Differences in What Christians Teach on Marriage and Celibacy - Video

July 24, 2026

Recap of Intro to the Analytical Study of Early Church History
Pre-Nicene Christians had a consensus of at least 4 authors taught and none denied on over 1,237 teachings.
All but 7 were taught by at least one writer between 325-431 A.D. too.
All Christian churches today, would agree on all of these except for about 44.
At least one church today would agree with every teaching except six.
See www.biblequery.org; under "Church History".
Details: www.biblequery.org/History/ChurchHistory/WhatEarlyChristiansTaughtOnDoctrine.html www.biblequery.org/History/ChurchHistory/WhatEarlyChristiansTaughtOnExperienceAndPractice.html.

Legend
White background – A consensus of 4 or more writers taught prior to 325 A.D., and none denied. There are over 1,237 teachings; a few are shown here.
Pale yellow – No consensus
Bright yellow – Nobody taught this before 325 A.D.

MARRIAGE AND CELIBACY
-Mc1. Christians should not get married with unbelievers (2-0)
-Mc2. It is OK for clergy to be married (1-1)
-Mc3. Presbyters and deacons cannot get married (2-0)
-Mc4. Catholic marriage is invalid if not by a priest (0)
-Mc5. Holy Spirit leaves room during marital relations (0)
-Mc6. A lengthy marriage could be annullable (0)
-Mc7. Special church tax on priests who have kids (0)
-Mc8. Catholics should not marry non-Catholics (0)

-Mc1. Christians should not marry unbelievers (2-0)

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 (implied) "Do not be yoked with unbelievers…" This includes not getting married with unbelievers. However, if you already are married you should not seek a divorce, as 1 Corinthians 7:10-17 teaches.

Clement of Alexandria (193-202 A.D.) (partial) quotes the relevant part of 2 Corinthians 6:14f, but it is in the context of syncretism, not marriage. *Stromata* book 5 ch.9 p.458
Tertullian (198-220 A.D.) "Marriage, too, decks the bridegroom with its crown; and therefore we will not have heathen brides, lest they seduce us even to the idolatry with" *The Chaplet* ch.13 p.101
Tertullian (207/208 A.D.) "…marriage should be 'only in the Lord,' that no Christian should intermarry with a heathen, he maintains a law of the Creator, who everywhere prohibits marriage with strangers." *Five Books Against Marcion* book 5 ch.7 p.443-444
Tertullian (198-220 A.D.) "These are the things which that utterance of the apostle has, beneath its brevity, left to be understood by us. These things, if need shall be, suggest to your own mind. By

these turn yourself away from the examples of some. To marry *otherwise* is, to believers, not 'lawful; 'is not 'expedient.'" *Tertullian To His Wife* ch.8 p.48-49

Origen (c.240,235-245 A.D.) (nothing) quotes the last two-thirds of 2 Corinthians 6:14, but skips the relevant part. *Homilies on Jeremiah Homily* 1 ch.16.3 p.21

Cyprian of Carthage (c.246-258 A.D.) has a whole chapter of not to marry non-believers. *Treatise of Cyprian* Treatise 12 Third book ch.62 p.550

Cyprian of Carthage (c.246-258 A.D.) quotes all of 2 Corinthians 6:14. *Treatises of Cyprian* Treatise 12 part 3 ch.62 p.551.

Cyprian of Carthage (c.246-258 A.D.) "The woman is bound so long as her husband liveth; but if he die, she is freed to marry whom she will, only in the Lord." *Treatises of Cyprian* Treatise 12 ch.62 p.550

Council of Elvira (306/307 A.D.) canon 15 (partial, does not mention Christian guys) Christian girls are not to marry pagans or heretics.

Council of Elvira (306/307 A.D.) canon 16 (partial) Heretics shall not marry Christian girls simply because the girls cannot find anyone in the faith.

Council of Elvira (306/307 A.D.) canon 17 (partial) says that if parents allow their daughter to marry a pagan priest, they cannot receive communion, even if close to death.

