

## THOSE FAMOUS LAST WORDS

*Levi Sides, Jasper, AL*

*"Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall" (I Corinthians 10:12).*

You have heard the words, I'm sure. You have probably even said them at one time or another. I'm talking about those famous last words, *"that will never happen to me."* You hear of people falling into sin, and you just know that it could never happen to you. You hear of someone having an affair, becoming addicted to drugs, or getting a divorce. You hear of some one's child getting into a lot of trouble, and you know that's the last thing that would ever happen to you.

*"Be careful,"* says the Apostle Paul. *"If you think you are standing firm, watch out that you don't fall!"* In other words, it could happen to you or me.

Temptation is the common lot of the very best Christians. The more like Christ one lives, the more fierce will be his temptations. Satan fights God's people. He cannot dethrone God, so he tries to dethrone Christ from the hearts of Christians. Temptations are all around, and they come in every form and shape. As long as we imagine ourselves to be immune, we lay ourselves wide open to Satan's attacks.

Paul wrote: *"There hath no temptation taken you but such is common to man: but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it."* I Corinthians 10:13.

God promises a way of escape in every temptation. There are certain weapons available to the Christian today: 1. Rest in the power of the blood of Jesus Christ, (Revelation 12:11); 2. Draw nigh to God, (James 4:7); 3. Use the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of God, (Ephesians 6:18); 4. Pray, (Ephesians 6:18); and, 5. Realize the presence of Jesus Himself to help, (Hebrews 2:18; II Peter 2:9; Matthew 28:20).

The glory of temptation is that it makes *heroes!* There is only one way for God to make Christians soldiers, and that is to put them into battle. Temptations resisted and conquered makes *saints*. The one that endures is blessed of God (James 1:12).

The only way to stand firm is to be aware of the presence of temptations and of our vulnerability. We need rely not on our own will-power but on God's power in order to resist. We need to know that for every temptation God provides a way of escape. Yes, there's an escape hatch for every temptation. We must remember that God is faithful; he will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear.

Ask Him now not to lead you into temptation.

### PRAYER

*"Lord, help us to be realistic about ourselves and to face our own weakness squarely. Lead us not into temptation. When we feel the power of evil, rescue us. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen."* **WOT**

## EDITORIAL

**“MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN ME?”**

*Once I stood in the night  
with my head bowed low,  
in the darkness as black as could be;  
and my heart felt alone,  
and I cried “Oh Lord,  
don’t hide your face from me.”*

*Like a king I may live in a palace so tall,  
with great riches to call my own;  
But I don’t know a thing  
in this whole wide world  
that’s worse than being alone.*

*“Hold my hand all the way,  
ev’ry hour, ev’ry day  
from here to the great unknown;  
Take my hand, let me stand  
where no one stands alone.”*

*(Where No One Stands Alone,  
Mosie Lister, copyright 1955 by  
Lillenas Publishing Company)*

The song above has provided many a faithful Christian with comfort and hope, realizing that God will not allow His children to stand alone. It is always possible that our dearest friends and family members, the loved ones who are so near and dear to our hearts may forsake us in the time of our greatest need (take Job, for example, or the apostle Paul—2 Timothy 4:16). At times like these, when we feel that we are alone in this world, we always have the assurance that God is standing with us so long as we are standing with Him (Hebrews 13:5). Jehovah will not forsake His people (1 Samuel 12:22). Understand that this is not some adage which is true most of the time but may not be true all of the time. God has promised His watch, care, and protection will be upon those who live for Him.

Have you ever stopped to think why God could, and would, guarantee never to forsake His children? Such a promise is contingent upon the death of Christ on the cross. Without the sacrifice of the sinless Savior, and, consequently, by virtue of our remaining in our sins, God would be forced to avert His eyes and close His ears (1 Peter 3:12) while we live out our existence on the earth, and, ultimately, we would be forever banished from His presence in the fires of hell (Revelation 21:8). We would have no hope of reconciliation with God—

which reconciliation is necessary because of the estrangement caused by our own sins (Isaiah 59:1,2)— apart from the price paid for our sins by Calvary’s Lamb.

