



Seeing What We  
believe

1 Jn. 5:13

1 Jn. 5:13 **These things have I written unto you** that believe on the name of the Son of God; that **ye may know that ye have eternal life...**

# MOUNTAIN SPRINGS BAPTIST CHURCH BYLAWS

## ARTICLE 1

### NAME AND PURPOSE

## ARTICLE 2

### STATEMENT OF FAITH AND COVENANT

#### **SECTION 2.01—STATEMENT OF FAITH**

- (A) The Holy Scriptures.**
- (B) Dispensationalism.**
- (C) The Godhead.**
- (D) The Person and Work of Christ.**
- (E) The Person and Work of the Holy Spirit.**
- (F) The Depravity of Man.**
- (G) Salvation.**
- (H) The Eternal Security and Assurance of Believers.**
- (I) The Church**
- (J) Separation.**
- (K) The Second Coming of Christ.**
- (L) The Eternal State.**
- (M) The Personality of Satan.**
- (N) Creation.**

**(O) Civil Government.**

**(P) Human Sexuality**

**(Q) Family Relationships**

**(R) Divorce and remarriage.** We believe that God disapproves of, and forbids, divorce and intends marriage to last until one of the spouses dies. Divorce and remarriage is regarded as adultery except on the grounds of fornication and desertion. Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the office of pastor of our church. (Mal. 2:14-17; Matt. 19:3-12; Rom. 7:1-3; 1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)

## I. THE PLAN DESIGNED

A. The Challenge for “Truth” – Mt. 19:3

B. The Clarification for Truth – v. 4 “...Have ye not read...” Mt. 19:4

C. The Completeness of the Truth – Mt. 19:5-6

## II. THE PROBLEM DESCRIBED – Mt. 19:7-8, Deut. 24:1-4:

## III. THE PROVISION DELINEATED – Mt. 19:9

- There are three circumstances that permit remarriage without committing adultery:

1. Death (Rom. 7:1-3, 1 Cor. 7:39)

2. Fornication (Mt. 19:9)

3. Desertion (1 Cor. 7:15)

- Divorce is permitted – not mandated. Reconciliation should be the goal: 1 Cor. 7:10-13

## IV. THE PERPLEXING DILEMMA – Mt. 19:10-12

Tonight, we will endeavor to cover the last part of our Section R – Divorce and Remarriage. This is, perhaps, the most controversial aspect of the subject – what about those serving in the church, especially a pastor or deacon.

## V. THE PASTOR'S DESIGNATION

“Although divorced and remarried persons or divorced persons may hold positions of service in the church and be greatly used of God for Christian service, they may not be considered for the office of pastor of our church. (1 Tim. 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6)”

### A. The Quandary of the Opportunities

- Can divorced individuals be qualified to have membership?

Answer: Yes. They are NOT perpetually “living in sin.”

- Can divorced individuals minister within the church?

Answer: Yes. The Scriptural qualification for ministering is to be saved, sanctified servants.

- Can divorced individuals be pastors and/or deacons?

Answer: The answer varies with one's interpretation of the Scriptures.

## B. The Qualifications for the Office

- There are many qualifications listed for a priest, **under the Law**, in Lev. 21.

Lev. 21:6 **They shall be holy unto their God**, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the LORD made by fire, *and* the bread of their God, they do offer: **therefore they shall be holy.**  
7 They shall not take a wife *that is* a whore, or profane; **neither shall they take a woman put away from her husband: for he is holy unto his God.**

- A priest, under Levitical rules, was to be holy, and **held to a higher standard than others.**

Because pastors are to be examples in “word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” to other believers (1 Tim. 4:11), **their marriages may come under a stricter judgment. John Stott** clearly sets forth this possibility: “Do these concessions not apply to clergy and prospective clergy, then? If not, does this not erect a double standard? Yes, it does, but is it not reasonable and right that **a higher standard should be expected of pastors** who are called to teach by example as well as in words?”<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> John R. W. Stott, *Guard the Truth: The Message of 1 Timothy and Titus: The Bible Speaks Today Commentary Series* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 93–94.



1. Howard Marshall makes note of the positive nature of this phrase: “It is positive in tone and stresses faithfulness in marriage, rather than prohibiting some specific unsanctioned form of marriage.”<sup>3</sup>

3 I. Howard Marshall, *The Pastoral Epistles: International Critical Commentary* (London: T&T Clark, 1999), 478.

2 Sam. 22:27 With the pure thou wilt shew thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt shew thyself unsavoury.