-Mc2. It is OK for clergy to be married (1-1)

1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6

Philip Blosser says, "Thus, priestly celibacy – like 'Fish on Fridays' (the requirement to abstain from meat) and Communion in one kind (withholding the cup from the laity) prior to Vatican II - was never a matter of unchangeable dogma, but prudential discipline imposed (in the case of celibacy) for the sake of fostering single-minded devotion to God and service in the ministry." *Not by Scripture Alone* (edited by Robert A. Sungenis) p.81-82

Tertullian (213 A.D.) "Come, now, you who think that an exceptional law of monogamy is made with reference to bishops, abandon withal your remaining disciplinary titles, which, together with monogamy, are ascribed to bishops. Refuse to be 'irreprehensible, sober, of good morals, orderly, hospitable, easy to be taught; 'nay, indeed, (be) 'given to wine, prompt with the hand to strike, combative, money-loving, not ruling your house, nor caring for your children's discipline,'-no, nor 'courting good renown even from strangers.' For if bishops have a law of their own teaching monogamy, the other (characteristics) likewise, which will be the fitting concomitants of monogamy, will have been written (exclusively) for bishops. With laics, however, to whom monogamy is not suitable, the other (characteristics) also have nothing to do." *On Monogamy* ch.7 p.69

Tertullian (213 A.D.) but monogamy is imposed upon bishops alone, (tell me), pray, whether *they* alone are to be pronounced *Christians* upon whom is conferred the entirety of discipline? *On Monogamy* ch.12 p.69. See also ibid ch.11 p.67.

Pontius (after 256 A.D.) (partial) shows that Cyprian was married (at least at one time) *Life and Passion of Cyprian* ch.3 p.268

X Second Council of Carthage (251 A.D.) It was proposed that priests be celibate. (*1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.249)

From the Start of Muslim Conquests to the Fourth Lateran Council (634-1215 A.D.)

X Pope Gregory VII (1074 A.D.) binding that no priest could be married. (*1001 Bible Questions Answered* p.249)

In the Middle Ages sex partners of priests were common. In some cases they functioned just like a marriage, except without the word.
In **Eastern Orthodox** Churches, priests with white robes can get married. But priests who have made a lifelong vow of chastity are given black robes.
While the Roman Catholic Church today does not allow priests to marry, it has allowed cases where already married Episcopal or Anglican priests converted to Catholicism. They became Catholic priests but were allowed to keep their wives.

-Mc3. Presbyters and deacons cannot get married (2-0)

God does not say this in His word, the Bible.

While the Roman Catholic Church today does not allow priests to marry, it has allowed cases where already married Episcopal or Anglican priests converted to Catholicism. They became Catholic priests but were allowed to keep their wives.

Council of Ancyra (314 A.D.) canon 10 p.67 Unmarried deacons who did not bring up that they must marry, cannot marry after they become a deacon.
Council of Neocaesarea (315 A.D.) canon 1 p.79 Presbyters are removed if they marry. One cannot be a presbyter before they are 30 years old. Canon 11 p.84

-Mc4. Catholic marriage is invalid if not by a priest (0)

God does not say this in His word, the Bible.

No writers prior to Nicea I (325 A.D.).

-Mc5. Holy Spirit leaves room during marital relations (0)

God does not say this in His word, the Bible.

No writers prior to Nicea I (325 A.D.).

This was a Roman Catholic teaching in the Middle Ages, but was never an official pronouncement from a pope or church council.

-Mc6. A lengthy marriage could be annullable (0)

God does not say this in His word, the Bible.

No writers prior to Nicea I (325 A.D.).

From the Start of Muslim Conquests to the Fourth Lateran Council (634-1215 A.D.)
Pope Nicholas (858-867) was involved in arguments over marriage validity.
Gregory VII (1073-1085) had church courts on annulling marriages.

Pope Alexander III (1159-1181) determined that marriages that did not have mutual consent were annullable.

