**The Difference In Fornication And Adultery**

Matt 19:9 "And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery."

A caller at the end of our last week’s program suggested “fornication” only means sex before marriage so this verse would not allow a man to divorce his wife for sexual unfaithfulness after the marriage.

fornication / porneia:

Vine’s - “illicit sexual intercourse”

Thayer – “illicit sexual intercourse … adultery, fornication, homosexuality, lesbianism, intercourse with animals etc.”

I Cor 7:2 “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”

Jude 7 “Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.”

adultery / moichao:

Vine’s – “denotes one who has unlawful intercourse with the spouse of another”

Thayer – “to have unlawful intercourse with another's wife”

Heb 13:4 “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

Rom 7:2-3 “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.”

Therefore “fornication” in Mat 19:9 would include any “illicit sexual intercourse” whether it is sex before the marriage, adultery after the marriage, homosexuality, bestiality – any sex outside of the lawful marriage relationship.

Matt 5:32 teaches the same thing as Matt 19:9 – “But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.”

And Luke 16:18 states the same general rule without giving the exception – “Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.”

I Cor 7:10 also states the same general rule without giving the exception – “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband.”

Matt 5:32 and I Cor 7:10 (and Matt 19:6) supply us some additional information – that even the divorce itself is wrong, if not done for fornication – even if no remarriage follows.

We’ve read that Matt 19:9 states that such divorce and remarriage results in adultery. Every time the new couple sleeps together they are committing sin. And so if one wants to repent of adultery they have to quit committing adultery; they have to terminate the marriage.

We see this illustrated by Mark 6:17-18 – “For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.”

What happens to people (saint or sinner) who refuse to quit committing adultery, in this case, who stay in unscriptural marriages? Rev 21:8 tells us – “But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.” (NKJV).