



# **BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

“DO NOT CONFORM TO THE PATTERN OF THIS WORLD, BUT BE TRANSFORMED BY THE RENEWING OF YOUR MIND. THEN YOU WILL BE ABLE TO TEST AND APPROVE WHAT GOD’S WILL IS—HIS GOOD, PLEASING AND PERFECT WILL.”

(ROMANS 12:2)



# A PEOPLE WHO...



... ARE **CHRIST-CENTRED**

... ARE **BIBLE-SHAPED**

... ARE **FAMILY**

... ARE **VIBRANT**

... **DEMONSTRATE INTEGRITY**

... **EXTEND GRACE**

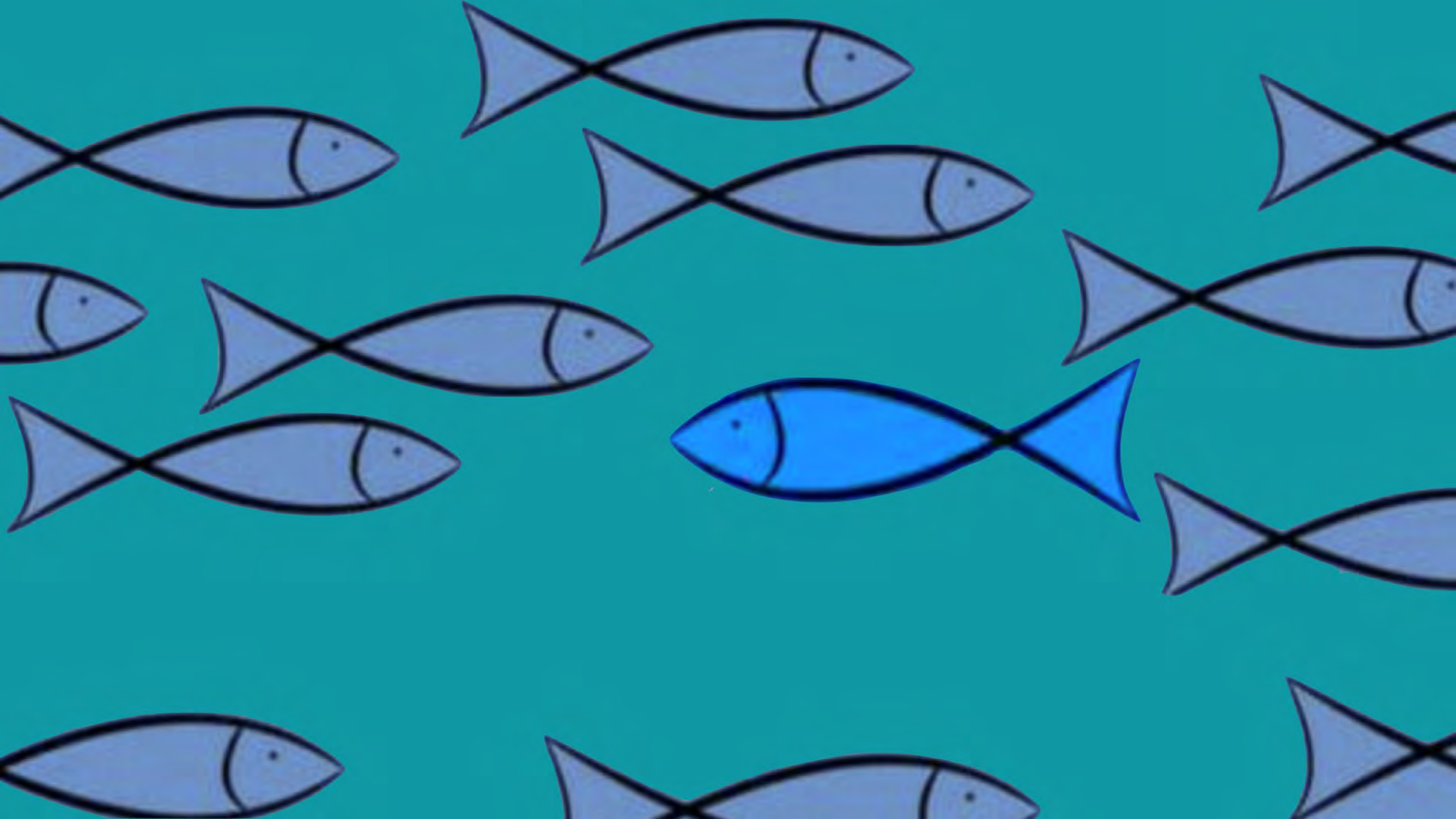
... **CONNECT**



# The Bible

***We believe the Bible, as originally given, to be without error, the fully inspired and infallible Word of God and the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.***

**ELIM FOUNDATIONAL TRUTHS**





**A SERIES ABOUT SOME SUBJECTS THAT WE  
NEED TO TALK ABOUT IN CHURCH - AN  
OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLAIN WHAT WE ARE  
FOR AS PEOPLE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD**



# **BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

## **SUBJECTS WE PLAN TO COVER...**

**'One True God' - a Bible-shaped approach to other faiths**

**'Supernaturally Speaking' - a Bible-shaped approach to spirituality**

**'You Are What You Eat' - a Bible-shaped approach to hedonism and holistic health**

**'Money Matters' - a Bible-shaped approach to money and materialism**

**'Sexual Sense' - a Bible-shaped approach to love and sexuality**

**'Who You Say I Am' - a Bible-shaped approach to identity and self worth**

**'Light of the World' - Being a Bible-shaped People (Question & Answer)**



# Q&A



# WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT...

**Marriage, Civil-  
Partnership &  
Cohabiting**

**Gender Identity**

**Sexual Orientation**

**Singleness**

**Divorce & Remarriage**

**Suffering**

**Persecution of God's  
people**

**Israel & Palestine**

**Antisemitism &  
Zionism**

**Immigration**

**Forgiveness & Justice**

**Forgiving others &  
knowing I am forgiven**

**Christians and the pub**

**Doubting my faith**

**Being on His path**





# **SEEKING A BIBLE-SHAPED PERSPECTIVE ON...**

**MARRIAGE, CIVIL-PARTNERSHIP & COHABITING**

**GENDER IDENTITY**

**SEXUAL ORIENTATION**

**SINGLENES**

**DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE**

**\*WE DO NOT INTEND TO COVER EACH OF THESE COMPLEX SUBJECTS COMPREHENSIVELY TODAY, BUT WE CAN DEFINITELY EXPLORE SOME RELEVANT BIBLICAL TRUTH**



# GRACE AND TRUTH

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**These are not simply theological issues - they are real life matters that impact our families and communities**

