

# **North Hills Church**

## **Position on Sexuality, Marriage, Divorce and Remarriage**

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### **POSITION ON SEXUALITY**

From the beginning God intentionally created humans as male and female to reflect His image. Our birth gender is by design. Any attempt to alter one's birth gender goes against God's design and is therefore sin (Genesis 1:26-27, Matthew 19:4-6).

Scripture allows for two options for sexual behavior: exclusive marital relations between one man and one woman or sexual celibacy. Either option is a gift of God (1 Corinthians 7:1-9).

Any voluntary participation in non-marital sexual acts is sinful. These sinful acts include but are not limited to adultery, fornication, lusting through pornography, bestiality, polygamy, or same-sex sexual acts. Unrepentant participation in any sinful act is inconsistent with God's call for us to be holy (Leviticus 18:22-3; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 5:11, 6:9-11; Matthew 5:28; Ephesians 5:3-6; 1 Thess. 4:3-7).

As image bearers of God, all persons should be treated with dignity and courtesy regardless of their sexual behavior. Everyone shares the need for salvation from sin. Freedom from sexual sin, as for non-sexual sin, is possible through the saving power of Jesus Christ (Genesis 1:26, Titus 3:2-6, Romans 3:21-26, 1 John 1:5-10, 1 Corinthians 6:9-11).

### **POSITION ON MARRIAGE**

God intended for marriage to be an exclusive and permanent union between one genetic man and one genetic woman that should be separated by nothing but death (Matthew 19:4-6); through steadfast, sacrificial love the Christian marriage pictures Christ's relationship with His church (Ephesians 5:22-33). Therefore all marriage counseling given by the staff or leadership of NHC will be toward preserving the marriage relationship.

The Bible does not permit a believer to enter into a marriage with an unbeliever (1 Corinthians. 7:39; 2 Corinthians. 6:14-15); however, when a believer is married to an unbeliever, and the unbeliever is content to remain in the marriage, the believer's mindset should be to stay in the marriage (1 Corinthians 7:12-13).

### **POSITION ON DIVORCE**

Divorce is the result of sin. As men and women harden their hearts to God's plan for marriage, divorce is one of the tragic results (Malachi 2:16; Matthew 19:8). Divorce mars the picture of Christ's relationship with His church and causes indescribable pain to those affected by its tragic consequences.

NHC rejects the popular notion that incompatibility constitutes grounds for divorce. The Bible names sexual immorality and abandonment as grounds for divorce. Abandonment is not strictly limited to physical desertion. Even while allowed in those cases, divorce is never commanded and should not be pursued hastily (Matthew 19:9; 1 Corinthians 7:15).

A repentant believer who has violated the marriage covenant through sexual immorality and/or abandonment should make every effort to reconcile their marriage

(1 Corinthians 7:10-11). The aggrieved spouse is called to forgive just as Christ has forgiven them (Matthew 6:15, 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4). Given time, when fruits of repentance are evident, the aggrieved spouse may also be moved by the Spirit of Christ to seek restoration of the marriage as well (Matthew 6:15, 18:21-22; Luke 17:3-4).

If a member of NHC pursues an unbiblical divorce, church discipline will be administered with the desire to see genuine repentance, restoration and peace in the family and in the church (1 Corinthians 5; Matthew 18:15-20).

As strongly as NHC opposes divorce, we also long to provide the love, acceptance and stability that individuals and families need, by the grace of God, to rebuild their lives (Galatians 6:1-5).

## **POSITION ON REMARRIAGE**

Since death breaks the bond of marriage, remarriage is permissible for a widow or widower provided that marriage is with another believer (Rom. 7:2-3; 1 Cor. 7:39).

A divorced person should prayerfully consider remaining single. The goodness and beauty of a life of singleness in God's service is clear in Scripture (1 Corinthians 7:7, 11, 32-35).

When a biblical divorce has occurred, the believing and faithful individual is free to remarry another believing and faithful person without committing adultery or incurring church discipline (1 Cor. 7:15; Matthew 19:9).

When an unbiblical divorce has occurred, the offending former spouse(s) should repent and seek restoration of their marriage (1 Corinthians 7:11). Remarriage after an unbiblical divorce is a complex question, each case being distinct and having its own challenges which require the discernment of the elders who bring various perspectives to this issue. At times, the judgment of the elders may make room for the remarriage of a repentant person in this situation.

Remarriage for a believer after any circumstance should not be pursued hastily or without much counsel, so that the believer can be satisfied in the Lord (1 Corinthians 7:17) and prepared for the commitment of marriage (Ecclesiastes 5:2-5).