Attempts By Man To Circumvent God’s Marriage Law

Intro: God has always dealt with people by giving them His law. When He created man, He gave man certain laws by which to live. Man, however, went contrary to (circumvented) that law. As we examine man through the ages, we observe the same situation, man circumventing God’s law. When we come to the law God has given concerning marriage, the same condition appears, man attempting to circumvent God’s marriage law. As we approach a study of man’s attempts to circumvent God’s marriage law, we must first examine God’s marriage law.

I. God’s Marriage Law.
   A. God instituted the marriage state at the beginning.
      1. God created Adam and placed him in a beautiful garden.
      2. Gen. 2:18 “And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.”
      3. God made all the animals pass before Adam.
         a. Adam named the animals.
         b. The purpose appears to be two fold.
            (1) It makes Adam realize the need for a help meet (all the animals had one suitable for them, yet Adam did not).
            (2) It also made Adam realize that an animal was not the one suitable for him; Gen. 2:20 “And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.”
      4. God made a help meet (one suitable) for Adam.
         a. Gen. 2:21-22 “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.”
         b. Adam realized the importance of what happened, speaking by inspiration; Gen. 2:23-24 “And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”
   B. God’s marriage law.
      1. We generally state that law as: One man for one woman for life.
      2. 1 Cor. 7:2 “Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”
   C. What constitutes marriage?
      1. There must be the decision by both parties (man and woman) to live together as husband and wife.
      2. Both parties must be eligible for marriage (they must meet God’s requirements).
      3. They must meet any requirements of the state for entering the marriage relationship provided they are harmonious with God’s law.
         a. Rom. 13
         b. John 4:18 “For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.”
            (1) She had five husbands (men who had met the requirements of society.
            (2) The man she was now with was not her husband, had not met the requirements of society.
4. God then joins these two in that holy union of matrimony
   a. Mat. 19:6 “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”
   b. Some teach that cohabitation must be involved before two are married or that cohabitation constitutes the marriage.
      (1) The sexual union does not join the male and female in marriage.
         (a) If that were necessary then they must commit fornication to become married.
         (b) In John 4 Jesus would have erred when He told the Samaritan woman, “he whom thou now hast is not thy husband” (verse 18) for he would have been her husband because of the cohabitation.
      (2) Nor does the sexual union need to take place before two individuals are married. Joseph and Mary were married for some time before they came together in the sexual union (after the birth of Jesus; Mat. 1:25 “And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.”)

5. The man and woman live in that marriage until death dissolves the relationship

D. Confirmation of this law.
   1. Mark 10:2-9 “And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife? tempting him. 3And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? 4And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put her away. 5And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. 6But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. 7For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; 8And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. 9What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”
   2. Luke 16:18 “Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.”
   3. 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. 3So 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.”

E. Jesus gives the one and only exception to that stated law.
   1. The two passages giving the exception.
      a. Mat. 5:32 “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.”
      b. Mat. 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.”
   2. The teaching of these two passages.
      a. It is not that difficult to understand.
      b. He gives a universal teaching (“whosoever”) applying to everyone in every place.
      c. Both sentences are exceptive statements.
         (1) “Saving for” and “Except”.

(2) Exceptional statements carry the meaning, “if and only if.”

d. The one who divorces his or her spouse and marries someone else commits adultery.

e. The exception to the general rule is when one commits fornication, God allows the innocent party to divorce the one guilty of fornication and marry another without committing adultery.

II. MAN’S ATTEMPT TO CIRCUMVENT THAT LAW.

A. Almost from the beginning of time man was not content to live within God’s marriage laws.

1. Lamech began the practice of polygamy.
   a. Gen. 4:19 “And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah.”
   b. Many patriarchs followed in his footsteps.

2. Divorce became so common, God had to regulate the practice.
   a. Deu. 24:1 “When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house.”
   b. Jesus explains the situation; Mat. 19:8 “He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.”

3. These actions were never right, they were always contrary to God’s will.

4. Man still tries to circumvent God’s marriage laws.

B. Divorce And Remarriage.

1. Divorce and remarriage has become common in our society.
   a. The world does not care what God says on the subject.
   b. They are only interested in their own self-gratification and satisfaction.
   c. The government has helped their cause with easy divorce laws.
   d. What affects the world soon affects the church.

2. Divorce problems soon made their way into the Lord’s church.
   a. Instead of standing firm upon God’s law, we had preachers, elders and members who compromised to make accommodation for the world.
   b. James Woodroof stated, “I had to make some type of attempt to settle the issue. At which time I went into the Scriptures, I found several principles that allowed me to go about my business of evangelizing.”
   c. With the advancement of liberalism within our ranks, there has also been the proliferation of false doctrines concerning divorce and remarriage.
   d. Goebel Music documented 25 different doctrines concerning divorce in his book on that subject (1987) and said that the list was not exhaustive.
   e. Let us notice some.

