

School of Religion & Theology

Adultery in Light of the Text Critical Evidences

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Most textual scholars concede that the autographs or originals of the New Testament text cannot be recovered. At best, what can be determined from the practice of New Testament textual criticism is the possible approximation of the earliest original. While most of the approximately 300,000 variant readings in the New Testament are insignificant, there are many that affect doctrines and could alter the way(s) Christians relate to community.

In this paper, some of these significant variant readings found in Matthew 5:27-32; 19:3-9; Mark 10:2-12 and Luke 16:18 will be addressed. The textual evidences reveal that there are several variations of these passages which could be considered closest to the original. Because these variant readings are sometimes contradictory and also reflect later interpretive developments in the text, we cannot be certain exactly what Jesus said with regards to marriage and divorce. In light of these textual variations, could there be any adjustments to the popular Christian position on divorce and remarriage? And consequently, could there be any modifications to our influence on community? These are some of the practical questions which will be explored.