From the Fourth Lateran Council on (1215- A.D.)
Pope Benedict XIV (1741) had a "defender of the bond" office to handle annulment court cases.

Russian Orthodox Church (partial) you can divorce for various reasons, including adultery, incest, syphilis, or even leprosy. See https://www.eadiocese.org/court (4/4/2026) for more info.

-Mc7. Church tax on priests with kids (0)

God does not say this in His word, the Bible.

No writers prior to Nicea I (325 A.D.).

The Roman Catholic Church did this in Zwingli's time.

-Mc8. Catholics should not marry non-Catholics (0) (historic Roman Catholic)

God does not say this in His word, the Bible.

2 Corinthians 6:14-15 (implied) "Do not be yoked with unbelievers…" This includes not getting married with unbelievers. However, if you already are married you should not seek a divorce, as 1 Corinthians 7:10-17 teaches.

Council of Elvira (306/207 A.D.) Canons 16-17 (implied) "Heretics, if they are unwilling to change over to the Catholic Church, are not to have Catholic girls given to them in marriage, nor shall they be given to Jews or heretics, since there can be no community for the faithful with the unfaithful. If parents act against this prohibition, they shall be kept out for five years.. (17) If any should somehow join their daughters in marriage to priests of idols, they shall not be given communion– even at the end."

X The Roman Catholic Church today allows a Roman Catholic to marry a non-Catholic if the non-Catholic spouse promises to bring up children in the Catholic Church.
Bible-believing Protestants teach that believers should not get married with non-believers. But if they already are married they should not seek a divorce.

Pre-Nicene Differences on Marriage and Celibacy Grid – May 2026

Mc1. Christians should not marry unbelievers (2-0) Mc2. It is OK for clergy to be married (1-1) Mc3. Presbyters and deacons cannot get married (2-0) Mc4. Catholic marriage is invalid if not by a priest (0) Mc5. Holy Spirit leave room during marital relations (0) Mc6. A lengthy marriage could be annullable (0)	Mc7. Church tax on priests with kids (0) Mc8. Catholics should not marry non-Catholics (0)	**Legend for Cells** **W** = wrote explicitly on this **I** = Implied m = Mixed or Inconsistent P = partial - = no reference found **X** = Disagree

Rows: white=Christian writer, orange=schism, pink=strange writer

Christian writer	Pages	Date A.D.	Mc 1	Mc 2	Mc 3	Mc 4	Mc 5	Mc 6	Mc 7	Mc 8				
Clement of Rome (wrote *1 Clement*)	**16.25**	96/98	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Papias of Hierapolis, disciple of John	**2**	95-110	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
"Presbyters" (Papias?)	**0.5**	-95-117	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Ignatius disciple of John (shortest version)	**13**	c.100-117	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Didache (=*Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*)	**4.75**	c.60-120	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Apology of Aristides (Greek version)	**4**	125-161	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Quadratus of Athens fragment (apologist)	**.125**	126	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Epistle of Barnabas	**12.5**	c.70-130	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
2 Clement (anonymous writer)	**5.75**	120-140	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Polycarp *to the Philippians*	**3.5**	100-155	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Mathetes to Diognetus – teaching a disciple	**5.25**	c.130-200	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Apostolic fathers totals: all symbols except P	**67.5**	-155	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Shepherd of Hermas (= *Hermas*, = *The Pastor*)	**46.5**	c.115-155	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Justin Martyr, philosopher, apologist	**116.5**	c.138-165	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Evarestus *Martyrdom of Polycarp*	**5**	c.169	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Tatian's *Diatessaron*	**86**	c.172	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Christians of Vienna and Lugdunum (Lyons)	**6.5**	177	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Athenagoras (apologist)	**33.5**	177	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Melito/Meleto of Sardis (Quartodecimian)	**11**	170-177	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Hegesippus (chronicler)	**2.5**	170-180	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Theophilus of Antioch (*to Autolycus*)	**32**	168-181/188	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Irenaeus of Lyons, disciple of Polycarp	**284.75**	182-188	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Passion of the Scillitan Martyrs -died 180 A.D.	**0.75**	180-202	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Caius and the Muratorian Canon (Latin)	**3**	190-217	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas	**7**	c.201/205	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Serapion of Antioch -against Marcion, Montanists	**1.333**	191/200-210	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
The Octavius of Minucius Felix	**25**	210 A.D.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Clement of Alexandria	**389**	193-202	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Tertullian	**891**	198-220	**W**	**W**	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Hippolytus, pupil of Irenaeus (undisputed)	**218**	222-235/236	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				