As Christ hung on Golgotha’s tree, suspended between heaven and earth, the piercing cry came from his parched lips, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me” (Matthew 27:46)? This utterance fulfilled a prophecy made centuries before the coming of the Messiah (Psalm 22:1). However, Christ Jesus did not utter these words from the cross merely to fulfill prophecy. These words are a reflection of the humanity of our Lord and Savior. Here was the Lamb of God, without blemish and without spot (John 1:29) being condemned to die a horrible death of which he was undeserving (1 Peter 2:21-25). As the Christ prepared himself in the Garden of Gethsemane for the suffering to come, his closest companions unwittingly failed to lend their support and strength (Matthew 26:40-46). With the Suffering Servant facing the greatest trial of his brief life, his own disciples forsook him and fled (Matthew 26:56). When Jesus needed his disciples the most, he could not count on them. He faced the prospect of death upon the cross with no one on this earth to share his burden.

Christ could turn to no one but the Heavenly Father in his time of greatest need. Writhing in agony and pain as the multitude mocked and scorned the loving Savior, Jesus no doubt felt betrayed and forsaken. How many of us, if put in this situation, would not have uttered the same words, or at least would not have felt the same sentiment? The cry of our Lord was not an accusation against the Heavenly Father. Remember that in Job’s case, he often thought that it may have been God who was placing the burden of pain and suffering upon him, but the Bible makes it clear that in all he endured at the hands of Satan, Job never sinned with his lips (Job 1:22; 2:10). The cry of Jesus from the cross was that of confusion and despair, of human understanding in the face of great suffering. These words echo the humanity of the Son of Man. Truly our Great High Priest can sympathize with us (Hebrews 4:15), albeit he suffered to a degree that none of us will ever experience. These words should bring comfort to all of us, especially as we face some great trial in our lives, knowing that the Lord above understands.

Even beyond this, however, is the thought that perhaps God actually did forsake His only begotten Son, if but only for a moment. God is perfect in holiness and purity (1 Peter 1:16), and as such, He is of purer eyes than to behold evil (Habakkuk 1:13). The Lord Jesus did no sin (1 Peter 2:22), yet

upon him was placed the burden of every sin ever committed (1 Peter 2:24). Although the pain and agony of the cross must have been excruciating and burdensome, the weight of sin that Jesus bore must have been the most difficult burden to endure. Nevertheless, Christ bore the burden of sin with joy (Hebrews 12:2). Consider what God saw as he looked down from heaven on that dreadful Friday. Here was His only begotten Son (John 3:16), who was sinlessly perfect, being tormented on a cross for nothing he had done. Like any loving parent, no doubt God wanted to stop the pain and bind up the wounds of Jesus. But Christ was made sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21) so that we might be righteous before God. Mind you, Christ was not a sinner, for he had committed no sin. He was merely the scapegoat upon which the sins of the world were placed. The innocent was made to suffer for the guilty. For the good of mankind, God had to avert His eyes in Christ's darkest hour. He

could not (not in the sense that it was impossible, but in the sense that it would thwart His own purpose) stop the horrendous events of that day. As the piercing cries of the sinless Son of God rose up to the throne room of heaven, God was powerless to intervene. As His heart filled with grief and pain, He was made to endure the terrible proceedings on Calvary's mount.

Indeed we are comforted by the promise that God will never forsake us so long as we never forsake Him. Because God forsook the Savior but for a moment as the sinless sacrifice was made for our sins, we have the promise that God will never forsake those who have been washed in the blood of the Lamb. When we consider that Christ endured all of this for us, it boggles the mind. Thanks be to God for His unspeakable gift (2 Corinthians 9:15). Hallelujah! What a Savior! **WOT**

## THE UNIVERSE IS GOD'S CLASSROOM

*Eva Nell Brown Naramore*

The Universe is God's classroom; the terrestrial globe called earth.  
Created with design and form, it's a place of untold worth.  
God the master of all teachers, sent to earth his only Son,  
Gave his word for us to study, perfect lessons for each one.

From the Father and the author, of the book that we must use,  
Came the message of salvation, to the class, he brought good news.  
He said, "Go into all the world," preach the gospel, was his plan.  
To study and to do his will, is to live by his commands.

For all the world God sent his book. No exchanges will be made.  
His word will never pass away, at the end, we'll have our grade.  
While the Class for us is open, we must listen to be sure,  
Each dot and tittle is in place, with a heart of love that's pure.

To fail the grade! The test of life! Hear the words "Depart from me!"  
Would take away all future hope, when the books and class are free.  
Christ the teacher of all teachers! Knew the people must be taught,  
So he paid the full tuition, with his death, supplies were bought.

