



## **Moral Assessment of Violations of Marital Vows Among Christian Couples in Urhoboland**

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### **Abstract**

The majority of people, especially among the Urhobo, seem to view marriage as their final resort when it comes to getting over issues like loneliness, sexual tension, and social, cultural, economic, and political constraints. However, marriages built on these flimsy foundations frequently end in a string of breakdowns when faced with difficulties, which results in the breaking of marital vows. Due to the above, this work examines the morality of Christian couples in Urhoboland, Delta State, and Nigeria who break their marital vows. The inquiry made use of both analytical and phenomenological approaches. This work was evaluated using a systematic questionnaire and unstructured oral interviews. As a result, 12 churches in six local government areas were selected (Ethiopia East, Ethiopia West, Udu, Ughelli North, Ughelli South, and Sapele Local Government Areas). The phenomenological and analytical procedures were used due to the versatility of survey designs, which allow for a wide range of data collection techniques. The investigation in this work was done under two headings: factors responsible for violations of marriage vows and effects of marriage vow violations on couples, families, and society. This study shows a number of elements that contribute to marital vow breaches as well as the repercussions such violations have on individuals, families, and society. The participants agree that, in general, Christian married couples who divorce have a sense of autonomy and freedom from abusive marriages. This essay contends that since they broke their marital vows, both partners frequently experience severe spiritual regression.

Keywords: Marriage, Violations, Marital Vows, Christian Couples; Urhoboland

### **Introduction**

Every civilization on Earth celebrates and practises marriage. In a similar spirit, each nation on the globe has laws that specify what marriage is and how it should be done and observed (Witte, 2012). Hebrew culture views marriage as both a concept and a way of life. This is due to the fact that the Bible approaches marriage from a Jewish perspective (Seidman, 2021). In Christendom, secular values, norms, and practises are those that are mandated by laws (Alobo & Nabiebu, 2022; Otu, & Nabiebu, 2022), conventions, traditions, and culture. Sacred values, norms, and practises are those that are mandated by the holy Bible. The admonition that a believer should not stick to the pattern of this world serves as evidence that the holy exists among the secular for the purpose of evangelization (Rom 12:2a). The contrary, however, is true in today's culture. The holy principles, traditions, and practises of marriage have frequently come under attack from secularism and postmodernism (Moghissi, 1999). Many Christians are eschewing traditional marital norms and practises in

favour of secular attitudes and behaviours in today's culture, which is leading to an increase in divorce rates.

The research issues for this research are broken down into three main categories. They are: (1) a lack of research on what encourages or deters Christian couples in Urhoboland from honouring their marriage vows; (2) misunderstandings and uncertainty regarding the biblical foundation of Christian marriage vows; (3) Christian couples' ignorance of the meaning, content, and moral ramifications of their marriage vows; and (4) issues with enforcement, adherence, and post-marriage management by couples and the Church. There hasn't been any study done on what encourages or dissuades Christians in Urhoboland from honouring their marriage vows. The current study is therefore interested in seeing how steadfastly Christian couples maintain certain marital vows in Urhoboland.

Most academics and Christians reject the scriptural foundation of Christian marriage vows because of misunderstandings and uncertainties surrounding them (Hanegraaff, 2012). The breach of the marriage promise is attributed to Christian couples' lack of understanding of its moral significance, meaning, and components. Many individuals don't realise that marriage is a contract, particularly Christian ones; thus, it's frequently handled carelessly. Those who enter into marriage vows in order to bind such contracts are also unaware of the moral repercussions. These factors have contributed to the majority of Christian marriages experiencing significant challenges, such as dissolution or divorce.

Couples and the Church both have issues with the enforcement, adherence, and administration of marital vows after marriage (Braithwaite & Baxter, 1995). Couples no longer have a moral responsibility to uphold the commitment, and the church is failing in its obligations to support married people in continuing to do so (Ottuh, 2021). Couples who break their marital vows run the danger of suffering more serious repercussions. A marital vow breach would be unable to "have and retain," as it is stated in the vow. One has violated the marital oath if they start dating someone else outside of their marriage. The majority of Christian couples in Urhoboland experience these issues often. Many husbands and wives have passed away as a result of the terrible repercussions, which are nearly unavoidable, particularly as a result of adultery. Physical violence is yet another illustration of a marital promise being broken. It is a breach of the vows "to love and adore" when a partner has a pattern of physically assaulting his or her spouse, which is most often the case with certain men and women.