Theodotus the probable Montanist	**7.75**	ca.240	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Instructions of Commodianus	**16**	ca.240	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Julius Africanus (undisputed writings)	**9**	232-245	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Martyrdom of the Holy Martyrs	**1.5**	< 250	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Origen (heterodox teacher)	**1005.15**	225-253/254	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Novatian (his schism lasted over 200 years)	**38.5**	250/254-257	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Treatise Against Novatian	**6.5**	254-256	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Treatise on Rebaptism	**11**	c.250-258	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Cyprian of Carthage (against Novatian)	**250.5**	c.246-258	**W**	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Roman church leaders (letters 2,29,30)	**1+4.75**	250-251	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Lucian et al. (letters 16, *21*)	**.875**	250-251	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Moyses, et al. to Cyprian (letter 25)	**2.5**	250	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Maximus, et al. to Cyprian (letter 49)	**0.25**	c.246-256	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Firmilian of Caesarea to Cyprian (letter74)	**7.25**	256	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Seventh Council of Carthage (85 bishops)	**7.25**	258	-	**X**	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Pontius' *The Life and Passion of Cyprian*	**7.5**	258	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Theognostus of Alexandria (Origenist)	**0.5**	260	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Gregory Thaumaturgus (undisputed works)	**28.5**	240-265	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Dionysius of Alexandria (Origenist)	**39.5**	246-265	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Malchion *(Against Paul of Samosata)*	**0.25**	270	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Pierius of Alexandria (fragment)	**0.5**	275	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Adamantius *Dialog on the True Faith in God*	**42**	c.300	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Arnobius Against the Heathen (undisputed)	**126.5**	297-303	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Victorinus of Petau, Austria –commentator	**18.5**	-304	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Council of Elvira (21 undisputed canons)	**1**	306-207	P	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Pamphilus disciple of Pierius (Origenist)	**2.75**	309	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Creed of Lucian of Antioch	**0.3**	c.300-311	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Peter of Alexandria (undisputed)	**8.5**	306-311	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Hesychius [Egypt],Pachomius,Phileas,Theodorus	**1**	-311	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Methodius (corrected Origen's followers)	**79.5**	270-311/312	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Council of Ancyra (Marcellus & 11 other bishops)	**3.333**	Spring 314	-	-	**W**	-	-	-	-	-				
Council of Arles I, France. 26-44 bishops.	**0.333**	Aug. 314	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Council of Neocaesarea (Basil and c.19 others).	**1.333**	c.315	-	-	**W**	-	-	-	-	-				
Martyrdom of Habib the Deacon by Theophilus	**5.5**	event c.315	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Athanasius *Against the Heathen* & *Incarnation*	**56**	318	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Lactantius, tutor of Constantine's son	**305.5**	303-325	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Alexander of Alexandria-Origenist, undisputed	**11.5**	313-326	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Eusebius of Caesarea	**1055.4**	318-325	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
23 others that do not have references.	**44.77**	170-325	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-				
92 Christian writer totals: all symbols except P's + Eusebius of Caesarea prior to 325 A.D.	**4425+ 1055.4**	up to 325:	2-0	1-1	2-0	0	0	0	0	0				
Christian writer	Pages	Date A.D.	Mc 1	Mc 2	Mc 3	Mc 4	Mc 5	Mc 6	Mc 7	Mc 8				