As we study, we teach others. We must not give up and say,  
"I'll go back to college, later, at a more convenient day."  
God will give us our diploma, if we're faithful to the end.  
When we graduate from college! Celebration will begin!

# LEAVE NO DOUBT

*Caleb Campbell, Columbus, GA*

As another encouraging worship service on the first day of the week drew to a close, brother Wayne Mott was called upon to lead the dismissal prayer. He was, at the time, already well past what many would consider the prime years of his earthly life. His diminished strength and failing eyesight forced him to lead the act of homage from the pew. A fading memory and weak voice limited the quantity of what could be said. In stark contrast to his temporal struggles, however, brother Mott's spiritual petition rose powerfully from the assembly. In particular, one simple yet challenging statement carried a force and left an impression far greater than his physical limitations ever could. He prayed, "May we live our lives in such a way that there would be no doubt in the minds of others that we are Christians."

Think for a moment of what a blessing it is to be a Christian! When one hears the gospel of Christ (Mark 16:15-16), believes in what it teaches about Christ (John 8:24), repents of sin to turn to Christ (Luke 13:3), and then confesses the name of Christ (Romans 10:10), he can be baptized into the spiritual body of Christ (Galatians 3:27). As he comes up from that watery grave of baptism, he has been cleansed by the blood of Christ (Revelation 1:5; Acts 22:16) and is added to the people of Christ (Acts 2:47). He is then privileged to wear the name of Christ (I Corinthians 1:10-13), enjoy the blessings and fellowship that are in Christ (Ephesians 1:3; I John 1:7), and live with the hope available through Christ (Colossians 1:27; II Timothy 1:1). It is indeed the greatest of all privileges to be able to call oneself a Christian in this life.

Those things noted, there are also tremendous responsibilities which come with being followers of the Christ. The name of Christ is beautiful, but we must strive to live in such a way as to represent it (Revelation 3:1). The riches of Christ are unmatched, but we must abide in His doctrine and fulfill His works to enjoy them (II John 9; II Corinthians 15:58). An eternity with Christ is waiting, but we must put forth genuine effort to obtain it (Hebrews 4:9-11). Surely none would argue that the general principle once given by our Lord would certainly apply to Christians: "Unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall much be required" (Luke 12:48).

What about us? Do our priorities show the world that we are Christians—that we are a people whose treasures are laid up in Heaven (Matthew 6:20), whose focuses are collectively set on things above (Colossians 3:1-2), and whose lives are devoted to seeking God first (Matthew 6:33)? Or is it clear to the world around us that our priorities reside with the things, joys, and pleasures of this world?

Do our lifestyles show the world that we are Christians—that we are truly "holy" (I Peter 1:15-16), "godly" (Titus 2:12), and shining as "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:13-16)? Or

do our lifestyles tell the world that we are perfectly content taking the easy road by being as they are?

What about our Bible study habits (Psalm 1)? Our speech (Colossians 3:8-9)? Our brotherly love (John 13:34-35)? Our worship (John 4:24)? Our evangelism (Acts 8:4)? When others see us, what do they see? Whom do they see?

"May we live our lives in such a way that there would be no doubt in the minds of others that we are Christians."

**WOT**

## JUST TURN TO THE LORD

Wanda Katrina McKinney

When you are experiencing problems,  
And you feel that you just cannot cope,  
Turn to the Lord, rest assured He is able to help solve them.  
He will give you hope.

When you turn to your friends for counsel,  
And they seem to never have the time to listen,  
Turn to the Lord, for He is your burden-bearer;  
Twenty-four seven, He is always there to listen.

When you feel that your family just does not understand  
The circumstances and trials that you may be going through,  
Turn to the Lord, and put your troubles right in His hands;  
He will give you the strength to pull through.

The Lord will never forsake nor betray you.  
His "hotline" is never busy; you can reach Him at all times.  
The Lord is a best friend who will always be faithful and true:  
Rest assured He will always be by your side.

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Due to software problems used to barcode our mailouts, we have been put well behind schedule on our mailings. In order to get us back on our normal production schedule, we have had to forego the August issue of *The Words of Truth*. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause. Taking this step will allow us to get our mailings corrected. Thank you for bearing with us during this time.

# STANDING FOR THE TRUTH WITH COMMON SENSE

Preston Silcox, Milton, FL

Then said Jesus unto them again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep (John. 10:7-11).