3. James Bales view.
   b. He argued that the world was not amenable to (subject to) the law of Christ.
      (1) The gospel (Doctrine, Law, the Faith, the Word, the Truth, etc.) is for all men (whether they have become Christians or not).
(2) All men will be judged by that law.
   (a) John 12:48 “He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that
       judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day.”
   (b) Thus, all men are subject to His Law.

c. Looking specifically at the marriage and divorce question.
   (1) Jesus teaching is universal.
   (2) Jesus goes back to the beginning, before there were any special groups;
       Mat. 19:4-6 “And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which
       made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5And said, For this cause shall
       a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one
       flesh? 6Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined
       together, let not man put asunder.”
   (3) Jesus uses the universal term “whosoever”; Mat. 19:9 “And I say unto you,
       Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another,
       commiteth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”

4. Perversion of 1 Corinthians 7:15 “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a
   sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.”
   a. Some believe this verse gives another reason for divorce and remarriage.
      (1) James Woodroof in his book The Divorce Dilemma taught that Paul
          countermanded Christ’s law of Matthew 19:9 “And I say unto you, Whosoever
          shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another,
          commiteth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”
      (2) They state that the deserted believer is free from the marriage bond and
          thus may scripturally remarry.
   b. The word bondage does not refer to the marriage bond.
      (1) The word bondage is the Greek word δεδουλωται (dedoulotai) which is a
          perfect passive indicative of δουλω (douloo).
          (a) This word is never used for the marriage bond.
          (b) The perfect tense expresses an action completed in the past and
              continues in that state when the writer speaks.
          (c) The perfect indicative generally expresses the present result of a past
              action.
      (2) Thus the true intent of “bondage” is they are not now nor have they ever
          been under bondage in such cases.
      (3) When God wants to express the marriage bond in this passage, he uses a
          form of δέω (deo) (verse 27 and 39).
   c. What this verse teaches is that a Christian is not so bound to the unbeliever that
      he must give up Christianity to hold to the unbelieving mate.
      (1) He must honor his relationship to God first and foremost.
      (2) Mat. 6:33 “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these
          things shall be added unto you.”

5. Abide in the calling in which you are called view.
   a. 1 Cor. 7:17, 24 “But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one,
      so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches... 24Brethren, let every man, wherein he is called,
      therein abide with God.”
      (1) The context shows this applies to social conditions that are right within
          themselves.
      (2) Paul is not discussing sinful situations.
b. Concerning sinful situations:
   (1) 1 Cor. 6:11 “And such *were* some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”
   (2) 2 Cor. 6:14, 17 “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?...” Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you,”
   (3) The thief must stop stealing, the liar must stop lying, the adulterer must get out of the adultery to please God.

6. Baptism justifies the sinful relationship.
   a. One can be unscripturally divorced and remarried (thus living in adultery) before he becomes a Christian and when he is baptized, his marriage becomes Scriptural.
   b. Baptism washes away all sin.
      (1) Thus, it washes away the sin of an unscriptural marriage.
      (2) Baptism cannot wash away a sin of which the person does not repent.
         (a) If a person plans on staying in a sinful situation, then he has not repented.
         (b) Then baptism is of no value to him.
   c. This is looking at the wrong subject.
      (1) This is not a question of what baptism does and the power of baptism.
      (2) This is a question of repentance.
      (3) A person must get out of a sinful state (repent) prior to baptism.
         (a) A homosexual must get out of any homosexual relationships to repent and prior to baptism.
         (b) A drunkard must quit drinking (get out of the sinful state) to repent and prior to baptism.
   d. What we must tell those who come to be baptized who are living in adultery; Mat. 3:8 “Bring forth therefore fruits meet for repentance:”

7. What is practiced most today is an avoidance of the issue.
   a. Preachers will not preach on the subject (they will only preach on the permanency of marriage or meeting the needs of the divorced).
   b. Elders will not discuss the topic.
   c. They work on the premise that everyone has already made up their mind of the issue, thus it will only cause problems.
   d. Thus, they will never ask anyone about their marriage relationship.