**We must not handle such matters without both the truth and the grace embodied and emanated by Christ**

**"Truth without grace is mean, grace without truth is meaningless"**



# GRACE AND TRUTH

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**We are making our 'best current attempt' to understand what the scripture teaches on these matters**

**We can think that a certain issue is very clear and can have a strong conviction but still have humility and kindness**

**To avoid the truth is not to be kind at all, but to present the truth without kindness is not Christlike or 'bible-shaped'**



# **MARRIAGE, CIVIL-PARTNERSHIP & COHABITING**



# MARRIAGE, CIVIL-PARTNERSHIP & COHABITING

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**These significant subjects are each deserving of discussion and study in their own right**

**We covered some of the relevant context for these matters in the talk entitled 'Sexual Sense' on 17th November 2024**

**The focus is upon what we are for, in light of God's design and will as revealed in scripture**



22 Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.



# **MARRIAGE, CIVIL-PARTNERSHIP & COHABITING**

**BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

**The ideal of God's pattern of marriage and the context of family is established and laid out clearly - one man and one woman as one flesh committed and united for life**

**Deuteronomy 17:17 prohibits polygamy**

**The Old Testament is rife with examples of this ideal being ignored or misunderstood, including in the lives of God's chosen Patriarchs and Kings**



# **MARRIAGE, CIVIL-PARTNERSHIP & COHABITING**

**BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

**The Bible does not hide or wash over uncomfortable the failure of God's people - even so called 'Bible Heroes'**

**God is able to work in and through people in a mighty way, even in spite of failure and weakness**

**Jesus reiterates and reaffirms God's ideal when being quizzed about divorce in Matthew 19**





4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' 5 and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."



# CIVIL PARTNERSHIP

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Civil Partnership - a legally signed schedule that requires no words or vows to be spoken and cannot involve in any 'religious' ceremony in the formation of the partnership**

**... our marriages are made by public vows and in the sight of God and a congregation**

**- What if someone is already in a civil partnership?**



# COHABITING

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Cohabiting - Living together, with the implication of being a couple and having a sexual relationship, without having made a marriage covenant and commitment**

**... clearly outside of the remit of biblical marriage and context for sexual relations**

**... probably 'the norm' in today's society which adds to the challenge (and opportunity) of being counter-cultural**

**- What if a family has already been established in this situation?**



# REMEMBER

**BE FULL OF GRACE & TRUTH (JOHN 1:14)**

**SPEAK THE TRUTH IN LOVE (EPHESIANS 4:15)**

**ANSWER WITH GENTLENESS & RESPECT (1 PETER 3:15)**



# **GENDER IDENTITY**



# **GENDER IDENTITY**

**BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

**This issue is distinct from sexual orientation and one that can be very sensitive for many individuals and families**

**We covered some matters relevant to this in the talk 'Who You Say I Am' on 24th November 2024**

**Whilst we are keen to explain what we understand the Bible to speak for on this matter, we recognise there are different perspectives and respect others' views and their right to live according to them**



So God created mankind in his own image,  
in the image of God he created them;  
male and female he created them.  
28 God blessed them and said to them, 'Be  
fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth  
and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea  
and the birds in the sky and over every  
living creature that moves on the ground.'



# **GENDER IDENTITY**

**BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

**The distinct roles and identities of male and female are clearly communicated - though we must be sensitive to the rare complicated physiological situations**

**Both male and female are created in God's image**

**Gender 'transitioning' is a recent development - through changes in science and philosophy - although documented history is not without examples related practices**





# GENDER IDENTITY

## BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Transgenderism is not mentioned explicitly by name in the bible so the matter must be considered within the wider relevant biblical teaching and truth**

**The Genesis passages we have read set out the blueprint and mandate for human identity and flourishing**

**Deut 22:5 does communicate clearly that we should not confuse identity in terms of attire - a matter adhere to, apply and understand within cultures and context**



13 For you created my inmost being;  
you knit me together in my  
mother's womb.

14 I praise you because I am fearfully  
and wonderfully made;  
your works are wonderful,  
I know that full well.



# **GENDER IDENTITY**

**BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

**Every person is uniquely and wonderfully created by God - loved, valued and able to thrive in their original identity**

**There are complicated pastoral implications for people dealing with gender dysphoria or gender identity questions that should not simply be dismissed or derided**

**Love must always be expressed in our attitudes and actions toward those who have different views to our own**



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# SEXUAL ORIENTATION



# SEXUAL ORIENTATION

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**This matter is distinct from gender identity, although there is some clear crossover**

**We can explain and present what we understand to be God's ways but cannot dictate other's beliefs or choices**

**This is an issue on which holding an 'orthodox' biblical position is becoming increasingly counter-cultural**



# SEXUAL ORIENTATION

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**We covered some of the relevant context for these matters in the talk entitled 'Sexual Sense' on 17th November 2024**

**Our emphasis is on biblical marriage between one man and one woman in a life-long commitment being the context for sexual intimacy and God's pattern for human flourishing**

**Not to dismiss the real life and often emotionally challenging situations this causes - within and beyond the church**



# SEXUAL ORIENTATION

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**There are bible passages that speak clearly against acts of same-sex intimacy - Lev 18:22, Ro 1:26-27, 1 Cor 6:9**

