



DIVORCE

AND REMARRIAGE

This PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET was developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church, Reno, NV • jtaylor@southreno.com
Scriptures are printed verbatim with references noted but highlights and underlines are added. Quotes and all primary sources are footnoted.

A Very Important and Personal Note:

Dear, Dear Friend:

*If you or someone close to you is contemplating divorce, I encourage you to study this PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET for yourself. Study it very carefully. I submit that for the believer in Christ, the most important question before anyone in a marital crisis is this: **God, what do you want me to do in this situation?** Before the Lord, develop your own personal conviction on divorce, derived from an intellectually honest study of God's Holy Word. The effects of divorce are far-reaching, the pain of divorce is deep, and the prevention of divorce is worthy of our most valiant efforts. Sometimes divorce is inevitable and, at times, even permitted biblically. It is my sincere prayer that whatever painful circumstances you find yourself in, that you will lean on God more than you ever have for wisdom, healing, and direction. May this PASTOR'S GUIDE SHEET be the first step in your healing process. Keep your faith in God strong and may God be with you. You are in my most sincere prayers....*

- Pastor Joe

Some Initial Summary Statements about Divorce

1. God hates divorce.

Malachi 2:16, NIV - ¹⁶ *"I hate divorce," says the Lord God of Israel..."*

Malachi 2:16, MSG - ¹⁶ *"I hate divorce," says the God of Israel. God-of-the-Angel-Armies says, "I hate the violent dismembering of the 'one flesh' of marriage." So watch yourselves. Don't let your guard down. Don't cheat.*

2. There are two, clear biblical grounds for divorce.

A. Adultery

Matthew 5:32, NIV - ³² *But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness (here in present tense in the Greek, it points to an on-going sin), causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.*

B. Abandonment

1 Corinthians 7:15, NIV - ¹⁵ *But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.*

3. There is only one “reason” for divorce.

The reasons for divorce are endless, but in reality, there is only one—a refusal (for some reason) on the part of either the husband, or the wife, or both to carry out their “vows” of marriage.

Malachi 2:15, NLT - ¹⁵ *Didn't the Lord make you one with your wife? In body and spirit you are his. And what does God want? Godly children from your union. So guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth.*

4. “On-going” adultery *may* be grounds for divorce, but confessed sin is always grounds for forgiveness.

Ephesians 4:32, NIV - ³² *Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.*

5. “How” you make a decision is as big as “what” you decide.

*(“Use your **head** and not your **heart!**” - ЖКТ)*

Proverbs 21:5, NIV - ⁵ ... haste leads to poverty.

6. The big question for the believer: “God, what do you want?”

What does the Scripture Teach about Divorce?

Detailed Study Verse Section - Matthew 5:31-32, NIV - ³¹ *It has been said*, important note: Jesus is speaking primarily to His disciples, that is why it seems like He is talking “just to men”; in reality, this whole sermon applies to men and women; **‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’** In Deuteronomy 24:1-4ff, Moses reluctantly permitted divorce. Moses actually improved on the situation in his day by insisting that men at least give their ex-wives, who were viewed more as property, written proof that the marriage had dissolved. ³² *But I tell you that anyone who divorces* our English word “divorced” comes from the Latin meaning “to amputate”; the Greek word here means “to break or tear off” **his wife, except for** ongoing **marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress** (an aorist infinitive, passive voice Gk idiom) the subject is acted upon; in other words, one mate has “forced” the other to *defile the bed* against their wishes, **and anyone who marries the divorced** present tense, indicates an ongoing (non biblical grounds) sin “cutting off” **woman commits adultery** (indicative voice—its done to oneself) or sins as well. Summary statement: Based on the original text, I strongly believe this verse means that, although God’s plan is that two people remain married until death separates them, those who divorce and remarry, in effect, do commit adultery. However, they don’t *live* in adultery. Therefore, God forbid that we should say, “All manner of sin is forgiven all men except for one: divorce.” That’s not what Jesus said. He said, “All manner of sin is forgiven all men except the blasphemy of the Holy Spirit—the rejection of Jesus Christ” (see Matthew 12:31). “Divorce” and “adultery” both are missing God’s original and perfect plan for anyone. It is one thing to sin (miss the mark) once and another to live, day after day, missing God’s plan for you.

