was proactive in chapter 1. He would rise early in the morning to offer sacrifices on behalf of his children in case they had sinned (v. 5). Make sure that you are an active member of a congregation of God’s people. When we are an active part of a congregation, we have help from others in dealing with problems in the right way. Have a relationship with your elders, look to them for guidance. Also, remember that you are not alone in having problems. Be wise to avoid potential temptations for you and your family. What kind of access do you allow your kids to have to the world wide web? Are you giving them too much freedom and giving Satan an open door to your children’s well-being? Are you protecting yourself and your spouse from temptation? Be proactive!

We need to be proactive with spiritual problems, but we also should take steps to be proactive with physical problems as well. I tell every couple with whom I do pre-marital counseling that a life insurance policy is a good idea. If for no other reason, in the event of a disaster (think Job), to have enough to pay for funeral expenses. Our two children have \$25,000 each for that reason, and the cost is literally pennies a day. Parents may want to get a bigger policy for themselves to cover the loss of income and pay off debt if a spouse should die. I realize these are difficult things to think about, but they are important in protecting our families. Having a will in case of tragedy is also a good idea. It doesn’t matter how young you are, death is no respecter of persons. If something were to happen to you and your spouse, would you want your children’s future to be put in the hands of the state/government? Call around and find a lawyer that will do that for you at a minimal cost. We need to be wise financially as well, and save money in case of job loss or catastrophic events that could drain you financially (Covid has taught us this on many levels — long hospital stays, job loss, etc.). It takes discipline and work, but it can be done.

What about being reactive to problems? As already mentioned, we cannot always foresee the problems that may be headed our way. At times, they come out of left field. Learn how to conduct yourself as a man or woman of God when difficulties arise. When we strive to be godly, godliness should come forth when problems appear. Again, look at Job’s response to his problems in 1:20-22. React with love and compassion as the Lord did in John 8 with the woman caught in adultery. If our kids come to us about a sin or mistake they made, we should listen and seek to help with our reaction. Help them see the need for repentance and help guide them to do what is right. Pray with them. Do the same for your spouse. Remember that “a soft answer turns away wrath” (Pro. 15:1). Handle the problem in the way you would expect God to handle you if you came to Him broken. If your child or spouse is overtaken in a fault, follow Galatians 6:1 and seek to restore them in a spirit of gentleness. Our reaction could be the difference in their running away from God or running towards God.

Perhaps the most difficult situation for any parent is figuring out how to react if a child becomes unfaithful. There are two extremes. I have seen parents ignore the sin and act as though everything is fine. I have seen parents refusing to have anything to do with a child who may have become unfaithful. As a parent, there is probably no other person on earth who will carry an influence over your child from birth to death like you will. If you give up on them, who will help them? If you ignore their sin, who will save them? Pray for them, ask others to pray. Beg them, plead with them, but don’t give up hope. Jesus once told a story of a prodigal son (Luke 15). What once looked like a hopeless situation ended with repentance. Do not make them feel as though their sin is okay, but do not shun them to the point that they would never return to you for help when they seek repentance.

There are certainly more problems we can face and more that can be done. Hopefully this article can serve as a starter, getting the fire going, so to speak. The rest is up to you and I. Be a man/woman of God, pray often and stay in the word. Let your family see this about you but include them in these things. “Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour” (1 Pet. 5:8).

# Dealing with PTSD and Depression

*Bobby Gayton*

The word of God states that one is not to be a “respect[er] of person” in James 2:9. Does this imply that I can be a respecter of person when it comes to myself? Some look at others and see only their appearance. Do you ever wonder what is happening within one’s heart (mind)? From studying the Hebrew and Greek words heart and mind, one would conclude that they are one, for all practical purposes. Do I know what’s going on in my mind? I know that first of all, I want to please the Savior daily. However, my mind has unfinished, disturbing thoughts that I do not wish to have. If I give my time to them, these thoughts will bring about depression, resulting in anger, anxiety, and survivor’s guilt. It is a battle! Do you love yourself? This biblical and psychological concept includes accepting myself as a child of God who is lovable, valuable, and capable of handling whatever comes. One cannot hide or bury the events in their lives.