While some teachers prey on the flock of God, devising ways to steal, kill, and destroy the sheep, the Master Teacher (the Good Shepherd) secures, supplies, and sacrifices for those under His care and influence. Jesus, the Good Shepherd, came to bring *the abundant life* to those who will hear and heed His voice. Consider a few thoughts about this overflowing life:

### **The abundant life is provided by an abundant God.**

It has been observed that the God of heaven does all things in a superlative manner. Paul wrote of this tremendous trait of God as follows: "Now unto him that is able to do *exceeding abundantly* above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end" (Eph. 3:20-21). Surely the God Who possesses this kind of might and majesty can make the life of His spiritual offspring one of abundance.

**The abundant life is available because of abundant mercy.** Notice the words of 1 Peter 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his *abundant mercy* hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead." While the wages of sin is death (Rom. 6:23), the compassionate Christ and gracious God of heaven extend their unmerited favor to an otherwise hopeless creation. The realization of such abundant mercy should move the redeemed to say with Paul, "And the grace of our Lord was *exceeding abundant* with faith and love which is in Christ Jesus" (1 Tim. 1:14).

**The abundant life is lived in view of an abundant reward.** By inspiration, Peter proclaimed an encouraging promise of God: "For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you *abundantly* into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" (2 Pet. 1:11). This guarantee of God is made to those who give diligence to make their "calling and election sure" (2 Pet. 1:10). Though such dedicated disciples of Christ

understand that the abundant life begins here, they also know that it does not end here. While they enjoy their earthly pilgrimage, their ultimate aim is heaven.

The Christian life is not a little life. It is a superlative life. It is the best life. It is the abundant life. Hear and heed the voice of the Good Shepherd who came that you might enjoy this larger life—both in this world and in the next.

WOT

## GOD IS MY ROCK

Sonny Sanders

All around storm clouds rage,  
Thus I turn the Bible's page.  
Though trouble haunts me night and day,  
I will listen closely to what God has to say.

In troubled times my comfort is in him,  
Through waters too grueling to swim;  
On a road too hard and a way too long,  
The Lord is a rock to keep me strong.

Hand in hand we shall go life's way;  
When faced with problems let me pray,  
Speaking to God about my worries and grief,  
He will faithfully reassure and give relief.

Though the way seems weary and drear,  
I know that my God will always be near.  
Though the world tries to crush me, he is there,  
For his Son he sent to die to show me he does care.

He is my rock, my strength, my anchor in life,  
He is the one that lifts me above the pain and strife.  
And, if I am found faithful at the end of it all, I know  
That to be with God and Jesus I shall surely go.

# KILLING CONNOR

Tyler Young, Hattiesburg, MS

Was Conner Peterson a human being? In one of the nation's more recent, high profile criminal cases, Scott Peterson was convicted of murdering his wife, Laci, who at the time of the murder was pregnant with their unborn son, Conner. Since the crime occurred in California, Peterson was charged with two counts of murder. The Golden State happens to be one of the 29 states with fetal homicide laws which makes it unlawful to kill an unborn child in the commission of a state crime.

The publicity surrounding the sensational case led to the passage of a federal law designated as The Unborn Victims of Violence Act, or "Laci and Conner's Law." Though it only applies to unborn children injured or killed during the commission of federal crimes of violence, prior to the enactment of this law in April of 2004, an unborn child was not recognized by the federal government as a victim with respect in such cases. Notice the language of the law, which in part states, "Whoever...causes the death of, or bodily injury to, a child, who is in utero at the time the conduct takes place, is guilty" of an offense which is to be punished "the same as had that injury or death occurred to the unborn child's mother." Thus, killing an unborn child is illegal. There is, of course, one notable exception: abortion.

Laci and Conner's Law states that "nothing [in this statute] shall be construed to permit the prosecution of any person for conduct relating to an abortion for which the consent of the pregnant woman...has been obtained." Similarly, the United States Supreme Court allowed to stand a Missouri statue which declares "the life of each human being begins at conception" and that

unborn children have protectable interests in life, health, and wellbeing, [and all state laws, including criminal laws] shall be interpreted and construed to acknowledge on behalf of the unborn child at every stage of development, all the rights, privileges, and immunities available to other persons, citizens, and residents of this state (*Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*).