Matthew 5:31-32, MSG - ³¹ *Remember the Scripture that says, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him do it legally, giving her divorce papers and her legal rights?’* ³² *Too many of you are using that as a cover for selfishness and whim, pretending to be righteous just because you are ‘legal.’ Please, no more pretending. If you divorce your wife, you’re responsible for making her an adulteress (unless she has already made herself that by sexual promiscuity). And if you marry such a divorced adulteress, you’re automatically an adulterer yourself. You can’t use legal cover to mask a moral failure.*

1. Does the Bible give any grounds for divorce?

Yes? In two instances, Scripture teaches that divorce may be permissible.

(1) **Adultery—Sexual unfaithfulness of one's spouse**

Matthew 5:32 (NIV) - *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 19:9 (NIV) - *I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.*

(2) **Abandonment by an unbelieving spouse**

1 Corinthians 7:15 (NIV) - *But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.*

NOTE: Please understand that Jesus is not commanding you to divorce if your spouse meets one of these two instances. As a Christian, you must forgive him/her and you may decide not to divorce. In other words, divorce is not an "automatic." ***Adultery may be grounds for divorce, but sin is always grounds for forgiveness.***

2. Besides my spouse committing adultery or my unbelieving spouse deserting me, under what other circumstances may I file for a divorce?

These are the only two reasons clearly stated in scripture.

3. What about physical abuse? Is that grounds for divorce?

Some biblical scholars would say no and others would say yes—depending on the circumstances. All would agree that you should remove yourself from the situation and seek protection until your spouse has repented. I would place *severe* abuse (either emotional or physical) under the category of abandonment. If it is ongoing and will not stop, get out! Get to a safe place. Once your mind has cleared, you will be in a better situation to determine God's will in this matter. To be clear, if the abuse will not stop, I believe you have biblical grounds to dissolve the marriage.

4. May a divorced person remarry?

Yes, if you were divorced because your spouse would not repent of his/her ongoing sexual infidelity or of abandoning you.

5. What if I am divorced before I was a Christian, married someone else, and then became a Christian? Should I divorce my second spouse and go back to my first spouse, if he or she hasn't remarried?

No, Scripture teaches you should make the best of the marriage you're in now. (c.f., Deut. 24:1-4)

6. If I don't love my spouse anymore, isn't it wrong to remain married, even though I have no biblical grounds for divorce?

It's wrong to go against the Word of God. It is also wrong to not work on a bad marriage. "Feelings" of love will follow obedience in this area.

Q & A about Divorce

1. What are the consequences of divorce?

A few personal thoughts:

- A. It creates severe economic difficulties.
- B. It creates an "unprotected" mate (especially the woman).
- C. It plagues one's conscience.
- D. It sets a precedent for your children to someday divorce their spouses.
- E. It increases the probability of ongoing relationship failures.
- F. It increases the chance of entering into a non-biblical marriage.
- G. It creates a loneliness that can lead to sin.
- H. Children of divorced parents deal with *divided loyalty issues*.
- I. Emotional health is affected negatively by all involved.
- J. Physical health is affected negatively by all involved.
- K. Psychological health is affected negatively by all involved.
- L. Complex feelings will arise (fear, anger, disappointment, uncertainty, guilt, liveness, etc.)
- M. You may take yourself out from under the hand of God's blessings.
- N. Personal schedules will be greatly impacted.
- O. The legal system will be involved and will make the most important decisions for you.
- P. Banking, insurances, medical directives, wills, estates, trusts, and more will be affected.
- Q. Titles, family heirlooms, possessions, real estates, and joint property will need to be divided.
- R. Children's schedules and living arrangements will need to be adjusted (most likely by the court).
- S. Family, friends, work, and children's schools will need to be notified.
- T. Lawyers will need to be secured—this involves expense and energy.
- U. "Dual roles" will be taken on by both mates (you will take over roles previously done by your mate)
- V. Friends and family members will "choose sides" and that structure will change in your lives.
- W. A significant move and/or change in lifestyle is most probable.
- X. Counselors will need to be secured to help all involved, "process" the divorce.
- Y. A detailed process for recovery must be developed.
- Z. There will be many, many, many unanswered questions.