When one suffers from PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder), it brings on depression, resulting in anger, anxiety, and survivor’s guilt. What goes on in the mind is about self! What is PTSD? It is a traumatic event(s) that has happened to a person that has not been completed within one’s mind. What is a traumatic event? It is a mental wound, hurt, or defeat that has taken place in one’s life that has not been completed. What is meant by completion is that the person has discovered and communicated the unfinished past wounds, hurts, and defeats. One does not have to repeatedly go over the same events if they have completed them. Have they answered the questions: what could I have done better, what could I have done differently, and what could I have done more? By answering these questions, depression, resulting in anger, anxiety, and survivor’s guilt will pass. How? If one allows their negative feelings to occur without resistance, they will pass. Does this mean that the events of their past will no longer invade their mind? No! Everything in our brain is “on file” or “instance recall.” Even if one has come to completion, other information made be remembered about the event(s) that was forgotten. One must revisit the event.

The word of God speaks about those who became depressed. Moses stated, “I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness” (Num. 11:14-15). Moses faced a crisis! He preferred death rather than to continue his life. Moses’ words contained discontent, despair, and seeds of rebellion. Moses’ focus is on his misery. But Moses was not alone!

As one reads 1 Samuel 16:14-23, they see Saul deteriorating mentally. Samuel stated,

“But the Spirit of the LORD departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the LORD troubled him. And Saul’s servants said unto him, Behold now, an evil spirit from God troubleth thee. Let our lord now command thy servants, which are before thee, to seek out a man, who is a cunning player on an harp: and it shall come to pass, when the evil spirit from God is upon thee, that he shall play with his hand, and thou shalt be well. And Saul said unto his servants, Provide me now a man that can play well, and bring him to me. Then answered one of the servants, and said, Behold, I have seen a son of Jesse the Bethlehemite, that is cunning in playing, and a mighty valiant man, and a man of war, and prudent in matters, and a comely person, and the LORD is with him. Wherefore Saul sent messengers unto Jesse, and said, Send me David thy son, which is with the sheep. And Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul. And David came to Saul, and stood before him: and he loved him greatly; and he became his armourbearer. And Saul sent to Jesse, saying, Let David, I pray thee, stand before me; for he hath found favour in my sight. And it came to pass, when the evil spirit from God was upon Saul, that David took an harp, and played with his hand: so Saul was refreshed, and was well, and the evil spirit departed from him.”

Whatever the “evil spirit” was, it invaded the mind of Saul. Do we find here one of the causes of depression? One must be in control of their thoughts. Others were depressed: Elijah in 1 Kings 19:1-18; David in Psalms 31:9-16; Jeremiah in Jeremiah 15:10; 20:14-18; and Job in Job 10:1.

As a Christian, how does one deal with PTSD that brings on depression, resulting in anger, anxiety, and survivor’s guilt? They turn to the word of God. Peter wrote that God “hath given unto us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him that hath called us to glory and virtue” (2 Pet. 1:3). One is being told from God’s word that there is no alarm because God has supplied everything about life and godliness. Peter said, “Casting all your care upon Him; for He careth for you” (1 Pet. 5:7). When one becomes depressed, their mind becomes an anxious mind, but God still cares. The care that God provides is continuous. God provided them with hope when the depressed mind is filled with hopelessness. “In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began” (Titus 1:2). When one feels depressed, they know that it was not from God. They do not have God’s word in their mind. Their mind is on the past!

# Grief

*Terrell Manasco*

January 14, 2022, 3:31 p.m. With one phone call, my world changed forever.

Seconds later, I felt my heart plunge like a weighted stone into my stomach when I heard the news.

My daughter, Kayla, was gone.

I sat stunned, uncertain if I was awake or dreaming. I remember thinking, “It’s a mistake. She’s just unconscious,” but the realization that my oldest child was dead eventually settled in. I found myself engulfed in a thick, soupy, mental fog for days at a time. I would catch myself about to apply toothpaste to my face instead of shaving cream, or forgetting how to measure coffee grounds for the coffee maker.

Death has existed since the creation of man. The Book of Genesis records the first human death in chapter 4, verse 8, when Cain, in anger, rose up and slew his brother, Abel. The Old Testament recounts the history of countless men and women who died “old and full of days,” as well as others who died violently in some way. All of us will face death at some point in our lives (Hebrews 9:27) unless Christ returns first.