But again, the nation's highest court upheld the wording of this statue *so long as the state did not construe it to restrict abortion*. So it is that unborn children are considered by our courts to be human beings deserving of the protection of law and the right to life—except in the case of abortion. Only when a mother wants to kill her unborn child is that child considered a non-human entity which may be disposed of with impunity. Yet it is an undisputable fact that there is no fundamental, qualitatively difference in the nature of a child in the womb who is killed by

violence without the consent of the mother and a child who is killed with her consent. This is the grossly inconsistent and maddening state of abortion law in our land, a land in which persons are declared to be granted by our Creator with the unalienable right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness."

It began when the Supreme Court ruled in the infamous 1973 case of *Roe v. Wade* that the word "person," as used in the due process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment ("no state shall deprive any person of life, liberty or property without the due process of law") does not include the unborn. This act of judicial fiat invented a "right" to abortion not actually contained in the Constitution, fully legalizing the killing of unborn child for any reason at any time during pregnancy. The consequences of this imposition of the Court's will on the nation have been far reaching. A slaughter of unprecedented proportions—more than 48 million precious children since the *Roe* decision—continues to this day. The tolerance of a massacre of this magnitude both requires and promotes a radical change in the way we as a society view the significance of human life. That is the legacy of *Roe*—not only the blood that has been shed, but the devaluing of life which has permitted the killing to continue.

On what grounds do we permit such selective and arbitrary assigning of personhood? How is it that we can consider the killing of an unborn child a criminal offense in a case like Laci Peterson's, but not when an abortion doctor uses his steel blade and suction hose to kill a baby in utero? Or in the case of partial birth abortion, how do we legalize the killing of a full term baby in the process of being born as long as his head is still in the birth canal, but consider it murder to kill that same child if she is moved just a few inches further and fully delivered? Does the movement of the head from inside to outside the birth canal transform him from an inhuman mass of tissue into a human being?

Part of the problem is that few in the public at large have given much thought to these kinds of questions because they have been conditioned by abortion activists and a pro-abortion media to think of the subject only in abstract terms: pregnancy termination, women's rights, reproductive freedom, and choice. This carefully chosen rhetoric effectively veils from our thoughts what abortion is. When we hear of a "woman's right to choose," someone needs to ask, "Choose to do what?" What exactly takes place in an abortion? We would rather not be bothered with the uncomfortable details of the dismembering of babies and instead justify killing the unborn by regarding ourselves as defenders of personal freedom (perhaps with the caveat that we don't personally like the idea, but wouldn't think of forcing our view on others).

We abhor and criminalize the killing of an unborn child, but we are willing to overlook the inconsistency of permitting abortion because in abortion a woman is exercising her will to do as she pleases, and treading on that "right" requires an assertion of moral authority which the relativism of our day will simply not allow us to make (though we inconsistently deny Scott Peterson the right to do as he pleases in harming his unborn child). In the culture war dividing our nation, abortion has become the holy sacrament of the left, the embodiment of "self-determination," and *Roe* the Emancipation Proclamation liberating us from intolerable restraints on our freedom.

That is why groups like the National Abortion Rights Action League, National Organization For Women, and the American Civil Liberties Union aggressively oppose even the most reasonable restrictions on abortion, such as parental notification for minors, which a vast majority of Americans support. To them, any limitations upon or opposition to abortion is a threat to their desire to be unrestrained in the pursuit of their own desires. Their zeal for permitting the killing of the unborn arises from a desire as old as Adam and the garden—the desire to be our own gods. They vigorously oppose legislation like Laci and Conner's Law because they understand that consistency requires that treating an unborn child as a person under the law in *any* case would lead to viewing a child in utero as a person in every case, which would lead to the overturning of *Roe*. We hope that, in the long run, their worries will prove to be justified, but for the time being, the public does not appear to be bothered by a trifling thing like consistency or rational thinking when it comes to the emotionally charged abortion debate.

Insisting an unborn child has "all the rights, privileges, and immunities available to other persons" but refusing to grant those rights in the case of abortion in order to allow a woman to exercise her will to kill her child unhindered by moral objections of others leads to a disturbing and dangerous conclusion: that whether we consider human life worthy of the protection of law is dependent upon whether that life is wanted. Think of it. If Laci had gone to an abortion doctor and consented to killing Conner, the doctor could have gone about his work with the full sanction of the law. But Scott Peterson was charged with murder for Conner's death only because Laci presumably did not grant him permission to kill the child.