2. What causes divorce?

Top 10 reasons* in the U.S. according to a GGBTS Ph.D. Dissertation/Study

1. Financial
2. "In-laws"
3. Moral failures (Adultery)
4. Alcohol
5. Anger/Emotional Abuse
6. Anger/Physical abuse
7. Abandonment
8. Different sexual expectations
9. Boredom
10. Other issues

* "Lack of communication" was included in each item

"The reasons are endless, but in reality there is only one—a refusal (for some reason) on the part of the husband, the wife, or both, to carry out their "vows" in marriage."

3. What are the most important insights for those considering divorce?

A. Use you *head* and not your *heart!* There are many, many intense feelings involved in the troubled marriage considering divorce. It is difficult, but absolutely necessary, to acknowledge and "vent" feelings in a way that is safe. It is equally necessary to base decisions based on the Word of God and facts and not the intense feelings of the moments. Feelings may linger for some time but they will lessen over time.

B. Recommit yourself to Christ. Divorce is perhaps the biggest storm most people will face in a lifetime. I say to people, "It will take a miracle for this marriage to work out!" I say that knowing that my God is in the miracle business. The only thing God knows to do is the miraculous—He alone is in the miracle business. The marriage that survives will be the marriage that plugs into the power of God. VERY IMPORTANT: Don't lose your faith! Spend time with God everyday. Listen to good, Christian music and read material that will encourage you. Ask good Christian friends to cheer you on to "stay on course". Keep the faith and give this battle your most noble, courageous, God-honoring effort.

C. Get into a good counseling program! When a marriage becomes so difficult that divorce is considered, it is time to secure a good marriage counselor. It will cost you some money and it will cost you time and effort but it will be well worth it. Seldom does a distressed marriage succeed without third party intervention. Find a qualified, Christian marriage counselor by talking to your pastor or looking in the Yellow Pages. You may be able to find out more on the internet. Just find one and give them the responsibility of helping repair the relationship. VERY IMPORTANT: Your counselor can only help people that want to be helped. Take an open spirit into the counseling process. Give the counselor time to "get up to speed" on your situation. Your problems didn't come up over night and they won't go away over night. If a counselor just doesn't work out, get another one. When it comes to your counseling process, don't try to be right, and try to do what's right! Fix your marriage!

D. Do not "problem-solve" outside of the counseling process or a third, neutral party. So many problems (finances, conflict resolution, schedules, communication styles, idle

time, computer time, drinking, drug use, purchasing habits, sex, even simple interactions, etc.) can blow up because a couple that was very sensitive to one another tried to problem solve an issue that soon got out-of-control and blown way out of proportion. VERY IMPORTANT: Your counselor will help you set good, healthy boundaries in the areas of finances, fighting, managing realistic expectations, schedules, etc. Use a "time out" policy when things even begin to get heated. Work on "the issues" with the counselor present! Also, choose your battle very carefully! Some things matter; some do not! Be careful what you say. Everyone's nerves are very sensitive right now. "If in doubt, don't say it!"

E. Keep the influences in your life in check! The Bible says, "Bad company corrupts good morals!" (1 Corinthians 15:33). Many things influence our lives—TV, internet, music, media, what we read, friends, co-workers, pastors, teachers, mentors, our children, our neighbors, the events of our past, the fears of our future, the music we listen to, the magazine we pick up waiting for an appointment, etc. Some "things" will encourage you to do what is right and others will not. Surround yourself with those people and those activities that encourage you to do what is right.

F. The path of forgiveness is the path of recovery. The grace of God must abound and the strength to forgive must come from God. The goal of any troubled marriage is to *catch the wave* of momentum at some point. My experience is that this "wave" is many times a spiritual event. Again, stay close to God and discern His "call" for you. Sometimes, only the call of God will keep you where you need to be.

G. Give the healing process your most intense effort! If a marriage fails, I believe those that heal and process the quickest are those who gave the most effort in the healing process. They worked hard trying to solve their marriage and therefore can walk away knowing they did everything they could to save it. I say, "Give me two people who are willing to do anything they can to make their marriage work and they generally make it." They don't just survive, but they thrive in time. They become a bright light to God's grace and mercy. They have a triumphant marriage—it really can happen.

