

A Word from Our Pastor

The statistics on divorce are confusing. Some say that one out of two marriages end in divorce. I have heard that a higher rate of Christians get divorced than non-Christians. Then, I've asked pastors if they have any statement on the issue or if they have any statement on the issue or if they have preached about it, and most say NO!

The fact is that the pain of divorce has affected every one of us. We know that divorce is occurring, and we want to respond by hoping for reconciliation and caring for those who are hurt and broken. Sometimes both are not possible.

The problem also intensifies as Christian leaders differ in their position on the issue and how to minister in the situation. I can understand why there is such confusion; it is because of the many facets and the amount of emotion.

Our goal with this brochure is NOT to answer all the questions. As a matter of fact, we may raise more questions and give less definite answers. Our hope is first to be preventative. When you see the seriousness of divorce and the pain it brings, you will be committed to building a strong marriage.

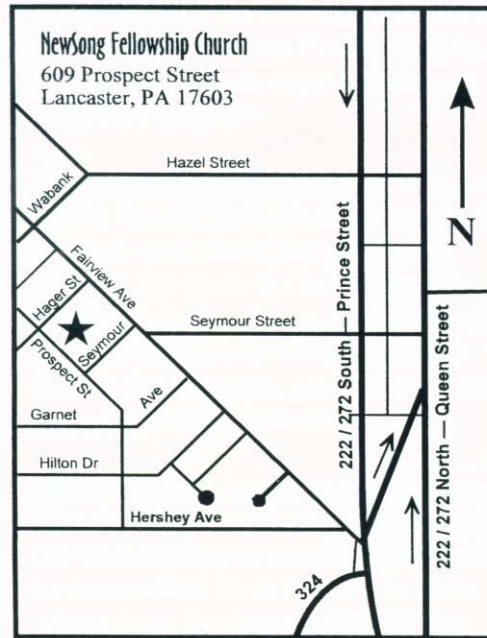
Our second goal, though, is to lay out how we will respond in a corrective manner in the event you are faced with divorce. Finally, this brochure is not to condemn those who have been divorced, especially if after you read our position you realize you proceeded wrongly. Let's leave that with the Lord and start with a clean slate. There are a lot of things that each of us has done that, as we grow, we realize we didn't do as God would desire. Confess it, admit the mistake, receive His forgiveness, and move on.

Although there may be consequences, God's grace is real and active in our lives. Our ultimate desire is to see the frequency of divorce diminish and healthy families and marriages occur at NewSong.

With Much Joy,

Pastor Jamie Mitchell

NewSong Fellowship Church



NEWSONG FELLOWSHIP CHURCH



Divorce & Remarriage

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GETTING MARRIED AT NEWSONG

1. **Any marriage is fixable!** With authority, we declare that if there are two people who are committed to Christ, willing to follow the Scriptures and come under godly counsel, ***there is hope***. Obviously, if those variables are missing from the equation, it becomes more difficult; but if there is any sense of willingness to see God work, no believer should ever give up hope! *With God, all things are possible.*

2. **Marriage is for life!** We believe that, as time has gone on, we have lessened our standard, even to the point that when a couple gets married, they believe they have an “option of divorce” if things don’t work out! **May it never be!** If you think that you have an option to separate or divorce – don’t get married! And if you are married and think you do – stop right now and purpose with your spouse that you are removing that option!

3. **Divorce happens in believers’ lives.** It’s a sad fact, but true; and therefore we must respond in a truthful and loving way. To do so, we must have historical perspective. In the Old Testament, marriage was a life-long commitment, yet when men began to take advantage of their wives and use the charge of adultery as a tool to use and abuse women, divorce was allowed by God to protect the wives. Don’t be confused; God’s accommodation was not in any way reversing His view that marriage was “till death do us part.” Even Jesus made it clear “*from the beginning it has not been this way*” (Matt. 19:8). Malachi 2:16 states God’s position — “**God hates divorce.**” However, there are some specific guidelines when proceeding with divorce.

4. **There are two stated Biblical grounds for divorce.** These “exceptions” should be the last reason and not an excuse for an easy solution to a tough marriage. They are: Fornication (*any sinful sexual activity, including adultery; unfaithfulness of a marriage partner*) A non-

believing partner initiating the divorce due to incompatibility with a Christian spouse. We believe that both of these acts can be overcome through forgiveness and through the application of biblical principles of marriage.

5. **Remarriage may be permitted for the faithful partner when the divorce was on biblical grounds.** In cases where a divorce was obtained between believers on non-biblical grounds, the person who remarries first commits “*adultery*” (Matthew 19:9), and the person who marries a person who was divorced on non-biblical grounds also commits adultery (Luke 16:18).

6. **Believers who pursue divorce on non-biblical grounds are subject to church discipline** because they openly reject the Word of God. The one who obtains a divorce on non-biblical grounds and remarries is committing “*adultery*” since God did not recognize the validity of the original divorce (Matthew 5:32; Mark 10:11-12). That person is subject to the steps of church discipline as outlined in Matthew 18:15-17 and as illustrated in 1 Corinthians 5:1-13.

7. **Divorce is a forgivable sin!** Salvation means that a person begins a new life; they are new creatures in Christ. At salvation, all sins are forgiven, even if divorce and remarriage has occurred based on non-biblical grounds. Consequently, the divorced believer is responsible to live up to what God has revealed about marriage and divorce after their salvation.

8. **Restoration is the priority!** In cases where divorce took place on non-biblical grounds and where the guilty party repents, the grace of God is operative at the point of repentance. It is assumed that the repentant party will endeavor to restore the marriage, whenever possible, as a sign of true repentance.

9. **Divorce does have its consequences.** The church has a responsibility to uphold the biblical ideal of marriage, especially as exemplified by its leaders. In

cases where there has been a divorce in a person's past, the church has an obligation to restrict, for a period of time, the person's involvement in leadership until it can be proven that the present marriage exemplifies Christ's relationship to His church. First Timothy 3:2,12 sets the marital qualification for a leader within the church. The phrase “*the husband of one wife*” does not mean that a person cannot have had a divorce in his past, since none of the other qualifications listed refer to specific acts in the past (prior to salvation or subsequent to salvation), but rather to qualities which currently characterize a man's life.

10. **Take your time the next time!** If a believer who has been divorced on biblical grounds is seeking remarriage, it is preferable that he or she wait until the spouse has remarried in order not to preclude any possibility of reconciliation. However, the situation will depend upon a number of factors, such as purity of life, time, etc.

11. **Make sure it doesn't happen again!** Those who have been divorced and are seeking remarriage will be expected to proceed through the same process of marriage counseling and premarital preparation as stated at NewSong. They will be expected to resolve any past issues prior to remarriage.

12. **Clean up all relational conflict!** If you were the initiator of the divorce for non-biblical reasons, first and foremost you need to repent and confess it to the Lord. We would suggest, with the help of pastoral counsel, you begin to seek reconciliation with your former spouse, your children, family, and others affected by the divorce. It may be that either you or your spouse has remarried and full and complete restoration is impossible, yet “as much as it has to do with you, be at peace with all men.” (Romans 12:18)

Anyone considering remarriage should consult our brochure “Getting Married at NewSong.”