

*In search of...*

# Truth & Right

Volume 09 Issue 40

October 5, 2014

## Bathsheba and Marriage

Jesus' views of divorce and remarriage are really quite concise and comprehensible. Putting a mate away and marrying another can be undertaken honorably in God's sight **only** on the grounds that that mate has been sexually unfaithful (Matthew 19:9). Despite the simplicity of such statements from God, there have always been individuals who would rather try to justify themselves or others instead of humbly submitting to divine standards (cf. Luke 10:29; 16:15). In the case of the Pharisees, they stubbornly threw up to Jesus their Old Testament justification for refusing to accept the stringency of God's law of marriage, divorce, and remarriage: "Why then did Moses...?" (Matthew 19:7). In like manner, in an effort to side step the clear thrust of New Testament teaching regarding the sinfulness of adulterous marriages and the need for the parties involved to **sever** the sinful relationship, some today stubbornly appeal to the Old Testament case of David and Bathsheba: "If God requires marriages to be severed today, why was David permitted to keep Bathsheba?"

The following observations merit consideration:

First, there is no parallel between the adulterous marriages being defended today and the relationship sustained by David and Bathsheba. It is true that David's affair with Bathsheba while her husband was at the battlefield constituted adultery. However, he did not further complicate or solidify his adultery by marrying her. She returned to her own home (2 Samuel 11:4). The two apparently had no intentions of further complicating their sin by forming an adulterous marital union. Instead, when Bathsheba notified David that she was pregnant, David made every effort to **hide** the sin by making it appear as if Uriah was the father of the child (2 Samuel 11:6-13). Repentance at this stage of the situation would entail David's confession of his sin and his determination to never repeat such illicit behavior. David could have devised some other plan, say, the banishment of Uriah for some breach of military regulations. With Uriah expelled from the land, he could have then taken Bathsheba as his own wife. In such a

case, David would have been **living** in adultery, and the only divinely-approved course of action would have been to sever the marriage relationship. But David did not do this. When his efforts failed, he decided the way he could "cover his tracks" was to bring about Uriah's death (2 Samuel 11:14-15). To the sin of adultery, he added murder.

Notice that David was not going through all this rigmarole in order to free Bathsheba to be married to himself, but to keep Uriah from finding out that his wife was pregnant by another man. Thus the argument that states, "You're saying a person ought to murder the mate of the individual that they wish to be married to," holds no validity in this discussion. By definition, adultery entails sexual relations with a person whose scriptural mate is **still living**. Notice God's own words on this matter:

*For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man (Romans 7:2-3, NKJV).*

However inappropriate David's action after the death of Uriah may have been, his marriage to Bathsheba was not adultery and is therefore not parallel to the illicit marriages contracted by so many today whose former mates are still living.

Second, why would we wish to go to David and Bathsheba for insight into acceptable divorce and remarriage practices, anyway? Even when Scripture does not specifically

condemn a certain action, we should not necessarily assume that God condones or approves it. There are numerous instances of improper behavior in the Old Testament that are in no way intended to be used today as justification for similar behavior today. Abraham (Genesis 12:13), Isaac (Genesis 26:7), and Jacob (Genesis 27:19) all behaved deceptively. Judah committed fornication (Genesis 38:18). Moses failed to trust in God as he should have (Numbers 20:12). Are these instances appropriate examples to emulate? David, himself, was guilty of additional violations of God's law. He desecrated the tabernacle by entering and unlawfully consuming consecrated bread (1 Samuel 21:1-6; Matthew 12:3-4). He neglected Mosaic regulations concerning proper transport and treatment of the ark (2 Samuel 6; 1 Chronicles 15:13). His reliance upon troop strength (as evidenced in his military census) cost 70,000 people their lives (2 Samuel 24:15). Such instances as these are intended to remind us of the necessity to adhere strictly to God's instructions (Romans 15:4). They are certainly not designed to encourage us to relax our own ethical behavior on the grounds that others did so in the Old Testament! Though at one time David was truly "a man after God's own heart" (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22), his behavior later in life demonstrates that he drifted from this ideal.

Third, by employing the same logic as those who fumble for the case of David and Bathsheba to justify the continuance of adulterous unions today, one could just as easily make a case for the permissibility of polygamy today. Bathsheba was only one of several wives (cf. 1 Samuel 18:27; 25:42--43; 1 Chronicles 3:2-5). Maybe Joseph Smith, with his 28+ wives, was nearer to the truth than we have previously supposed?