Grief is a natural human response to the death of a loved one. We mourn when someone we love and care about passes from this life. King David grieved when he was told his son, Absalom, was dead in 2 Samuel 18:33. Jacob mourned and refused to be comforted when his sons (falsely) told him Joseph was slaughtered by a wild animal in Genesis 37. Even our Lord felt compassion and wept when Lazarus died. We all grieve in some way when a friend or loved one passes from this life. We feel devastated if we were especially close to them, or at the very least, saddened to some degree, knowing we will never see them in this life again, even more so if they never became a Christian or if they lapsed into unfaithfulness and never repented.

Ecclesiastes 3:4 tells us that, like the seasons of the year, life has cycles of both joy and sorrow. “*A time to weep, and a time to laugh; a time to mourn, and a time to dance.*” I sometimes compare life to a Ferris wheel; things are going well for us, and we feel “on top of the world.” Eventually, circumstances change—someone loses a job, test results bring grim news, a marriage collapses in divorce. The “Ferris wheel” rotates around, and we find ourselves “at the bottom,” sometimes at no fault of our own.

Even Jesus was subject to these low periods of life, “tempted in all points as we are.” (Hebrews 4:14) He felt compassion for his friends when Lazarus died. Remember when He went away to pray in the Garden of Gethsemane, knowing He was hours from being crucified on the cross? It is clear He was overcome with sorrow when He told the disciples, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death.” (Mark 14:34, ESV) How it must have hurt Him to feel such tremendous anguish, then return and find His friends asleep!

Although Hebrews tells us Jesus was subjected to trials as we are, the verse goes on to remind us He endured them “without sin.” It is often difficult to abstain from responding to tragedy and loss in a sinful manner, but that is what we are commanded to do. In fact, James 1, verse 2 says we should “count it all joy” because these trials have the potential to teach us patience. I don’t think the verse is saying we should rejoice when a loved one dies, or a friend is diagnosed with terminal cancer. The word “trial” in this context has a financial connotation and means “to evaluate.” We should evaluate how we respond to calamities and setbacks, knowing that, instead of being a stumblingblock, they can serve to strengthen our faith.

In most cases, we cannot prevent such circumstances, but we can take comfort in the assurance that God cares for us. Psalms 34:14 says, “The Lord is close to the brokenhearted.” The English Standard Version renders the word “close” as “near.” God is near us when we are sorrowful and when we grieve. He knows how we hurt when we have lost a family member. He knows how our hearts are broken when our child dies. He listens when we cry out to Him in anguish and ask for peace and comfort when we are grieving, whether it be for a parent, sibling, grandparent, a close friend, or our own child. God has not abandoned us. He is near us. He does care.

Regardless of what we may face, even our own death, Jesus promises us in Revelation 2:10 that if we are faithful unto death, He will reward us with a crown of life. In Heaven, we will be united with God the Father for all eternity and never have to worry about death and suffering ever again.

# Safe in the Arms of Jesus

**David Wade**

*[This article first appeared in the June 29, 1990, edition of Words of Truth (Vol. 25, No. 26). Bro. Wade was the editor of WoT at the time.]*

Recently, a tragic accident happened in our area which claimed the lives of three children, five years and younger. We are saddened to learn of the death of the adults, but we are especially appalled to learn of the death of little children. We feel sorrow for their families realizing the extreme grief and loneliness they must be experiencing.

One great consolation that we have in the death of little children is that they are safe in the arms of Jesus. However, not all people who profess to be Bible believers hold this view. Many still hold to the Calvinist theory that children are born totally depraved and separated from God. A favorite proof text is Psalm 51:5, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." Truly, David was born into a sinful world, but the passage says nothing about the infant David being a sinner. Another favorite passage is Psalm 53:2-3, "God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back; they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one." While this passage describes the evil of those who have "gone back" and have "become filthy" it in no way describes the spiritual state of little children.

Jesus describes the spiritual state of little children in no uncertain terms.

At the same time came the disciples unto Jesus, saying, Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven? And Jesus called a little child unto him, and set him in the midst of them, And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the

kingdom of heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in my name receiveth me. But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea...Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 18:1-6, 10

"Then were there brought unto him little children; that he should put his hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he laid his hands on them, and departed thence" (Mat. 19:13-15).

These verses depict the innocent state of little children. They inherit no sin from Adam or their parents. "The soul that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father" (Eze. 18:20). God is the Father of our spirits (Heb. 12:9). Children are not "saved" because they have never been "lost." They are "safe." In view of his infant son's death, David exclaimed, "I shall go to him, but he shall not return to me" (2 Sam. 12:23).

