

# Husbands, God Hates Divorce... But He Also Hates...

By Kevin McCarthy

God hates divorce. There can be no doubt of this because He has said so plainly: “‘For I hate divorce,’ says the LORD, the God of Israel,” (Mal 2:16). Now, look at the context more carefully:

Mal 2:13-16

<sup>13</sup> "And this is another thing you do: you cover the altar of the LORD with tears, with weeping and with groaning, because He no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. <sup>14</sup> Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. <sup>15</sup> But not one has done so who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did that one do while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then, to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. <sup>16</sup> "For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

Notice what is happening. The Israelites are weeping and groaning because God has not accepted their offering. Why? Because the men have dealt treacherously with their wives! The word translated “treacherously” is *bagad*:

treacherously OT:898 bagad (baw-gad'); a primitive root; to cover (with a garment); figuratively, to act covertly; by implication, to pillage:

KJV - deal deceitfully (treacherously, unfaithfully), offend, transgress (-or), (depart), treacherous (dealer, -ly, man), unfaithful (-ly, man), very.

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The men have transgressed, offended, dealt deceitfully or unfaithfully: they have sinned against their wives. God hates more than the divorce – He hates the one who “covers his garment with wrong.” It’s not just the divorce that God hates: He hates the men who are sinning against their wives! Yes, He hates the men; notice He says that he hates divorce AND the ONE who covers his garment with wrong!

What am I getting at? I have personally known men – professing Christian men – who have treated their wives shabbily by intimidating them, domineering them, belittling them, dealing deceitfully with them, ordering them around like slaves, who have seemed to think their wives were their captives because, “God hates divorce.” Yes, God hates divorce, but he also hates these men and what they do. They seem to think that because the Bible tells the wife to submit to her husband, that automatically makes the husband “Dictator for Life” with a mandate for iron-fisted command. They might have heard somewhere that the husband has certain responsibilities towards his wife, but they certainly don’t act as if they have any idea what those responsibilities are, and they fail to see how the husband’s responsibilities actually make him *the wife’s* servant!

This is written to these men, who proudly proclaim that divorce is not an option (at least for the beleaguered wife) because “God hates divorce”. Do you deal treacherously with the wife and companion of covenant whom God has joined to you? Do you draw the line at divorce, and yet treat your wife like a bond slave or servant? Do you yell at her? Abase her? Threaten her verbally or physically? Do you use God’s Word as a cudgel and beat her with such proclamations as, “The wife must be submissive! You have no choice but to do everything I tell

you to do!”? Do you “lord it over your wife”? And when she cannot take the abuse, do you remind her that “God hates divorce!”? God **hates** what you are doing right now!

Divorce isn’t the only thing that God hates, but some self-righteous men are perfectly willing to practice one or many of these things against their wives so long as they can shackle the poor woman to themselves by means of God’s hatred of divorce. It’s good to be concerned about avoiding things that God hates, but hypocritical to take a stand for something that benefits you while ignoring other things that are equally hated by God, and practicing them on a daily basis. It is hypocritical, also, to insist that the wife kowtow submissively at her husband’s feet, while completely disregarding his God-ordained responsibility to love his wife. “I DO love her!” you insist, but you lack understanding. The Bible is specific regarding not only THAT you love her, but HOW you love her as well. A husband is directed to love his wife AS CHRIST LOVES THE CHURCH!

Eph 5:24-33

<sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. <sup>28</sup> So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; <sup>29</sup> for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of His body. <sup>31</sup> For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. <sup>32</sup> This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.

Excuse me – HOW is the husband to love his wife? Like our Lord and Savior loves the Church! He is to **sacrifice** his own desires and needs (so-called) for his wife! He is to give his very life, if called-for, to protect his wife! He is to love her as Christ loves the Church, and do everything for *her* good rather than his own! He is to nourish and cherish her, at least as much as his own body. This is love, gentlemen! This is Agape love. It is the kind of love we should have for one another (Rom 13:8, Eph 4:2, 1 Thess 3:12, Heb 10:24, etc.). Agape love is the unique telltale of being a Christian (Jn 13:34); sacrificial love, here made especially poignant in the marriage relationship. And it is here connected with a mystery, and that mystery is in the fact that the Christian marriage is a reflection of the relationship Christ has with the Church. He is the bridegroom (Jn 3:29; Rev 18:23), and the Christian husband is to represent Him. The Church is the bride (Jn 3:29; Rev 18:23, 19:7), and the Christian wife is to represent the Church. Think about that, fellas, the next time you shout at your wife because dinner wasn’t ready on time or the laundry wasn’t done. Notice that the wife is not admonished to love the husband in this manner! She is submit and respect her husband, but the husband is to consider her more important than himself, to put her first, and to *serve* her through his love!

