

5-27-1969

From: Johnn Thompson (enclosure)

Johnn Thompson

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#### Recommended Citation

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# Church of Christ

Eighth and Harrison

P. O. Box 2226

Telephone GA 3-3353

HARLINGEN, TEXAS 78550

May 27, 1969

Mr. John Allen Chalk  
Highland Church of Christ  
Fifth and Highland  
P.O. Box 2439  
Abilene, Texas 79604

Dear John Allen:

I truly appreciate your gesture of friendship in sending the copy of Marlin Hoffman's letter. Upon reading it, I called Lena Wilson and she reaffirmed what she had told me earlier -- that is, she had a scriptural right to remarry. Because I have known Sister Wilson only three years, I only know those things of her past life which she has told me personally. She had done nothing to cause me to disbelieve that she is a godly woman and faithful mother. I warned Sister Wilson that if she were not telling the truth, that she, not I, would be responsible at the Judgment. She readily admitted this and said there was no doubt in her mind but that she was safe in the making of this marriage. Yesterday I received a letter from her making the same statement. I am enclosing a copy of this letter for you to read.

I really do not know what else to do but perform the ceremony. John Allen, if you feel that participating would be a breach of Christian ethics, please notify me immediately. Your judgment has always been that on which I could rely.

Cordially,

  
Johnny Thompson

JT:cm

Minister: CC: Lena Wilson  
Johnny Thompson  
Residence:  
722 E. Van Buren  
Phone GA3-1048

Elders  
D. D. Killingsworth  
Elwood Kirk  
G. Robert Marrs  
W. J. McCarty

2401 North 14th  
Abilene, Texas  
May 24, 1969

Dear Johnny,

This letter is written in answer to your call to me concerning the copy of a letter written to me by Marlin Hoffman.

You know that I tried very hard to contact you to let you know Lectureship that Dr. Varner was leading the elders at Highland opposing my marriage to John. In the beginning I told you that he objected to my marrying again. The only thing that I have done to counteract this is to write somewhat in detail a letter answering some of the questions that were asked me when the elders brought me before them and to try to lay the truth before these men who are zealous, but misinformed because of lack of true information and very scanty rumor at that. I plan to mail these letters to the elders individually on the week of the wedding. In dealing directly with the elders, I do not feel any obligation to Marlin Hoffman, and I wrote them about my approaching marriage as early as December 31, 1969.

Howard Paul and I are aware that Marlin Hoffman has gone to some of the elders, at least Dr. Varner, and claimed that he knows all details about me and that I have lived in adultery and will be again to marry John. My understanding now is that he has gone before the elders at least three times claiming to be so interested and concerned about my soul. Evidence points to the fact that he is the one from whom Dr. Varner has heard so many "rumors" and "by the grapevine", because he pumped Howard with several questions about John at church.

Pity keeps me from saying more about Marlin Hoffman than that I have found him to be a very bitter and jealous man with a most marked inferiority complex. He broods over the fact that he never made his wife happy and how unfair he feels she treated him. One summer he came here and asked me and Howard to take memorization lessons of Bible verses from him. When I refused, he begged me to let him teach me and Howard the sermon on the mount. I tried to be kind to him, but he spent much more than half his time telling me how unfaithful that his wife and son had been to him. He got mad at me and threw temper tantrums because I didn't agree with him and tried to help him see that he and all men have a great responsibility in marriage that many do not realize. A time or two he asked to let him help furnish transportation to special education students from parties at my house. Both times the girls told me that he scared them because he tried to put his hands all over them. I tried to tell them that he was probably trying to show fatherly affection as to daughters, but I did not ask him for transportation anymore. Later, he wrote me some very passionate love letters which I did not answer except to tell him that I had appreciated his help with the students and that I hoped my help in corrections, suggestions, and typing of some of his materials for his booklets on prayer,

fasting, and memorization had been helpful. A long time after that, one of the women at Highland told me that he had been very much in love with me and had dropped dating a young student at ACC because of it. I believe he has written me two letters strongly opposing my marriage to John, accusing me of being so sinful and unfaithful, but if you have either or both of them, I know you can see the prejudice, jealousy, and hate. I feel very sorry for the man!

Johnny, I assure you that I have every right to marry John according to the scriptures. It is a decision made by many, many hours of study, meditation, and prayer.

I will admit to you and to everyone that having two men divorce me looks bad on the surface, but the sufferings, examples, and teachings of Christ and Paul give me courage when the men that I have tried most to help and please and some of my own brethren turn against me and accuse me of untrue deeds of sin and neglect because I know that I have tried with all my heart to please God most of all, throughout my whole life.

John and I could have asked a justice of the peace and had a secret ceremony, but we love and are loved by so many people that we are inviting some of them to enjoy this very wonderful and holy occasion with us. All our friends and loved ones are rejoicing and believe God is with us. We both are fully assured that God has brought us together.

As I have told you before, I asked you to perform the ceremony because although I haven't given you all the tiny details of my life, you know me better because of our work together and numerous discussions than any minister who is now living. Your ability, your understanding heart, and your appreciation and concern for your wife, other Christian women, and people everywhere have helped to make you one of the outstanding ministers and leaders of our time.

Regardless of what I've said, I want to let you know that I know your greatest responsibility is to God. If for any reason you feel you and Sue should not participate in our wedding, please let me know.

Sincerely in Christ,

*Lena Wilson*