

Dear John,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You wanted to know if as Christians you and your girl friend would be able to marry even though she is currently married to another. You told us that she married seven years ago when she was not a Christian. Her husband also was not a Christian and still is not. Your girl friend, though, found the Lord four years ago. She has since separated from her husband because he is addicted to gambling, leaving her as the sole provider for herself and her daughter. You met this woman three months ago and the two of you fell in love. You wanted to know if as Christians there is a scriptural precedence that would allow her to divorce her husband and marry you.

For the Christian we believe that there are only two circumstances by which a marriage may be dissolved. The first circumstance is adultery. The second is desertion by an unbelieving spouse.

(1) Adultery: “But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife [husband], saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her [him] to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her [him] that is divorced (for a reason other than fornication) committeth adultery.” (Matthew 5:32)
If your friend divorces for reasons other than adultery, you may not be able to marry her unless her husband, the unbeliever, leaves her.

(2) Desertion by an unbelieving spouse: “But if the unbeliever leaves let him [her] do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.”
(1 Corinthians 7:15)

As things stand now, your girl friend and her husband are not divorced and the husband has not left her. Therefore, she really should not seek a divorce since her husband has not asked for one (apparently he does not want to leave her). However, if the husband has committed adultery, she does have scriptural grounds for divorce.

All of the above having been said, we must caution that until a divorce is finalized, you should not be dating your friend or have any kind of intimate contact with her. Needless to say, sexual relations are allowed only within the bonds of marriage.

We hope we have answered your question. Be sure to sign up for CQ Rewind at www.christianquestions.net. The service is free without obligation and will provide you with scriptural perspective on many questions and topics.

Sincerely,
Christian Questions Radio