Are we willing to accept the implications of the view which says whether or not someone is considered a person depends on the whim of others? On whether he is convenient? Or wanted? That is what gave us Auschwitz, Treblinka, Dachau and the other death camps of Hitler's Third Reich. It is the stench of Hitler's ovens, and it ought to make any decent person shudder with horror.

How can we reverse the culture of death that has arisen in the wake of *Roe*? One thing we can do is highlight the inconsistency of abortion law in our land to raise the question which is at the heart of the issue: How do we determine the value of human life? What gives a person worth and makes him

deserving of the protection of law? Is it whether or not he is wanted? Is it his stage of development, his viability, his position in the birth canal?

The answer to that question is found ultimately in our Creator and his word. What gives human life its unique value and meaning is the fact it is made in the moral and spiritual image of God Almighty (Gen. 1:26-27). It doesn't matter what someone looks like, what race he is, how healthy or sick he may be, how limited or gifted he may be physically or intellectually. The value of human life is grounded in the fact that we are the offspring of God (Acts 17:28). If the Darwinist view of human nature is true—if we are merely products of time and chance, the result of natural process working over millions of years—then man is ultimately nothing more than one animal among many. Killing a child for being unwanted—for any reason, for that matter—would be no more morally reprehensible than swatting a fly or crushing a bug underfoot.

Thankfully, we know that we are not mere matter in motion, but the handiwork of our Creator who stamped His image upon us. And we bear that image of God from the moment of conception (Psa. 139:13-16). That is what makes killing a human being, even in the womb, without divine authority a monumental moral offense: "...for in the image of God made he him" (Gen. 9:6). And that is why the battle over what we believe and what our children are taught concerning our origins is a critical one with far-reaching implications, especially for the unborn.

There is something else which stands as a powerful reminder of the value of man's life to God: the cross of Calvary. The cross of Jesus Christ is the ultimate measure of the worth of a single soul to God. When we treat life as disposable, just so much tissue to be tossed aside if inconvenient, we are showing contempt for our God who gave his Son to die for the sake of every living soul. Both creation and the cross dramatically affirm the sanctity of life. Abortion is an affront to the cross and an abomination to God.

The sanctity of human life is the leading moral issue of our time. How we settle it will have profound implications for generations to come. As this war on the unborn stretches now into a fourth decade, we must be a voice crying out for these helpless victims and in defense of the value of every life. As Scott awaits the executioner's needle, it is up to us to point out why it was wrong to kill Conner whether Laci wanted him or not.

**WOT**

## ASK A BIBLE QUESTION

**QUESTION:** Although God hates divorce; under what circumstances does He allow it?

**ANSWER:** God indeed hates divorce, according to Malachi 2:16, “for the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce.” Divorce violates God’s blueprint for marriage. Marriage, according to Genesis 2:24-25, involves severance (“leave father and mother”), permanence (“and shall cleave unto his wife”), unity (“they shall be one flesh”) and intimacy (“and they were both naked...and were not ashamed”). Marriage is an honorable institution (Heb. 13:4). Divorce breaks the covenant of marriage. Marriage involves two people (biological male and biologically female) joined together for life (Matt. 19:4-6; Rom. 7:2-3). Malachi called marriage a covenant (Mal. 2:14). When a man and a woman marry, they DO NOT say, “Till divorce do us part,” they say, “Till death do us part.” Divorce also produces suffering and pain that is ugly. Even under the best circumstances it causes great pain. When a husband and wife get married they become one flesh; when they divorce that one flesh is torn apart. There is no painless way to tear one’s flesh apart. However, those that suffer the most are children and grandchildren. Children and grandchildren are the silent victims of divorce. Divorce leaves scars that sometimes never heal. Therefore, why does God allow divorce? God does allow divorce, but for one and only one reason: fornication (Matt. 19:9). Divorce for any reason except fornication (sexual immorality) results in sin (Matt. 5:32). Let me be perfectly clear – God does NOT allow divorce for any and all reasons (Matt. 5:31-32). If one’s mate engages in sexual immorality with another (defiles the marriage bed – Heb. 13:4), the innocent mate has the scriptural right to divorce (Matt. 19:9). Therefore, God allows divorce if fornication has occurred. The innocent party (i.e. the one who did not commit fornication) has the scriptural right to remarry and remain in a faithful relationship with God.

—**Mark N. Posey**  
**Decatur, AL**