If a spouse is often abused, it is impossible to claim to love that person. Emotional abuse is a form of marriage vow breach that includes verbal abuse, sexual denial, and a lack of compassion. Given the aforementioned, it is not surprising that, despite a wide range of related issues and subjects that fascinate the mind, such as death, joy and pain, happiness and sorrow, love and hatred, and so on, the current study has chosen to highlight and morally assess the recurrent incident of marital vow violation among Christian couples in Urhoboland.

## **Research Methods**

Analytical and phenomenological methods were used in the investigation. In order to do this, a systematic questionnaire and unstructured oral interviews were used to gauge respondents' opinions on the breaking of marriage vows among Christian couples in Urhoboland. In order to address the challenges in the survey setting and to evaluate the situations involving marital vow breaches in various scenarios, representative samples of small groups of individuals are utilised in survey research. In this sense, 12 churches in 6 local government regions were chosen (Ethiope East, Ethiope West, Udu, Ughelli North, Ughelli South and Sapele Local Government Areas). Due to the flexibility of survey designs, which allow for a wide range of data gathering techniques, including participant observation, interviews, and questionnaires, the phenomenological and analytical methodologies were employed.

## **The Research Design**

In this paper, the survey design was employed. This design can be used by a researcher to investigate several subjects. There are other occurrences as well, like vast populations of people. Because there are so many representative samples, it is both appropriate and economical because it enables generalisations to be made about a population that is too big and diverse to analyse all at once. In order to ascertain people's opinions on the subject of marriage vow breaches and abuses among Christian couples in Urhoboland, the current study used a survey design.

In survey research, small or large groups of people are selected from representative samples. The researcher may be interested in examining the entire population to identify the characteristics of that demographic. For the goal of addressing the issues pertinent to the survey setting and evaluating the instances of marriage vow breaches in various scenarios, the features of a large population are also significant in this context. The status of Christian spouses is also investigated in the research region. This approach was chosen because survey designs' flexibility enables the use of a variety of data gathering techniques, including participant observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Surveys are designed using questionnaires.

## ***Study Environment***

According to Ottuh and Erhabor (2018), the Urhobo people inhabit Delta State in the Niger Delta region of Nigeria. Christian couples in Urhoboland, Delta State, Nigeria, participated in the research. In the Ethiope East, Ethiope West, Udu, Ughelli North, Ughelli South, and Udu Local Government Areas—where Urhoboland is located in Delta State—the research focused on Christian couples according to their religious denominations. Urhoboland is a region in Africa. According to religion, the majority of inhabitants in the local government areas of Ethiope East, Ethiope West, Udu, Ughelli North, Ughelli South, and Udu

are Christians. Government employees, farmers, politicians, traders, craftsmen, fishermen/women, and businessmen/women make up the majority of the population.

The researcher was drawn to this area because of its closeness to one of the region's most wealthy neighbourhoods as well as its geographic placement for the study. As a consequence, this will enhance the completeness of the research activities monitoring to assure the validity of the research topics and responders, including the study's dependability.

### ***Sample And Sampling Techniques***

To identify the abuses and breaches of marriage vows among couples, stratified random sampling was used in the study. Randomization is the process through which each person in a group is given a different number. There is an equal opportunity for the targeted population to be selected. This is the sample distribution by local government area for the administration of the questionnaire:

Table 1. Sample And Sampling

<b>S/No</b>	<b>LGA</b>	<b>Church Sampled</b>	<b>Church Denomination</b>	<b>Number of Persons Sampled</b>
1.	Ethiope East	Mount Zion Baptist Church, Abraka	Baptist	50
2.	Ethiope East	Assemblies of God Church, Ovu	Pentecostal	50
3.	Ethiope West	Winners' Chapel, Oghara-Junction	Pentecostal	50
4.	Ethiope West	St. Peters Anglican Church, Jesse-Town	Anglican	50
5.	Udu	Church of God Mission, Otor-Udu	Pentecostal	50
6.	Udu	Seventh-Day Adventist Church, Aladja	Evangelical	50
7.	Uvwie	Ufuoma Baptist Church, Effurun	Baptist	50
8.	Uvwie	Flocks of Christ Mission, Enerhen	Pentecostal	50
9.	Ughelli South	Methodist Church, Out-Jeremi	Methodist	50
10	Ughelli South	Celestial Church of Christ, Ughelli	African Independent Church	50
11.	Ughelli North	Christian Deeper Bible Church, Ughelli	Pentecostal	50
12	Ughelli North	Redeemed Christian Church of God, Agbarho	Pentecostal	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>600</b>

### ***Instrument For Data Collection***

A questionnaire will be the only thing utilised in this investigation. This marital adjustment scale questionnaire has two parts: Part One and Part Two. One mainly focused on the respondents' demographic or personal characteristic statuses. In order to collect information based on the general traits of the individuals, this part had seven (7) variables. The second part of the questionnaire evaluated issues like the use of the Likert scale to evaluate respondents' answers to the posed questions. There were six parts and a total of 30 questions in part two. Using a three-point Likert scale, the couples gave the statements their ratings.

### ***Method Of Data Collection***

With the aid of research assistants, the researcher administered the study's instruments to the designated respondents in the study region. Only those who could read and write offered this aid. Several persons received the surveys. There are 100 questions for each local government. The researcher and research assistants went the numerous churches that were the focus of their study, and while there, questionnaires were given out. During the procedure, respondents were encouraged to ask questions.

The respondents were given the option to fill out the surveys whenever it was convenient after the religious sessions. Despite this, most surveys were filled out with one of the three choices using the "Agree (A), Disagree (DA), and Undecided (UD)". Thus, each item on the questionnaire or checklist had to be completed and returned in a timely manner.

### ***Method of Data Analysis***

The approach used to analyse the data obtained using the study's devices is a straightforward percentage computation method. The following % statistical approach was used to examine the data:

$$\frac{100\% \times \text{Number of Response}}{\text{Total Respondents}}$$

### ***Data Presentation, Results and Discussion***

#### **Demographic Data**

This part largely focused on the demographic or personal details of the respondents to the survey's questions (questions 1–7).

**Table 2. Gender of respondents**

Variable	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Male	301	63.6
Female	172	36.4
Total	473	100

Table 2 reveals that both male and female respondents took part in the survey, with the biggest number of male respondents (301), or 63.6% of the population, making up the entire sample.

**Table 3. Age of respondents**

Variable	<i>F</i>	%
18-30yrs	198	41.9
31-45yrs	223	47.1
46-60yrs	52	11.0
61yrs above	-	-
Total	473	100

According to Table. 3, there were more than 223 respondents who participated in the survey and were between the ages of 31 and 45 (representing 47.1% of the total population). The responders between the ages of 18 and 30 come in second, with 41.9% of the total. No one over the age of 61 responded to the poll.

**Table 4. Formal education of respondents**

Variable	<i>F</i>	%
Primary	23	4.9
Secondary	126	26.6
Post –Secondary	214	45.2
No Education	110	23.3
Total	473	100

The respondents’ level of education is shown in Table 4. The table reveals that 214 (45.2%) survey participants have post-secondary education credentials, while 126 respondents—or 26.6% of the population—had just secondary education credentials. Those with only a basic school education come in second (23,3%), followed by those with no formal education (4,9%).

**Table 5. Respondents’ number of years in marriage**

Variable	<i>F</i>	%
2-10yrs	151	31.9
11-20yrs	174	36.8
21-26yrs	120	25.4
27yrs above	28	5.9
Total	473	100

The marital backgrounds of the respondents are shown in Table 5. The biggest proportion of respondents (36.8%) have been married for between 11 and 20 years, followed by those who have been married for between 2 and 10 years (31.9%), while those who have been married for between 21 and 26 years make up 25.4% of the total. Here, findings from the examination

of answers to two questions on the idea of a marriage pledge in a Christian setting are given and analysed.