Have you heard this before? Do you know this, and yet refuse to (or claim you are unable to) obey your Lord? Are you sinning against your wife? Are you doing things that God hates, while hypocritically demanding submission and keeping her a prisoner by standing against divorce (God hates it!)? Divorce is not all God hates.

Here are some things that God says He hates, and yet many of these things occur in some “Christian” homes with regularity:

Prov 6:16-19

<sup>16</sup> There are six things which the LORD hates,  
Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:

<sup>17</sup> Haughty eyes, a lying tongue,  
And hands that shed innocent blood,

<sup>18</sup> A heart that devises wicked plans,  
Feet that run rapidly to evil,  
<sup>19</sup> A false witness who utters lies,  
And one who spreads strife among brothers.

1. Haughty eyes (The pride of position, lording it over another.)
2. A lying tongue
3. Hands that shed innocent blood
4. A heart that devises wicked plans
5. Feet that run rapidly to evil
6. A false witness
7. One who spreads strife among brothers

Ps 5:5

<sup>5</sup> The boastful shall not stand before Thine eyes;  
Thou dost hate all who do iniquity.

8. All who do iniquity (sin) – Notice, He hates the **person**, and not just the sin!

Zech 8:17

<sup>17</sup>'Also let none of you devise evil in your heart against another, and do not love perjury; for all these are what I hate,' declares the LORD. "

9. (Those) who devise evil (in their) heart against another
10. perjury

Mal 2:16

<sup>16</sup> "For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "

11. divorce
12. (wrongdoers)

Rev 2:6-7

<sup>6</sup>Yet this you do have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

13. the deeds of the Nicolaitans

[This one is especially interesting because it bears directly on our topic. “How?” you ask, “I looked it up and it’s talking about some ancient followers of some dude named Nicholas who was teaching stuff like Balaam.” That’s what you may find in many Bible dictionaries concerning the proper noun “Nicolaitans”, but the really interesting thing is that there is no need or warrant for the word to be a proper noun, transliterated from the Greek, rather than a compound word translated from the Greek. The translation would be something like conquerors of the people, or those who lord it over the people. In fact, if you abuse your headship within the home, if you “lord it over” your wife, give orders, treat her as a servant; if you do anything but lead by your example, with compassion, putting her first, **YOU MAY BE A NICOLAITAN**:

The word "Nicos" means "to elevate oneself above" and "Laos" means "the ordinary people" (the laity). Nicolaitans were people who elevated themselves above the ordinary people. In the book of Revelation (Ch.2:6,15) Jesus says that He despises this doctrine. (Pastor Boaz Gill - <http://www.shaffaf.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Publication&id=31>)

The root of the word Nicolaitans comes from Greek nikao, to conquer or overcome, and laos, which means people and which the word laity comes from. The two words together especially means the destruction of the people and refers to the earliest form of what we call a priestly order or clergy which later on in church history divided people and allowed for leadership other than those led by the spirit of the risen Lord Jesus Christ. A good translation of Nicolaitan would be "those who prevail over the people." (<http://latter-rain.com/eschae/nicola.htm>)

The name, Nicolaitanes, is a compound word which is composed of three Greek words, and which, because of being a proper noun, is transferred [transliterated] instead of being translated into English. As thus transferred, it is subject to the laws of Greek construction in regard to ellipsis, contraction and phonetics.

The Greek words used in its construction are first: "*Nikos*," of which we use the English equivalents instead of the Greek letters, as we shall also of the other two. *Nikos* is defined as "a conquest; victory; triumph; the conquered; and by implication, dominancy over the defeated." Another transferred [transliterated] name in which this term is used is "Nicolopolis," i.e., Niko - conquest; polis city. Hence, the city of conquest, or city of victory. Also "*Andro*" -- "*nikos*," a man of conquest, of victory.