**This matter of sexual purity should not be overemphasised against others that we might not focus upon as often**

**The Elim Movement have a stated position regarding involvement of our churches and ministers in 'marriages' that are outside of the biblical pattern**





***Marriage: Elim upholds the biblical and historical definition of marriage as being the union of a man and a woman. Therefore Elim does not recognize marriage between persons of the same sex and no Elim church shall be permitted to hold such a ceremony and neither shall any Elim minister be permitted to officiate at such a ceremony including any blessing of a same sex union.***

**ELIM CONSTITUTION**



# SEXUAL ORIENTATION

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL


**Our desire is not to offend or ostracise anyone, but to pursue healthy, godly patterns for physical and spiritual fruitfulness and blessing**

**Everyone experiences the challenge of pursuing sexual wholeness, fulfilment and purity - this is inevitably more acute for some than for others - God is always enough**


**We have to be able to continue to dialogue and understand the the perspectives of others whilst being able to be true to our understandings and convictions**






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 by Limitless

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# Living Out

We help people, churches and society  
talk about faith and sexuality.

**LIVINGOUT.ORG**



# REMEMBER

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# SINGLENES



# SINGLENES

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Throughout scripture marriage would have been seen as the natural, desirable and expected aspiration... being unmarried was (and still often is) seen very negatively**

**And yet... Jesus did not marry**

**Furthermore... Does the Apostle Paul seem to suggest that to be single is in some way better?!**



6 I say this as a concession, not as a command.

7 I wish that all of you were as I am. But each of you has your own gift from God; one has this gift, another has that.

8 Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I do.

9 But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion.





# SINGLENES

BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL

**Is it possible that Paul's language here is an attempt to redress the overwhelming bias in culture toward the preference of being married?**

**You don't need to feel inferior or alone if you are single - it is a gift and opportunity in its own way**

**Singleness can help one in devotion and service of the Lord**



***In the Bible, the gift of singleness is the state of being single. If you are currently single, you are experiencing the gift of singleness. Marriage is a gift in the same way. If you are currently married, you are experiencing the gift of marriage. Whatever gift we currently have, God will empower us to live it out, but this doesn't make the gift of singleness a superpower.***

**ANDREW BUNT**

**[HTTPS://WWW.LIVINGOUT.ORG/RESOURCES/ARTICLES/51/WHAT-IS-THE-GIFT-OF-SINGLENESS](https://www.livingout.org/resources/articles/51/what-is-the-gift-of-singleness)**



# REMEMBER

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# **DIVORCE & REMARRIAGE**



# **DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

**BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

**This is a matter of great personal relevance that I have had to do a lot of research and soul searching!**

**Divorce and 'freedom' to remarry are often seen as separate matters, but they are inextricably linked**

**There remains wide ranging theological and pastoral views on these subjects - Elim has an established position**



10 To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. 11 But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife.



# **DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

**BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

**Paul refers to the The Lord here, possibly in reference to Jesus' teaching recorded in Matthew 19**

**This is the the ideal and the aspiration - lifelong commitment between one man and one woman**

**But we live in a world that is often very far from ideal**



3 Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"

4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' 5 and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?"





6 So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

7 "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"



8 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. 9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."



# **DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

**BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

**It is true that 'God hates divorce' (Malachi 2:16)**

**And as a divorced (and remarried) person - so do I!!! - It is the pain caused that God hates, not the people involved**

**Does God have personal experience too?**



8 I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery.



# **DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

**BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

**When Moses permitted certificates of divorce, it was a matter of grace to stop the oppression of those who were being mistreated and abandoned**

