

sought the living water. To obtain eternal blessings we must acknowledge and repent of our sins. Those sins may need to be exposed for us if we are not aware of them.

A similar example could be when John the Baptist told King Herod that it was not lawful for him to have his current wife. He had seduced Philip's wife away from him and married her (Matt. 14:3-4). Do you think if Herod came to John for baptism John would have done so without requiring repentance. It was a sinful arrangement Herod was in. **He needed to end it.**

Without a doubt this would be a difficult command to fulfill. In point of fact, most repentance is challenging. We were engaged in sin before our baptism because we liked it. We drank, fought, cussed, or caroused because we wanted to. We did not see the horrible nature of our sin before learning the Gospel. However, the hardest repentance of all would likely be leaving a happy marriage. But this is a consequence of ignoring God's word when we married, divorced, and remarried.

The Jews had intermarried with the people of Canaan in the time of Ezra. Such marriages in their past led to idolatry and Babylonian captivity. The people were required to sever the marriages. Ezra 10:10-11 says, *"And Ezra the priest stood up, and said unto them, Ye have transgressed, and have taken strange wives, to increase the trespass of Israel. Now therefore make confession unto the Lord God of your fathers, and do his pleasure: and separate yourselves from the people of the land, and from the strange wives."* Verse 44 reveals some of them had children. God's will must be obeyed. We need to require it of ourselves and those who would become members of the church.

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720 N. Indianapolis Road

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Assemblies

Sunday:

9:30 a.m. Bible Study

10:30 a.m. Worship

5:00 p.m. Worship

Wednesday:

7:00 p.m. Bible Study

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"If something is new it is not true, and if it is true, it is not new."

Mary Allen continues to decrease in strength. Continue to pray for the family during this difficult time.

The Roberts will be away for a Gospel meeting next week.

The business meeting and ladies' Bible class will meet next Sunday at 3:45. Be sure to attend if you are able.

Keep all the sick in your prayers: Reva has had hip problems and cold symptoms recently. Edith is at Meadow Lakes due to pneumonia. Laura is struggling with her memory. There are many others also.

If you have an extra book or two at home from our Wednesday night study please return it. These books are helpful for visitors or members who have forgotten theirs at home.

We appreciate the presence of all of you. Some of you are here even though you do not feel well. We thank you. You encourage us.

Where is an Example?

When a married person wants to be baptized or to place membership in the congregation there is one question we should always ask. “*Have you or your spouse been married before?*” The reason for the question should be obvious, but it seems unclear to many saints today.

If a couple is in a second marriage then their previous marriage must have ended in a Scriptural way or else they are living in sin. They could have married a second time after their first spouse **passed away**. This would be acceptable (Rom. 7:2-3). Or they could have divorced their first mate for **infidelity**. This is also permitted (Matt. 5:32, 19:9). If they have been divorced, and it was for any other reason, then Jesus teaches that they are committing adultery by their second marriage.

Matthew 5:32 shows that a **woman** who has been put away from her husband and remarries is guilty of *adultery*. “*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**.*” If the first husband put her away for any reason other than fornication then he has caused her to commit *adultery*. If he **did** put her away for fornication then her *adultery* in the second marriage is all of her own making. In either case, she is guilty of *adultery* in her second marriage.

In Matthew 19:9a Jesus uses the same exception, but this time He deals with **the second marriage of the man** who put away his wife. “*And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth **adultery**:...*” Here we see the one acceptable case for remarriage of a divorced person. The spouse who put their mate away for fornication can remarry without committing adultery (providing their new partner is also eligible).

Therefore, when we ask a person about their marital status we are trying to determine if they are living in sin. We must not give a person a false impression that they are acceptable to God while in sin.

Many congregations try to avoid this discussion. Some contend that God is merciful and the second marriage is forgiven even though it continues. Others argue baptism washes away adultery even though there is no repentance. Some want to say adultery was in the act of wedding and not a continual sin in the marriage.

A number of churches will accept the person into their membership without questioning their marital status. They say that the person will **eventually** hear the truth through sound preaching and will **then** make the correction. Meanwhile, he **gets close** to the members of the church until the bombshell is dropped. Does anyone really think a church that is unwilling to confront the question when a person first places membership will be willing to withdraw from him **later** if he does not repent? And would he not likely cover up the sin in order to keep the friendship of the church after being with them **for so long**?

Some have asked for **an example** in the Bible of someone who was asked about their marital status before they were allowed to be baptized or to place membership (*thus the title of the article*). The challenge perplexed me for only a moment. Then I realized there are few examples of anyone placing membership in a congregation. I believe Paul (Acts 9:26-27) and Apollos (Acts 18:27) would be two examples.

The requirement of repentance precedes all baptisms (Acts 2:38). If we were aware of a person being a drunk, a serial killer, or a thief; would we allow them to join the congregation without change? I do not find any **specific examples** of a man being told to quit drinking, killing, or stealing before he was baptized either.

One example is close to the question. Jesus spoke with a woman of Samaria in the fourth chapter of John’s Gospel. When she sought the living water Jesus offered, He told her, “*Go, call thy husband, and come hither.*” The woman then revealed she had no husband. This was technically correct. She had had five husbands in the past and was currently living with someone to whom she was not married (Jn. 4:16-18). Jesus introduced the subject of her marital status into the conversation as she