The burden of grief is heavy to bear when little children die. Human traditions and assumptions about the eternal estate of little children compound these burdens.

(continued from page 2)

Secondly, consider Jesus. In Luke 22:41, “He knelt down and prayed, saying, “Father, if it is Your will, take this cup away from Me; nevertheless not My will, but Yours, be done.”...And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly.” Matthew and Mark tell us that he prayed these same words three times, but the answer was no. Why? Because the will of the Father needed to be done. This brought to my mind the questions, “Could it be when I’m praying for relief, that there is something more important than my pain? Could it be that there are souls that will be reached if I remain in this condition?” I’m thinking about ending my pain, but the Lord sees souls and opportunities. Maybe someone is searching for the truth and providentially, I will be the way for them to learn it. Maybe there is a hard heart that can only be opened by my situation. Maybe someone will be encouraged to persevere because of me.

### #3 – How do I get through the tragedies of life?

I’ve had friends say to me, “I don’t know how you do it. I’d just curl up and hide in my house.” How do we get through the tragedies of life? I certainly don’t have all the answers, but I’d like to share one thing I’ve learned. Don’t live in the past. Ecclesiastes 7:10 says, “Do not say, “Why were the former days better than these?” For you do not inquire wisely concerning this.” One of the greatest torments I have found is living in the past. When I sit and contemplate days gone by and how good they were before the accident, it takes me to a bad place. It’s a tormenter. Paul said, “*this one thing I do, forgetting* those things which are **behind**, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” While I know the context is different, I also know that we can let the past (bad or good) torment us and hold us back. I’ve got to let it go and press ahead.

#### **PLEASE SUBMIT CHANGE OF ADDRESS!**

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#### **[sixthavenuechurch.org](http://sixthavenuechurch.org)**

We hope and pray that you will use our website for personal growth in the faith of Jesus Christ. On our website you will find many resources including bulletins, sermon audios, Bible correspondence courses, Searching for Truth materials, and House to House/Heart to Heart materials. You can also sign up to receive our bulletin by email or submit questions you would like to have answered. On the website you will also find back issues of *Words of Truth*. Please visit regularly and use the resources available to you!

## ASK A BIBLE QUESTION

**QUESTION:** Can a non-Christian in an unscriptural marriage remain in that relationship with God's approval if he or she is baptized for the remission of sins?

**ANSWER:** NO! All unscriptural relationships must be severed. Marriage is a lifelong commitment (Mat. 19:6; Rom. 7:2) between a biological male and biological female (Gen. 1:27). God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16) but permits it for one and only one reason: sexual immorality [adultery] (Mat. 19:9; 5:32; 1 Cor. 7:10, 15). Divorce for any reason other than that which God allows is unscriptural (Rom. 7:3a). Those ineligible to marry cannot do so with God's approval or acceptance. Those in such a relationship would be considered "fornicators and adulterers" (Heb. 13:4). They would not be scripturally married in God's eyes regardless of what Civil Law allows (Acts 5:29). Divine Law governs all marriage: Christian as well as non-Christian (Gen. 2:24; Mat. 19:6). Therefore, a non-Christian (outside of Jesus [alien sinner], Eph. 2:11-12; Col. 1:21) in an unscriptural marriage, if baptized for the remission of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16; 1 Pet. 3:21), must sever any unscriptural relationship in order to meet with God's approval. God forgives every sin of which a person repents (2 Cor. 7:9-10; Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9). If one repents of sin (adultery), but continues to do it, true repentance has not occurred. When we repent of sin we must determine in our heart not to sin any longer (Acts 26:20; Rev. 9:20-21)! If one is a thief, that sin must be left behind when Christ is put on (Eph. 4:28). If one is a fornicator, fornication must cease when washed in the Lamb's blood (1 Cor. 6:9-11). If one is a liar, lying must stop when in Christ (Rev. 21:8). Therefore, if one is in an unscriptural marriage, that relationship must be severed when baptized into Jesus (Rom. 6:3-4; 7:2-4). Paul used marriage to illustrate the relationship between Christ and His Church (Eph. 5:22-33). It is a relationship with one Groom (Christ) and one bride (Church) characterized as "glorious, holy, and without blemish" (Eph. 5:27). We must strive to have the kind of marriage that reflects our relationship with Christ (Eph. 5:23, 25).

-Mark Nichols Posey

[mark.nichols.posey@gmail.com](mailto:mark.nichols.posey@gmail.com)