Fourth, David and Bathsheba are not intended as models for ascertaining God's requirements

concerning divorce and remarriage today in **any** sense. For the Scriptures are exceedingly explicit concerning God's feelings about the whole sordid affair: "But the thing that David had done displeased the Lord" (2 Samuel 11:27). He did not have to sever the marital relationship with Bathsheba since her husband was dead and she was released from that law (Romans 7:2). However, God brought down upon David untold misery and unpleasant consequences to punish David, as well as instruct us concerning His true view of such iniquity. Three direct consequences were inflicted upon David: (1) Nathan said the sword would never depart from David's house (2 Samuel 12:10), fulfilled in the successive violent deaths of at least three sons—Amnon (2 Samuel 13:29), Absalom (2 Samuel 18:14), and Adonijah (1 Kings 2:25); (2) Nathan also declared to David that his own wives would be shamefully misused in broad daylight before all Israel by someone close to him (2 Samuel 12:11), distastefully fulfilled when Absalom "lay with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel" (2 Samuel 16:22); (3) Further, Nathan pronounced the fatal fate of the son conceived by David's sin with Bathsheba (2 Samuel 12:14), fulfilled seven days after Nathan's judgment sentence (2 Samuel 12:18). All of this detailed narration suggests that we have missed a major point if we seek to justify illicit behavior today on the grounds that "David did it."

Friends, let us not scrape the bottom of the proverbial barrel in a desperate attempt to come up with just any argument to defend our position. Let us weigh biblical data fairly, rightly handling the Word of truth, and drawing only those conclusions that are warranted by the evidence (1 Thessalonians 5:21). Only then can we be approved in God's sight (2 Timothy 2:15).

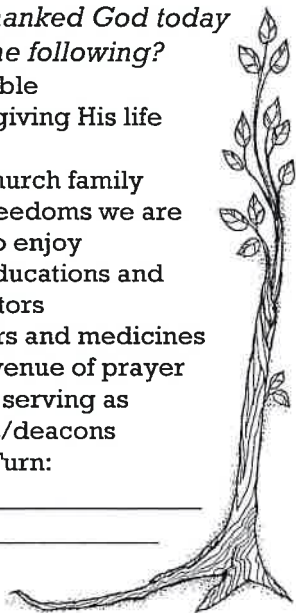
Dave Miller

**DEAR GOD,  
I WANNA TAKE A  
MINUTE, NOT TO ASK  
FOR ANYTHING FROM  
YOU, BUT SIMPLY TO  
SAY THANK YOU,  
FOR ALL I HAVE.**

*Have you thanked God today  
for any of the following?*

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- The freedoms we are able to enjoy
- Our educations and educators
- Doctors and medicines
- The avenue of prayer
- Those serving as elders/deacons
- Your Turn:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



*This bulletin is published by the*  
**WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST**

92 Rose Cottage Lane  
Wellsburg, WV 26070  
304-737-1422

<http://www.truthandright.org>



Like us on  
**FACEBOOK** under  
Wellsburg church  
of Christ!

Follow us on **TWITTER**  
@wellsburgchurch



View us on **YOUTUBE**:  
[https://www.youtube.com/  
user/wellsburgchurch](https://www.youtube.com/user/wellsburgchurch)

# Monthly Challenges

**DIRECTIONS:** *Each first Sunday of the month, we will have challenges that you should attempt to complete by the end of the month. If we all, as members, complete these challenges, our church will grow in spirit and in number.*

## **1) ENCOURAGE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST**

*1 Thess. 5:11 "Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing."*

A vital work that Christians are to be engaged in is strengthening each other. This month, our challenge will be to take the initiative and do something to build up someone in our congregation. Some of the ways we can all be encouragers are:

- a) read the prayer list in the bulletin and visit someone
- b) if you can't visit, give them a phone call
- c) or send them a card to brighten their day
- d) take time before and after services to get to know the brethren
- e) say something positive about their work in the church
- f) tell others about a Bible verse or passage that encourages you
- g) offer hospitality and help if you can, and do so with love

## **2) USING YOUR BIBLE IN THE WORLD**

Share the following verses with someone who does not attend this congregation at least twice this month:

*Matthew 10:26-33*

**26** "So have no fear of them, for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. **27** What I tell you in the dark, say in the light, and what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops. **28** And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. **29** Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. **30** But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. **31** Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. **32** So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven, **33** but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven."