

## A “PUT-AWAY WOMAN” AND A “PUTTING-AWAY MAN”

by Bill Reeves

We hear a lot today about a “put-away woman” not being permitted to do anything but remain bound to a fornicator-husband simply because she is now a “put-away woman.” They think that they find their “put-away woman” in Matt. 19:9b, “and he that marrieth her when she is put away committeth adultery.”

Of course the hypothetically “put-away woman” of Matt. 19:9b is **not** the put-away woman of the present controversy. The one of Matt. 19:9b was put away for just any cause **except fornication**, but the one of the present controversy is one who **has the cause of fornication** against her husband and upon which she may act with divine permission in repudiating him, and remarrying.

But aside from that, look at what our erring brethren are doing to the words of Jesus in Matt. 19:9. They have the woman committing adultery if she remarries **because she is a put-away woman!** Alright, Jesus says that the husband **also** commits adultery upon remarrying. Why is that so? To be consistent, our erring brethren will have to say that it is because he is a **putting-away husband!** So, logic forces our mistaken and divisive brethren to admit that, **not only** every “put-away woman” commits adultery upon remarrying, but that **every** “putting-away husband” commits adultery upon remarrying. They cannot deny it and be consistent. Again, Jesus has **both** the husband and the wife committing adultery, not just the wife! If in the case of the wife it is because she is a “put-away woman,” then in the case of the husband it has to be because he is a “putting-away man.”

**But**, they won’t say that every “putting-away husband” commits adultery upon remarrying. Why? Because, they tell us, if he has the cause of fornication against his wife he does not commit adultery by putting her away and remarrying. Well, friends, that surrenders the plea that every “put-away woman” commits adultery upon remarrying! If this “putting-away husband” has the cause of fornication against his wife and therefore may exercise the divine permission, why can’t the “put-away woman,” having the same **cause**, do that also?

There are some brethren who are dividing the brotherhood by disfellowshipping those who disagree with them on this issue. Their error consists in **making a classification** of person, and then denying to any of that class the divine permission to repudiate a fornicator-mate and remarry. They classify the **woman**, but conveniently ignore classifying the man! Jesus said that **both the man and the woman** of his scenario commit adultery upon remarriage, but these brethren put **only the woman** in their “box,” which to them is the **put-away woman box!** They don’t deal with the man as they do with the woman. They don’t have a “box” for the “putting-away man.” Why not? The question is greeted with silence! They can’t answer it, and justify their classification of the woman. Jesus didn’t classify **anyone!** He didn’t put anyone in a box (Bro. Joel Gwin in our debate in Hopkinsville, KY in 2003, concerning the “box,” said that that box is Jesus’ box!). Jesus dealt with **cause**, and teaches that a putting-away man, or a put-away woman, who does not have that **cause** for putting away, and remarries, commits adultery. Our mistaken brethren, ignoring Jesus’ issue of **cause**, build a **box** (category of person) and put the **woman** in it, while conveniently ignoring an equally demanding box for the **man!** Remember: what Jesus said about the woman of Matt. 19:9 he said about the man: both commit adultery upon remarrying if repudiation, or putting-away, is not done for fornication. The reason for this is not some imaginary **box** (for the woman

only), but simply because God does not free either the man or the woman from the marriage bond unless the innocent, vow-keeping spouse repudiates the mate for fornication.