



## **Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage**

Scottsdale Bible Church believes that God created and designed marriage to showcase covenant love to humankind, and in doing so, foreshadow His ultimate union between Jesus Christ and His Bride – the Church. God spoke the design of marriage into existence, and through it creates the one-flesh union. From the one-flesh union, marriage creates the best environment for the nurturing, loving, and protection of children. Marriage is for God’s glory – it is the doing of God and the display of God. Marriage is a covenant between one man and one woman before God – each pledging their devotion and faithfulness in a one-flesh union as long as they both shall live. For this reason, the Christian marriage has been likewise placed in view of all in our culture by God to show the genius of His design and plan. Marriage is set as the pinnacle of earthly relationships and is not to end except by death of one spouse or the other.

Scottsdale Bible Church will be a champion for Christ-centered marriages within our congregation and community. Our pastors and staff support couples in building, maintaining and growing healthy, faith-affirming marital relationships through teaching, counseling, and marriage-strengthening events. We also provide numerous resources to assist in rebuilding broken marriages, as well as provide support and healing for divorced individuals.

It is because of the sacredness of the marriage union that God hates divorce. While some may disagree as to whether there are any Biblical grounds for divorce, there is agreement that divorce is never commanded nor is it ever God’s perfect will for a person’s life. Accordingly, the pastors of Scottsdale Bible Church will not counsel a Christian to seek a divorce.

People having experienced divorce are commonly interested in remarriage. Pastors offer clear instruction where the Bible provides explicit directives, and provide guidance where the Scriptures are not explicitly declarative, so that all people involved are able to live out their convictions based upon their study of the Scriptures. Some circumstances invite pastoral admonishment, and if necessary, formal discipline, toward the goal of restoration.

Divorce in a person’s past does not necessarily automatically disqualify a person from leadership (as a layperson, pastor, or elder). Details about the time and circumstances about the divorce related to the person’s faith in Jesus must be understood before a determination can be made. To disqualify a person when the Scriptures do not, goes beyond the Scriptures and invites legalism.

### **On Prenuptial Agreements**

Every person is wise to make preparations that legally provide for loved ones and, as much as it is possible, make personal intentions or interests known and declared. One example of this type of preparation is a Medical Directive, which expresses a person's preferred courses of actions for the family to follow in the event that the person needs medical care and is unable to state those preferences him/herself.

Any person entering into the covenant of marriage is encouraged to draft the legal documents that will execute their intents and interests, particularly those that affect and impact others such as children or other relatives.

An increasingly common issue facing people making these premarital decisions is whether or not to draft a prenuptial agreement that delineates the allocation of resources being brought in to the marriage, and how those resources should be allocated, in the event of the dissolution of the marriage.

While prenuptial agreements are legal, these contractual arrangements contradict the covenantal aspects of marriage, and provide a preemptive system of defense for the presumed, predictive failure of the marriage. Despite the good intentions of the cause for drafting it, a prenuptial agreement accounts beforehand that the marriage will not succeed, and that the premarital resources must be protected from the interests of the divorced spouse. It is a prepared provision requiring the agreement of both the groom and the bride that undermines the faith upon which marriage is established.

Therefore, to honor the intent to provide for children or other descendants, individuals are instead encouraged to draft irrevocable trusts that designate the allocation of specific resources to the intended parties. These trusts are preferred because they still accomplish the intended purpose, without being established on the premise of the likelihood of marital failure. Resources, possessions, and provisions that are not explicitly designated in irrevocable trusts should otherwise be brought into the marriage with full faith and confidence that the marriage will flourish until the death of one spouse.

Please note, this is not financial advice; rather, it is spiritual counsel that agrees with Scripture that marriage is an institution ordained by God where he cleaves one man to one woman for life. It is not to be entered into lightly, and no person should seek to rend asunder what God has brought together. As "one flesh," a husband and wife should have all things in common, live in mutual submission to one another, and strive to honor one another and honor God in their stewardship, both prior and subsequent to their wedding ceremony.