**As we have seen, both Jesus and Paul give concession for scenarios where divorce is 'permitted'**

**The only purpose of divorce being permitted was for people to be free to remarry**



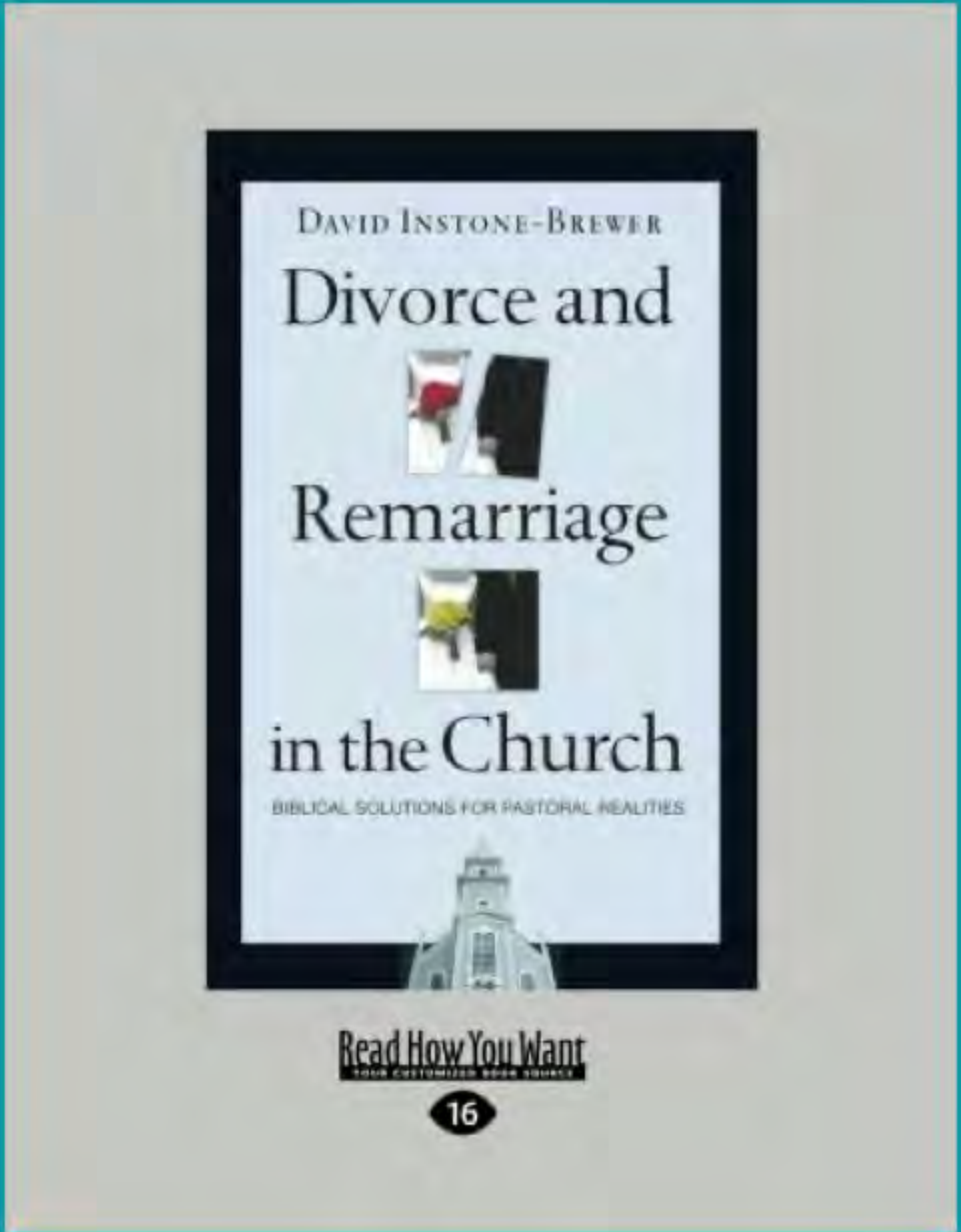
# **DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

**BIBLE-SHAPED & COUNTER-CULTURAL**

**A past Elim theological and pastoral study on divorce and remarriage clarified our position**

**A (rather crude) summary is that the bible gives three broad scenarios where divorce and remarriage are permissible - namely adultery, abandonment or abuse**

**The ideal is always be that struggling marriages be restored, refreshed and/or reconciled - please dont pursue divorce with any selfish motivation**



**DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE IN THE CHURCH - DAVID INSTONE-BREWER**



# REMEMBER

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1 Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.