When Jim met Julie—A story study of Marriage, Divorce, and Re-Marriage

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When Jim met Julie she had been single for two years. Her first marriage, to Bill, did not work out. Julie and Bill just could not be happy together and both thought it best to go their separate ways. Julie and Bill divorced. When Jim met Julie she was over Bill. She had managed to piece her life back together and move ahead. She had a good job and many good friends. Lifelong companionship, which she had thought she would have forever with Bill, was the only thing that seemed to be missing from her life.

When Jim met Julie they fell in love. A whirlwind romance straight out of a fairy tale book. They had so much in common. They could talk, laugh, and felt so comfortable with who they were when they were together. Something this good just had to be right. So they were married. This was the first marriage for Jim and for Julie this was marriage number two.

When Jim met Julie they were not Bible defined Christians. The Lord's church was not part of their lives. Fifteen years into marriage they were taught the Gospel Truth. The plan of salvation worked just like the Bible states it would on both of their sincere hearts. When Jim met Julie they just knew their love would last forever. A love that would be able to conquer any hurdle in life. A love soon to be tested by the gained knowledge of sin. For you see, when Jim met Julie, even though they did not know the Truth, they were still bound by the same Truth they had later learned and obeyed in life.

When Jim met Julie she did not know that "sexual immorality" was the only reason given by Jesus for divorce (Matthew 5:32). "Better to go their separate ways" was never mentioned by Jesus. And, when Jim met Julie, Jim did not know that marriage to a person who had divorced for a reason other than sexual immorality made both parties guilty of the sin of adultery (Matthew 5:32). Can Jim and Julie remain married and still be servants of the Lord? Will God overlook a marriage that was formed in innocent ignorance?

The answer to both questions is no. As much as it may devastate Jim, Julie, their family, and those who love them, to remain together would bring condemnation to both of their souls at judgment. Adultery, like any other sin, can be forgiven. However, forgiveness only comes to those who repent (Luke 13:5). Repentance involves a change in ones life—an active change from sin. Continuing in sin is continuing to commit lawlessness (without the Law of Christ, 1 John 3:4). Sin is what separates one from God (Isaiah 59:2). It is impossible to be practicing sin and

abide in the Law of Christ at the same time. The sin must therefore be done away with or removed from one's life—confessed and repented of.

Paul declares in Romans 6:1-6, "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin (are baptized into Christ) live any longer in it… that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we should walk in newness of life… that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves of sin." If Jim and Julie remain married, they "continue in sin." When Jim met Julie, if they had both known the Truth, perhaps they could have avoided such a painful situation. Because, when Jim met Julie they were subject to the Law of Christ, the Truth, even though they did not understand nor realize it at the time.

Jesus commanded His law preached to "all the world" (Mark 16:15-16). Thus, all men are subject to His law, the Gospel, the Truth. The apostle Paul inspired by God and speaking of Christ states in Philippians 2:6-11 that "every (all) knee should bow… and that every (all) tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Paul's statement in Acts 17:30 makes God's view of those who claim ignorance very clear and also points out those who claim ignorance to His will: "Truly these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent." Ignorance is bliss some say, but ignorance will not slow the fury of God at judgment. Paul later writes, "In flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ" (2 Thessalonians 1:8).

Let us each examine ourselves to make sure that we are not "continuing in sin" of any kind. Rather, let us each flee any sin "which so easily ensnares us and run with endurance the race that is set before us" (Hebrews 12:1-2).