Q & A about the Biblical Material

1. If your divorce isn't final yet:

1 Corinthians 7:10-11 (NIV) - ¹⁰ *To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. ¹¹ But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.*

Proverbs 21:5 (NIV) - *The plans of the diligent lead to profit as surely as haste leads to poverty.*

Note: It is contrary to God's will to initiate divorce unless you have biblical grounds.

2. If you are divorced and not yet remarried, and your divorce wasn't biblically allowed:

As I understand Scripture, you are not biblically allowed to remarry [at this time.] (That would be adultery. c.f., Mark 10:11)

3. Selected Scriptures on the subject of divorce:

Malachi 2:16 (NIV) - *"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel, "and I hate a man's covering himself with violence as well as with his garment," says the LORD Almighty. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith.*

Matthew 5:31, 32 (NIV) - ³¹ *"It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.'* ³² *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 18:15-18 (NIV) - ¹⁵ *"If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over."* ¹⁶ *But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that 'every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.'* ¹⁷ *If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector."* ¹⁸ *"I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.*

NOTE: I am going out on a limb at this time. In extremely, extremely rare cases, I feel that 'hardness of heart' might be a third instance for divorce. It would be important that the biblical prescriptions of confrontation are observed and absolutely all efforts are made to reconcile the marriage. - JKT

Matthew 19:4-6 (NIV) - ⁴ *"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'"* ⁵ *and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh?'"* ⁶ *So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

Romans 7:1-3 (NIV) - ¹ *Do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to men who know the law—that the law has authority over a man only as long as he lives?"* ² *For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage."* ³ *So then, if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man.*

Romans 12:18 (NIV) - *If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.*

1 Corinthians 7:1-40 (NIV) - ¹ *Now for the matters you wrote about: It is good for a man not to marry."* ² *But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband."* ³ *The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband."* ⁴ *The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife."* ⁵ *Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."* ⁶ *I say this as a concession, not as a command."* ⁷ *I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that."* ⁸ *Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is*

good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. ⁹ But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion. ¹⁰ To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. ¹¹ But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. ¹² To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. ¹³ And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. ¹⁵ But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. ¹⁶ How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife? ¹⁷ Nevertheless, each one should retain the place in life that the Lord assigned to him and to which God has called him. This is the rule I lay down in all the churches. ¹⁸ Was a man already circumcised when he was called? He should not become uncircumcised. Was a man uncircumcised when he was called? He should not be circumcised. ¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing. Keeping God's commands is what counts. ²⁰ Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. ²¹ Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. ²² For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴ Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to. ²⁵ Now about virgins: I have no command from the Lord, but I give a judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. ²⁶ Because of the present crisis, I think that it is good for you to remain as you are. ²⁷ Are you married? Do not seek a divorce. Are you unmarried? Do not look for a wife. ²⁸ But if you do marry, you have not sinned; and if a virgin marries, she has not sinned. But those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this. ²⁹ What I mean, brothers, is that the time is short. From now on those who have wives should live as if they had none; ³⁰ those who mourn, as if they did not; those who are happy, as if they were not; those who buy something, as if it were not theirs to keep; ³¹ those who use the things of the world, as if not engrossed in them. For this world in its present form is passing away. ³² I would like you to be free from concern. An unmarried man is concerned about the Lord's affairs—how he can please the Lord. ³³ But a married man is concerned about the affairs of this world—how he can please his wife—³⁴ and his interests are divided. An unmarried woman or virgin is concerned about the Lord's affairs: Her aim is to be devoted to the Lord in both body and spirit. But a married woman is concerned about the affairs of this world—how she can please her husband. ³⁵ I am saying this for your own good, not to restrict you, but that you may live in a right way in undivided devotion to the Lord. ³⁶ If anyone thinks he is acting improperly toward the virgin he is engaged to, and if she is getting along in years and he feels he ought to marry, he should do as he wants. He is not sinning. They should get married. ³⁷ But the man who has settled the matter in his own mind, who is under no compulsion but has control over his own will, and who has made up his mind not to marry the virgin—this man also does the right thing. ³⁸ So then, he who marries the virgin does right, but he who does not marry her does even better. ³⁹ A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord. ⁴⁰ In my judgment, she is happier if she stays as she is—and I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