The second term used in the name under consideration is "*laos*," -- people, another use of which is Nicolas, which is transferred and is composed of Nikoslaos and means one who is "victorious over the people," the letter "s" being, in both words, the nominative case ending, which is retained only at the end of the word to denote the case, while "a" short and "o" short are contracted into "a" long.

### Laodiceans

Also, a still further transferred use of "*laos*" is found in the name Lao(s)diceans, compounded with *dike* or *dice* as the Greek "k" is the equivalent English "c." Thus, in the name Laodiceans, we have *laos* -- "people" and *dice* judgment, or vengeance, i.e., the people of my judgment, or of my vengeance. Also the Greek word *la(ic)os* means "laymen," of which *laos* is the root and stem, which selfsame word, with the "o" short contracted to "i", to which root and stem the plural definite article *ton* is joined to form *laiton* -- is a Greek phrase meaning "the laity."

The third and last word entering into the construction of the proper name Nicolaitanes is *ton*, in which *omega*, the long "o", is contracted into long "a", thus making the word "tan" which is the genitive case plural in all the genders of the definite article the. Therefore, we have, without the legal Greek construction, the English hyphenated word *Nickos-laoston*, but which, with its lawful elisions and contractions, becomes the English name: ***Nicolaitanes***, the full meaning of which, in its native tongue and in its ecclesiastical setting, is that the bishops and prelates of the Church have gained a triumphal victory or conquest over the *laiton* -- the laity -- until they have been compelled to submit to the arbitrary dominion of men who have become that thing which God hates: **"Lords over God's heritage."** (Written by: J. H. Allen (author of *Judah's Sceptre and Joseph's Birthright*))

God HATES the ones who "lord it over" their brothers and sisters! How can a husband ever justify lording it over his believing wife? He is in the position of headship because that is the role God has ordained for him, but headship does not equate with autocracy. Christians are not supposed to lead in this way!

Luke 22:25-30

<sup>25</sup> And He said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called 'Benefactors.'<sup>26</sup> But not so with you, but let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant.<sup>27</sup> For who is greater, the one who reclines at the table, or the one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at the table? But I am among you as the one who serves.<sup>28</sup> And you are those who have stood by Me in My trials;<sup>29</sup> and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you<sup>30</sup> that you may eat

and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

We are to love our wives as Christ loves the Church. All around us in this secular world, the god of this world (Satan 2 Cor 4:4) has blinded men's eyes to true leadership, and perverted what headship really means. If you want to be a Christian leader, or head of a Christian home, you will "become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant." As you love your wife in the same way Christ loves the Church, she will stand with you in your trials, and it may be a stretch from the above reference, but it seems to me you should reward her by treating her like royalty.

We husbands are specifically directed to love our wives in the same way that Christ loves the church. Do that, fellows, and you will turn away much anger and win even a "shrew" as Shakespeare imagined her. We are directed specifically to treat our wives as a "WEAKER VESSEL". This doesn't mean belittling her, taunting or teasing her: "I'm stronger than you, you wimp!" No! What it means is that *your wife is not a man!* If, when you're "out with the boys", you punch each other in the arm, tell crude jokes at each other's expense, and make fun of each other when you think someone's acting like a dork, that's one thing (and there are a few issues here as well, but we won't get into that now.). The problem is that a lot of guys ("Christian" guys!) treat their wives that way! They don't take into account that God says men and women are *different!* When He says that that we are to treat our wives as weaker vessels, the context itself tells us what that means. God wants us to deal with them gently, and in an understanding way, to grant her honor as an equal and fellow heir in Christ. Furthermore, it is clear that if we don't treat our wives in this way, we cannot expect God to answer our prayers:

You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)

Numerous references can be cited showing that we are to defend and strengthen the weak, rather than tearing them down (Ps 82:4; 1 Thess. 5:14, etc.) Rather than putting our wives down, as I have personally heard many times from professing Christian men, we are to build her up as a fellow Christian (1 Thess 5:11), and show her honor:

honor NT:5092

time (tee-may'); from NT:5099; a value, i.e. money paid, or (concretely and collectively) valuables; by analogy, esteem (especially of the highest degree), or the dignity itself:

KJV - honour, precious, price, some.

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We are to esteem our wives! They are precious!

