Is it a Sin to Marry a Divorced Person?

* **Kris Swiatocho, Cliff Young**

***EDITOR'S NOTE:***[***He Said-She Said***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/) *is a biweekly advice column for singles featuring a question from a Crosswalk.com reader with responses from a male and female point of view. If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to* ***hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com*** *(selected questions will be posted anonymously).*

**QUESTION**: Would I be sinning to marry a divorced woman? The woman I love left her ex-husband due to battery, not adultery. I’ve read several passages in the [**Bible**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/) where our Lord Jesus Christ condemns marrying a divorcee.

**HE SAID:**

I have asked myself the same question over the years as I *contemplated* pursuing relationships with women who have been divorced; however you have already started down that road and face an even more difficult one.

God takes the union of two people in [**marriage**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/) very seriously; however, at times many of us rush into (and out of) His Will, don’t listen to His voice, or choose to “do our own thing.” As a result (of not following Him explicitly) we sometimes (feel we made a mistake and) want a “do-over.”

**SEE ALSO:** [**What are the Grounds for Biblical Divorce?**](http://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors-or-leadership/ask-roger/grounds-for-biblical-divorce.html)

Divorce is often the consequence of those relational decisions in conjunction with the selfishness of one or both parties in a marriage. Sadly, some reports now have “Christian” marriages ending even more often than “non-believers.”

*"I hate divorce," says the LORD God* ([**Malachi 2:15-16**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=mal+2:15-16)).

What God intricately joins together physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, separated (or ripped apart) by man can leave a scarring only He can heal and maybe that’s why He is so stringent on the topic.

*But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery* (Matthew 5:32).

**SEE ALSO:** [**What Does the Bible Say about Divorce?**](http://www.christianity.com/christian-life/manhood-and-womanhood/what-does-the-bible-teach-about-divorce-remarriage.html)

These are some pretty harsh words which are probably debated on both sides by mature, educated and knowledgeable believers. However, each of us must make a determination and choice on our own as to how He is speaking to you on the topic.

*The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it"* ([**Matthew 19:10-12**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=mt+19:10-12)).

I cannot conclude whether or not you would be sinning; that is only something you can decide after seeking the Lord’s direction for yourself.

**SHE SAID:**

**SEE ALSO:** [**Christians and Divorce: Busting the Myth**](http://www.religiontoday.com/columnists/breakpoint/christians-and-divorce-busting-the-myth.html)

This is one of those questions that has a lot of answers depending on what church denomination you belong to. First, in my opinion (I am a daughter of a divorced parents as well as a leader in single adult ministry) no, it's not a sin to marry a divorced woman. Because God takes marriage and divorce very seriously due to how many people it affects - including God ([**Mark 10:9**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=mr+10:9-9): "*Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."*), he hates it when people divorce. He knows the pain it's going to cause so many people. In all the years I have led singles ministry I have yet to meet anyone that said their divorce was wonderful. There is always pain.

God sees marriage as a covenant, a bond between the couple and a bond between couple and himself. It is a covenant that he does not want broken. If you were to break that covenant, what else would you break? But the problem is that people *are* broken. And broken people make mistakes. They get married for the wrong reasons, often bringing personal issues and problems from their past into the marriage. They marry to fix family issues. They marry because they get pregnant. They marry not having anything to do with God. As a result, abuse, abandonment, adultery and so much more happens in the marriage, which often leads to divorce unless both people seek God to help them heal and be restored. If one person wants out, you have no choice but to let them.

So now concerning your girlfriend and her divorce. You say she was abused but there was no adultery. For some, knowing you have a "biblical" divorce is important, especially if you ever want to be a deacon, elder, leader or teacher. Because for some, if you are not able to keep your marriage healthy, then how can you lead others? I can totally understand this logic. But I know many amazing Christians that, through divorce, have grown in the Lord and gone on to become pastors and teachers.

Some questions I have: did her ex know the Lord? I find it hard for me to believe that someone who says they are a believer and follower of Christ could be abusive. If they aren't a believer, then you have Biblical grounds for divorce. But on another common sense note. If someone is beating you, verbally or emotionally abusive, where do you find in scripture that you should put up with this? If your girlfriend did everything in her power to get her ex some help, to fix their marriage and then felt she had to just leave for fear of her life, then...well, I would have done the same. And if my church or others didn't understand this, then I would find another church.

**SEE ALSO:** [**The Unfaithful Spouse: Should I Divorce or Try to Reconcile?**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/divorce-and-remarriage/the-unfaithful-spouse-should-i-divorce-or-try-to-reconcile.html)

So let's just put a cap on all of this. Because we are broken, we sin, but we are forgiven through the grace of God. Divorce is not the unforgiven sin; unbelief is. You have to search your own heart, asking God if this is the woman for you. If her past and how she divorced is a problem for you, then you shouldn't marry her. God will tell you what is right for you. Remember, guilt is form the enemy and conviction is from God.

For me, marrying someone who has been divorced is not an issue. I just want to make sure they divorced for the right reasons.

*Truly I tell you, people can be forgiven all their sins and every slander they utter, but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; they are guilty of an eternal sin* ([**Mark 2:28-29**](http://www.biblestudytools.com/search/?t=niv&q=mr+3:28-29)).

***HE is …******Cliff Young****, a Crosswalk.com contributing writer and a veteran single of many decades. He has traveled the world in search of fresh experiences, serving opportunities, and the perfect woman (for him) and has found that his investments in God, career and youth ministry have paid off in priceless dividends.*

**SEE ALSO:** [**How To Stop Your Divorce**](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/marriage/divorce-and-remarriage/how-to-stop-your-divorce.html)

***SHE is ...******Kris Swiatocho****, the President and Director of* [***TheSinglesNetwork.org Ministries***](http://thesinglesnetwork.org/) *and* [***FromHisHands.com Ministries.***](http://fromhishands.com/) *Kris has served in ministry in various capacities for the last 25 years. An accomplished trainer and mentor, Kris has a heart to reach and grow leaders so they will in turn reach and grow others. She is also the author of* [***four books***](http://www.thesinglesnetwork.org/store.html)*.*

***DISCLAIMER****: We are not trained psychologists or licensed professionals. We're just average folk who understand what it's like to live the solo life in the twenty-first century. We believe that the* [***Bible***](http://www.biblestudytools.com/) *is our go-to guide for answers to all of life's questions, and it's where we'll go for guidance when responding to your questions. Also, it's important to note that we write our answers separately.*

***GOT A QUESTION?*** *If you've got a question about anything related to singleness or living the single life, please submit it to hesaid-shesaid@crosswalk.com (selected questions will be posted anonymously). While we are unable to answer every inquiry, we do hope that this column will be an encouragement to you. Click here to visit the He Said-She Said* [***archives***](http://www.crosswalk.com/family/singles/he-said-she-said/)*.*