4. If you are considering marrying an unbeliever realize what the Bible says about that:

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 (NIV) - ¹⁴ *Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness?* ¹⁵ *What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever?* ¹⁶ *What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: "I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people."*

"Pastor Joe's Talking Points" for Those Trying to Survive Divorce

If divorce is inevitable and one feels biblical grounds are present, the following represent some "talking points" I could offer. - JKT

1. Get a good attorney.

It may be a simple statement but here it is: *Two people who can't live together in a peaceful manner probably can't terminate a marriage in a peaceful way, either.* Few couples have truly amicable resolutions to their marriage without legal intervention. Will it cost you? Yes! Is it right? I believe so. You are dissolving a legal relationship and the legal system needs to be involved. The courts are foreign territory to most of us. A good attorney will help represent you in a fair way and then guide you through the official process. Your (ex) mate may "give you their word" but remember, they "gave you their word" (via a wedding vow) and didn't keep that either. Secure an attorney.

2. Develop a healthy support system of friends and resources.

Divorce is a painful conflict that continues long after the judge pronounces the termination of the marriage. Bickering and legal battles become the norm for some. Years may pass before a true sense of "it's over" becomes a reality. You will need your God, your pastor, your church, your good friends, and encouraging resources like books and support groups to weather this extended storm.

3. Learn to grieve in a healthy way.

The pain of divorce is much like the pain of bereavement—for many people, its worse. It will do you well to enroll in a good grief management program. Read good books about grief. Attend a seminar. Join a support group. Manage your grief or it will manage you. It's okay to hurt when you are hurt.

4. Strongly consider getting into a good counseling or recovery program.

There will be lots of toxic emotions that divorce will stir up. Many feelings of anger, bitterness, hostility, grief, doubt, uncertainty, loss, fear, dread, etc. will need to be understood and managed. You may need help processing this event.

6. Determine that this event will not define your whole life.

Will divorce always be a part of your story? Yes, but don't let it be the whole story. We serve a God who brings "good out of bad" (Romans 8:28). Allow God to honor your wounds and bring good out of this bad. No one can say for certain what your future holds but God promises that He will be the God of all comfort and a strong refuge for you. Let Him rescue you and complete His story in your life. When all is completed, you will say, "This is good."

7. Though this marriage is over, parenting continues.

As established earlier, divorce inevitably has negative consequences for everyone involved—especially the children. They will need help processing this catastrophic event for them. Consider counseling. Do not use the children to pit parent against parent. Assure them that YOU love them. Do not speak against their other parent—you'll lose in the long run. Do not attempt to purchase the children's loyalty. Do not ask them to "spy" for you. Do tune into your child's communication patterns. What are they saying? Let them talk. Stay as active as you can in your child's life. Hold them, touch them, and care for them. They are wounded also but they do not have the mental or spiritual capacity to deal with this situation like an adult. They are children who will have to grow up much faster than planned. Pray for wisdom, guidance, and strength to carry you into this new phase of your parental role in their lives.

8. Be slow to remarry

Avoid making any major decisions—especially about relationships. Please go slow, pray often, and seek premarital counseling early in any future, significant relationship. You will be different as a result of a divorce. Let the "processing" of this event have time to be completed in your life. Any quick decision is probably a wrong decision. Give this matter to God. Let Him provide in His time.

9. Don't walk away from God—you'll need Him to get through this storm!

Notes/Questions:

Welcome to the "Third Party" Club

Developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church

Coaching Agenda Those Wanting to Help a Hurting Couple

Thank you for your interest in and love for your friends. Your efforts will be "worth it."

1. Please see your role in their lives in three ways:
 - A. Encouragers (All the time)
 - B. Prayer Warriors (Daily)
 - C. Accountability Partner (Only once a week. We don't want to "wear them down.")
2. A Word about **Encouraging**
 - A. Your Friend(s) are wounded right now ... more than you know!
 - B. Find creative ways to encourage him/her (e.g. Notes, calls, cards, emails, voice mails, etc.)
 - C. Please remember that Confidentiality is very important. (Be discreet.)
3. A Word about Being a **Prayer Warrior**
 - A. Set a time everyday to pray for your friend.
 - B. Remember: "This is a spiritual battle!"
 - C. If a couple is working together as the "third party," please pray together.
 - D. Pray for restoration and reconciliation.
 - E. Please remember that Confidentiality is very important.