**Original Word:** ἀνεπίληπτος

**Transliteration:** anepiléemptos

**Definition:** without reproach (**blameless**)

**Usage:** irreproachable, never caught doing wrong.

*anepílēptos* – **properly, not apprehended (found wrong) when censured or attacked, i.e. without blame in light of the *whole picture*.** Here the person (accuser) trying to seize someone's character by unjustified censure is shown to be groundless, i.e. when the matter is understood in its *full context*. <https://biblehub.com/greek/423.htm>

- For a pastor, two passages list marriage requirements:

1 Tim. 3:2 **A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife**, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; ...

12 **Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife**, ruling their children and their own houses well.

Titus 1:6 If any be **blameless, the husband of one wife**, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

**Quite literally, the pastor must be a “one-woman man” and hence a “one-wife husband.” Most English translations render the translation “the husband of one wife.”**

<https://www.equip.org/article/the-divorced-pastor-is-he-the-husband-of-one-wife/>

Alexander Strauch “claimed that a recent survey of divorce rates in the United States showed that **pastors had the third highest divorce rate—exceeded only by that of medical doctors and policemen!**” (*A Biblical Style of Leadership?* *Leadership 2*, Fall 1981, 119-29, cited in Alexander Strauch, *Biblical Eldership* [Littleton, Colo.: Lewis & Roth Publishers, 1995], 67).

1 Tim. 3:2 **A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife**, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

There are generally four different ways this phrase has been understood:

- pastors must be married

1 Cor. 7:7 For **I would that all men were even as I myself.**

But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that.

8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I.

9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.

- **pastors must not be polygamists**

1 Tim. 3:12 Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well.

1 Tim. 5:9 Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man,

Titus 1:6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

- **pastors must have married only once in their life**

1 Cor. 7:39 The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; **but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord.**

Rom. 7:2 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.**

- pastors must be sexually pure and therefore totally committed to their wife

John F. MacArthur summarizes Paul's teaching quite well:

**Many men married only once are not one-woman men. That qualification was especially important in Ephesus, where sexual evil was rampant.** Many, if not most, of the congregation had at one time or another fallen prey to sexual evil. If that was before a man came to Christ, it wasn't a problem (cf. 2 Corinthians 5:17). If it happened after his conversion, even before he assumed a leadership role, it was a definite disqualification. Those same standards apply to men in positions of spiritual leadership today.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> John F. MacArthur, Jr., 1 Timothy: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Press, 1995), 104-5.

**First: the biblical rule, or the “letter of the law.”**

**Second, we must consider the “spirit of the law.”** Pastors are to be “one-woman men.” It is not enough merely to stay married. A pastor with a bad marriage is as disqualified from ministry as an adulterer or a deserter.

**Third, we need to apply the biblical principle that overrides all of 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1:**

**1 Tim. 3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife**, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; ...

**Titus 1:6 If any be blameless, the husband of one wife**, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly.

Gordon Fee explains that this “has to do with irreproachable, observable conduct. Here it seems to be intended as the general, covering term for the following list of eleven virtues, or qualities (mostly single words in Greek) that should characterize an overseer.”<sup>5</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Gordon D. Fee, 1 and 2 Timothy and Titus: New International Biblical Commentary (Peabody, MA: Hendriksen Publishers, 1988), 80.

**Fourth, there are practical concerns that divorced clergy cannot ignore.**

**The Key Question. So should a church hire (or keep) a pastor who goes through a divorce? Pastors who are biblically divorced may well be free to remarry; to do so is not sin. Nevertheless, divorced pastors would do well to remove themselves from pastoral ministry and should consider transitioning into other facets of Christian ministry.**



## The Difficulty in Determining Guilt/Innocence

When considering a divorcee's past, regarding the impetus for their divorce, how accurately are the details remembered? How can an outsider judge the incident with complete confidence of information for determination of one's guilt or innocence?

1 Kings 15:5 Because David did *that which* was right in the eyes of the LORD, and turned not aside from any *thing* that he commanded him **all the days of his life, save only in the matter of Uriah the Hittite.**

**In the end, it remains the choice of the congregation whom they call to be a pastor.** Congregations may also, legitimately, conclude that a divorce for a Christian man was so long ago in the past that it should not hinder his witness or his work in the pastorate, **especially if that person has an impeccable “track record” of faithfulness for many years.** There are no hard and fast rules; only principles, to guide a man in the ministry or a congregation seeking a pastor.

<http://www.equip.org/PDF/JAV371.pdf>

## Conclusion

Eph. 4:30 And **grieve not the holy Spirit of God**, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.

31 Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, **be put away** from you, with all malice:

32 And **be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.**