



## ASK A QUESTION



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### QUESTION

If I am divorced, neither I or my husband remarry, and my husband dies, am I a divorcee or a widow?

### ANSWER

**Thank you so much for your enquiry. It is important to bear in mind that your legal status may not be questioned, but I will assume that you are asking here what is the teaching of the Bible as it applies to you.**

In biblical terms, your question seems to be about the legitimacy of divorce and remarriage in God's sight. In the Old Testament (OT), divorce with the right of remarriage was permitted both for men and women. A man could marry, divorce and remarry as he chose, while a wife who had been divorced was regarded as free to remarry, even if she had been divorced by her husband for something shameful. The only forbidden relationship was for a divorced husband and wife to remarry each other after the wife had entered into a new marriage. Probably the reason for this was that the intervening marriage would then become in effect an 'adulterous' interlude ([Deuteronomy 24:1-4](#)). Divorce with the right of remarriage was also allowed to wives if a husband failed to provide them with food, clothing and a sexual relationship ([Exodus 21:10](#)).

At one period in Israel's history, Jewish men commonly married pagan wives, with the result that they were commended for divorcing them in order to marry Jewish women to maintain the Jewish population ([Ezra 9 and 10](#)). They were commended for ending these mixed marriages, so divorce was there seen as godly as long as it was done according to the law ([Ezra 10:3](#)). The only divorce regulation is [Deuteronomy 24:1-4](#), so divorce on religious grounds must be seen as within the meaning of that law.

However, only a few generations later the prophet Malachi denounced men for divorcing for less profound reasons ([Malachi 2:10-16](#)). Verse 16 is often translated that God hates divorce, but the original language of Hebrew is not so definite. Even if that is the correct translation, it cannot refer to divorces approved in the OT Scriptures and would be limited to unjustified divorce.

The practice of unjustified divorce became common so that by the time of Jesus, morally concerned Jews protested that the law permitting divorce was being abused by interpreting 'something indecent' too broadly. Jesus was asked his opinion and used a term meaning 'something morally offensive' to interpret the OT law, which would include but not be limited to adultery. Divorce under Jewish law included the right of remarriage, and Jesus accepted that but deplored remarriage when the divorce had an improper cause ([Matthew 5:31-32](#)).

Some Christian churches do not allow remarriage at all, others accept some limited grounds, and yet others accept all remarriages provided the couple have dealt solemnly and seriously before God with any sins involved against a previous marriage.

In your position, you do not need to be concerned whether or not your divorce was acceptable to God because you did not remarry. Your standing with God does not depend on rejecting the divorce and regarding yourself as a widow, but on turning from a life without God to the Lord Jesus Christ as your Saviour and Lord. God always forgives past sin when it is repented, and welcomes us into His fellowship when we repent from sin and place our trust in Jesus Christ.

I do hope this general answer to your question goes some way to helping you find peace with God through Jesus Christ our Lord. If you want to know more about what Jesus has done for you please watch the video on the main part of our site: [www.lookingforGod.com](http://www.lookingforGod.com)

In closing, I want to encourage you to get more involved with your local church. It would be good to speak to a Christian leader or another trusted church individual regarding your question. I know they would be delighted to further answer you as well as offer prayer and support as you continue your spiritual journey: [www.lookingforgod.com/churchfinder](http://www.lookingforgod.com/churchfinder)

Please use our Interactive Answer Matrix and feel free to ask another question. Our helpful staff are praying for you and waiting to try and answer to you from the Bible, and will be delighted to tell you more about Jesus Christ the Lord, the Saviour of the world.  
[www.lookingforgod.com/your-questions](http://www.lookingforgod.com/your-questions)

\*All Scripture references are taken From The English Standard Version of the Holy Bible unless stated otherwise

\*If anything in this answer affects you directly, then please feel free to call our confidential prayer line in the UK on **0845 4567729**, where trained Christian volunteers will take your call and pray both for you and with you. If you are outside of the UK then you may submit your request for prayer on line at [www.ucb.co.uk/prayerline](http://www.ucb.co.uk/prayerline)

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