4. A Word about **Accountability**
 - A. Try not to "visit" with your partner about "specifics."
 - B. If you feel there is a "grouse discrepancy" in their "stories," contact the Pastor Joe first.
 - C. Remember, you are not the counselor, please refrain from "giving advice."
 - D. You need to set a specific time and place and ask only the following questions:

Begin by saying, "I want to talk to you about your life and the situation we are trying to recover from. Because I love you, I want to ask you some questions:"

- i. What is going on right now in your life that God is not pleased with?
- ii. Have you talked or had any contact with "the other person" at all?
- iii. Have you had any contact with any other person that is inappropriate?
- iv. Have you been consistent in your "quiet times" with God this week?
- v. Have you prayed everyday for your mate?
- vi. Have you been intimate with you husband/wife? Any fights?
- vii. Is there anything going on in your life I need to know about?
- viii. Have you lied to me about anything we have talked about?

- E. "Remember, we encourage everyday, we hold the friend to accountability once a week."
 - F. *Please remember that Confidentiality is very important. Please do not "discuss" this matter with your mate in any detail and only if they too function as an official "third party" encourager.*
 - G. ***NEVER** approach your friend in public and talk to them about this matter! This is a private matter only. You don't want to "wear them out." (And remember, guilt never motivates for long!)*
5. *If the couple is seeing Pastor Joe for the counseling, a "Relationship Covenant" will be established. You will get a copy of it. You can also check the persons/couples progress on the covenant during the "Once-a-week" accountability time.*
 6. *If you need to contact Pastor Joe, please call him at the Church Office at (775) 827-3227.*
 7. *Again, thank you so much for your prayers and support for your dear friend(s).*

HEALING EMOTIONAL HURTS THROUGH CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

A TMC Work Sheet

Developed by Dr. Joe K. Taylor, Senior Pastor, South Reno Baptist Church

*"Put away all bitterness and anger and be kind, tender-hearted,
forgiving each other..." Ephesians 4:31, 32*

1. ALONE, list ways in which I have hurt my spouse and our marriage.

Examples: Selfish, critical, negative, insensitive, disrespectful, verbally abusive, unsupportive, ungrateful, unfaithful, wrong priorities, rejecting, unforgiving (specific hurtful events, fights, arguments, or scenes may need confession). Use extra paper as needed!

2. CONFESS to God and receive his forgiveness.

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will purify us from all unrighteousness."

Example: "God, I have deeply hurt you and my spouse by my _____. These are very wrong and I ask you to forgive me. Thank you for doing so and I ask you to change me into the kind of person I need to be. AMEN."

3. TOGETHER share your lists and request forgiveness.

James 5:16 "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed."

Example: "I've seen that I've hurt you deeply by being _____. I have been wrong. Will you forgive me? (The word "wrong" is much better than "sorry" since confession means agreeing with God, and God has said these behaviors and attitudes are wrong.)

Response: "I forgive you." (Remember: forgiveness is a choice, not primarily a feeling! The question is not if I feel like forgiving, but if I will forgive. Will you release the hurt, and let it go... then new feelings will come!)

Other: "Are there other major hurts that I've not seen that need my apology? Please share them with me so I can confess them and seek your forgiveness."

Next: Spouse shares her list and seeks forgiveness.

4. EXCHANGE LISTS and tear them up.

Philippians 3:13 "...forgetting what lies behind and pressing forward to what lies ahead..."

Start the forgetting process with a focus on this new memory of forgiveness as lists are exchanged and destroyed. (Some people burn or bury them.)

Additional suggestions: Hold hands and pray (even if silently), thanking God for his forgiving you, changing you, and healing your marriage.

5. A NEW HABIT.

Ephesians 4:26, 27 "Do not let the sun go down when you are still angry, and do not let the devil get a foothold."

Confession to God and others we hurt along with forgiving others who have hurt us must become a daily habit if intimacy is to be maintained.