

## **Elders' Statement on Divorce and Remarriage**

Marriage is the sacred and covenantal union between one man and one woman, and God's intention is for marriage to last a lifetime (Gen. 1–2). When a divorce occurs, it is always a result of sin (whether from one spouse or another). However, divorce is not always sinful. Biblically, divorce is permitted, but not required, on the grounds of sexual immorality (porneia) or abandonment (Matt. 5:31–32; 19:1–9; 1 Cor. 7). We believe sexual immorality (porneia) is best understood biblically as consisting of a range of actions with varying degrees of severity. We believe physical, sexual or other forms of abuse can be a form of abandonment. Marriage reconciliation can be the fruit of the Holy Spirit's work, but it may not always be wise, possible or biblically commanded.

When divorce is not biblically warranted, any subsequent remarriage (to someone other than the original spouse) results in biblical infidelity. In situations where divorce is biblically warranted, remarriage is possible. Christians who have been remarried following an unbiblical divorce should remain with their current spouse but follow the biblical admonition to repent and be forgiven of their past sins and make whatever amends are necessary.

We acknowledge that the subject of divorce and remarriage is biblically challenging in its interpretation and requires prayerful discernment and often a team of wise counselors in its personal application. In all instances, it includes complexity and nuance that cannot be oversimplified into a blanket policy, but requires prudence, patience and pastoral sensibility.

## **Elders' Statement on Divorce in Cases of Domestic Abuse**

The elders affirm that all forms of abuse—including physical, emotional, verbal, economic, spiritual and sexual abuse—of one's spouse or children are egregious evils because they are a desecration of the divine image of God in a person. We acknowledge they may be considered grounds for divorce as a breach of the marital covenant and/or desertion of the marriage, since stopping the abuse may require physical separation.