Many are the "deeds of the flesh" in a marriage. What do I mean? Just look at the list:

Gal 5:19-21

<sup>19</sup> Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, <sup>20</sup> idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, <sup>21</sup> envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

In the world, marriage is the prime breeding ground for most of these things. Look at the list again if you think I'm wrong. Today's marriages are rampant with these things, because the world has perverted marriage. Is that a surprise? If the Christian marriage is to reflect Christ and the Church, wouldn't you expect it to be a target of the world, the flesh and the devil? Television and the movies promote immorality (KJV – Adultery), impurity and sensuality both outside and within marriage, and it is common for married men and women to be “on the prowl.” These are deeds of the flesh, and clearly sin, but so are the other items.

- enmity NT:2189 echthra (ekh'-thrah); feminine of NT:2190; hostility; by implication, a reason for opposition:

KJV - enmity, hatred.

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- strife NT:2054 eris (er'-is); of uncertain affinity; a quarrel, i.e. (by implication) wrangling:

KJV - contention, debate, strife, variance.

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- jealousy NT:2205 zelos (dzay'-los); from NT:2204; properly, heat, i.e. (figuratively) "zeal" (in a favorable sense, ardor; in an unfavorable one, jealousy, as of a husband [figuratively, of God], or an enemy, malice):

KJV - emulation, envy (-ing), fervent mind, indignation, jealousy, zeal.

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- outbursts of anger NT:2372

thumos (thoo-mos'); from NT:2380; passion (as if breathing hard):

KJV - fierceness, indignation, wrath. Compare NT:5590.

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- disputes NT:2052 eritheia

a courting distinction, a desire to put oneself forward, a partisan and factious spirit which does not disdain low arts; partisanship, factiousness: James 3:14,16

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- dissensions NT:1370 dichostsis (dee-khos-tas-ee'-ah); from a derivative of NT:1364 and NT:4714; disunion, i.e. (figuratively) dissension:

KJV - division, sedition.

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- factions NT:139 hairesis, haireseos, hee;

1. act of taking, capture

2. choosing, choice,

3. that which is chosen, a chosen course of thought and action

4. a body of men separating themselves from others and following their own tenets (a sect or party)

5. dissensions arising from diversity of opinions and aims: Gal 5:20; 1 Cor 11:19.

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- envying NT:5355 phthonos (fthon'-os); probably akin to the base of NT:5351; ill-will (as detraction), i.e. jealousy (spite):

KJV - envy.

- drunkenness NT:3178 methē (meth'-ay); apparently a primary word; an intoxicant, i.e. (by implication) intoxication:

KJV - drunkenness.

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- carousing NT:2970 komos (ko'-mos); from NT:2749; a carousal (as if letting loose):

KJV - revelling, rioting.

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This sounds almost like vignettes from a modern marriage, doesn't it? Many elements of the above creep into supposedly Christian homes as well, and much to their detriment. Doesn't it give you pause when the Word says about such things that, "I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."? Emphasis is due here: **THOSE WHO PRACTICE SUCH THINGS WILL NOT INHERIT THE KINGDOM OF GOD!** Yes, "practice" is in the present tense, a continuous action, and probably is referring to the unsaved, but then, if you're continuously practicing such things, can you possibly *be* saved? "No one who is born of God practices sin, because His seed abides in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." (1 John 3:9). The one who continually practices sin as a pattern of life **is not** born of God – is not saved. That person has a mere intellectual belief and is fooling himself. If, as a pattern of life, you treat your wife in this way, sinning against her continually, then you must question whether or not you are of the family of God at all.

The opposite of the deeds of the flesh is the fruit of the Spirit, gentlemen. These actions are the result of the indwelling Holy Spirit working within us, perfecting us (Phil 1:8):

Gal 5:22-24

<sup>22</sup> But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, <sup>23</sup> gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law. <sup>24</sup> Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

This is how we should be acting, with our wives and our brothers and sisters in Christ. Those who belong to Him have crucified the flesh.

crucified NT:4717 stauroō (stow-ro'-o); from NT:4716; to impale on the cross; figuratively, to extinguish (**subdue**) passion or selfishness:

KJV - crucify.

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Our flesh, our old nature is still there, but it has been subdued, and those who say they try to do the right thing with their wives, but cannot are either dead wrong or else dead in their trespasses and sins.

Yes, God hates divorce, but there are a lot of things that you can do while staying married that God will equally hate. By all means heed God's Word regarding the dissolution of a marriage, but do not neglect His word in the living out of your marriage every day.