C. Fornication.
   1. Fornication is any type of illicit sexual activity.
   2. Our society has become sex crazed.
      a. We have raised a generation without any standards of morality.
      b. The emphasis is on “safe sex” to such an extent that school systems are handing out condoms to teenagers free of charge.
      c. If they should happen to get pregnant; they can have an abortion, without even informing their parents.
   3. The marriage bed is good and right.
      a. God regulates the desires of men and women.
b. Heb. 13:4 “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

Paul lists fornication as a work of the flesh, that will keep one out of heaven; Gal. 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies. 21Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

c. c. Paul lists fornication as a work of the flesh, that will keep one out of heaven; Gal. 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

D. Adultery.
1. Adultery is the voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a partner other than the lawful spouse.
2. God condemns this action.
   a. It is listed first in the works of the flesh; Gal. 5:19-21 “Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, 20Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, 21Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”
   b. 1 Cor. 6:9-10 “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.”
   c. God will condemn those who commit adultery; Heb. 13:4 “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”

3. This sin is glorified in our society.
   a. Some psychologists and psychiatrists advocate married couples to have “affairs” (commit adultery) supposedly for the good of the marriage.
   b. Television advocates this (along with every other type of sexual perversion) as something that everyone is doing.
      (1) Nothing is ever presented concerning the evil of adultery.
      (2) The result is a growing number of marriages destroyed by one or both partners committing adultery.

E. Homosexuality.
1. This perversion has become one of the most powerful special interest groups in America.
   a. They are seeking to become an official minority group so anyone saying anything negative about them can be placed in jail.
   b. In Washington, they enjoy special favor with President Clinton.
      (1) Immediately after taking office, he tried to lift the ban on homosexuals in the military.
      (2) He has appointed several high ranking officials who are homosexuals.
   c. The entertainment industry will not release any product that portrays homosexuals in a negative light, yet will continually portray religious people as evildoers.

2. God has made himself clear concerning this action.
   a. In Genesis 19 God destroyed Sodom, Gomorrah and the cities of the plain because of this sin.
   b. In the law of Moses.
      (1) Lev. 18:22 “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it is abomination.”
(2) Lev. 20:13 “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them.”

(1) 1 Cor. 6:9-10 “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, 10Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.” The words “effeminate” and “abusers of themselves with mankind” refer to different aspects of homosexual actions.

(2) 1 Tim. 1:10 “For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;”

d. The nation has the responsibility to punish the evildoer.
(1) Rom. 13:4-5 “For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil. 5Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.”

(2) 1 Pet. 2:13-14 “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme; 14Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.”

(3) The government has the responsibility to punish (put to death) those who practice this evil; Rom. 1:26-27, 32 “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: 27And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompence of their error which was meet....32Who knowing the judgment of God, that they which commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure in them that do them.”

F. Polygamy.

1. Polygamy is the practice of one man having more than one wife simultaneously. Polyandry is the practice of one woman having more than one husband at the same time.
2. We do not see this practiced much today.
   a. It formerly was a major doctrine of the Mormons, and still practiced by some today.
   b. Some nations still allow the practice.
3. Some make an appeal to the Bible to justify polygamy.
   a. Several Old Testament men of faith had more than one wife (i.e., Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, Solomon).
   b. God allowed certain practices in the Old Testament that was not what He wanted.
      (1) Mat. 19:8 “He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.”
      (2) Simply because God allowed man to pervert His marriage law under the Old Testament does not mean that He allows it today.
   c. This is a way for perverts to satisfy their desires under the guise of honor.
III. WITHIN THE HOME.

A. God has established certain roles within the family unit.

1. The husband.
   a. He is the head of the home.
      (1) Eph. 5:23 “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.”
      (2) 1 Cor. 11:3 “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God.”
   b. He is to provide and protect.
      (1) Gen. 3:19 “In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.” cf. 1 Tim. 5:8 “But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”
      (2) Neh. 4:14 “And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them: remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.”
         (a) Christ died for His bride (the church) as an example of the man’s protection
         (b) Eph. 5:23-25 “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. 24Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. 25Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”

2. The wife.
   a. The wife is to be in submission to her husband.
      (1) Eph. 5:22 “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”
      (2) Col. 3:18 “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord.”
   b. She is to be domestically oriented.
      (1) Tit. 2:4-5 “That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.”
      (2) 1 Tim. 5:14 “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully.”
      (3) This includes the importance of bearing children; 1 Tim. 2:15 “Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety.”

3. The children are to honor and obey their parents.
   a. Eph. 6:1-3 “Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. 2Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) 3That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.”
   b. Col. 3:20 “Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.”
   c. Parents are to make sure their children learn proper respect and obedience by their training.
      (1) Eph. 6:4 “And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.”
      (2) Pro. 22:6 “Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it.”
B. When we fail to live according to these roles God has established, then we are trying to circumvent God’s marriage laws.

Conclusion: While man will try to circumvent, change, God’s marriage laws, that law will not change. It is futile to try to change any of God’s laws. Instead of trying to change God’s laws to accommodate the wishes of man, as some preachers are doing, we must teach man to change his ways to conform to God’s laws. God’s laws are always right and will always be best for man.