**Factors Responsible for Violations of Marital Vows**

The replies to questions 20–25 about the causes of marriage vow breaches among Christian couples in Urhoboland were given and examined in this paragraph.

**Table 6a. Factors responsible for marital vow violations**

Statement	A		D		UD	
	<i>F</i>	%	<i>F</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%
Inability to bear children can make couples violate their marital vows.	301	63.6	100	21.1	72	15.2
Illiteracy and ignorance on the part of one of the partners or both can lead to violation of marital vows.	211	44.6	254	53.7	8	1.7
Couple’s post-wedding experiences (Discovering of self and incompatibility after marriage) lead to violation of marital vows.	426	90.1	47	9.9	0	0
Denial of conjugal rights and privileges lead to violation of marital vows.	309	65.3	113	23.9	51	10.8
Peer-group and family influences lead to violation of marital vows.	226	47.9	237	50.1	10	2.1
Economic hardship and ill-health lead to violation of marital vows.	200	42.3	262	55.4	11	2.3

**Table 6b. Summary responses on factors responsible for marital vow violation**

Variable ( <i>v</i> )	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Agree	1673	58.9
Disagree	1013	35.7
Undecided	152	5.4
Total	2838	100

The degree of agreement and disagreement among Christians on the causes of marriage vow breaches is seen in Table 6a above. According to the summary in Table 6b, the proportion of respondents who agreed with all the claims is 58.9%, the proportion who disagreed is 35.7%, and the proportion who gave no response is 5.4%. The majority of respondents felt that, particularly in the Urhobo cultural and traditional environment, infertility might lead couples to break their marriage vows. Participants agree that failing to read and learn can result in one or both parties breaking their marriage vows. A couple’s post-wedding experiences, the denial of spousal conjugal rights and privileges, peer-group and familial pressures, poverty, and poor health are other contributing factors.

A marital infraction occurs when one spouse deserts the other under trying circumstances. Many couples split up because of sickness, destitution, job loss, or business failure. These partners are breaking the clause of the wedding vow that reads, “For better for

worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's sacred law," and I humbly seek your forgiveness. Adultery and divorce, which are both on the rise nowadays, violate the bond of marriage. The aforementioned point to a violation of the vows of marriage. There are other elements that are not highlighted here. Nonetheless, it is against the rules of one's marital vow to do any action that is detrimental to the wellbeing of one's spouse. Some people's lives just come to an end and get awful. Some could perceive it as achieving freedom from a taxing relationship. Broken marriages may signify various things to different individuals based on who was involved and what went wrong. If a spouse has a history of physically abusing their partner, who is frequently the husband, they are in violation of the vow to "love and cherish" them. If one repeatedly beats one's spouse to a pulp, one cannot claim to love that person. One runs the risk of suffering severe penalties if they do this.

This includes verbal abuse, sexual denial, negligence, and other types of emotional abuse. The commitment is violated when a wife verbally abuses her husband frequently or when a husband treats his wife and the rest of the family with extreme carelessness. When parties object to having sex, it is a violation of the marital oath. According to Ottuh and Jemegbe (2020) and Emina (2022), communication integrates human beings into their environment and brings about peaceful coexistence. Thus, when communication is absent among couples, they are bound to fall apart and have their marriage vows violated. Many marriages end in divorce because of one or more of these behaviours. Such conditions put the victim's life in danger, and in certain cases, actual fatalities have occurred. One's commitment to remain married is broken by any one of these behaviours.

One violates their marital vow when they routinely criticise their partner in front of family and friends or resort to blackmail to acquire what they want. This implies not watching your spouse's back. Rather, it is a plan to get rid of him or her. Another way that the marital pledge is broken is through infidelity; the vow's promise to "have and to hold" has been breached. If a couple dates someone else while they are still married, they have breached their marriage promise. Untimely deaths of spouses have been brought on by infidelity. Others go through professional failure, job loss, and health problems. Smart individuals shouldn't be surprised when their lovers pass away too soon since more and more couples are betraying their partners.

According to Tesch & Bekerian (2015), domestic violence is pervasive around the world but frequently goes unreported since it is a covert and concealed problem. Contrarily, the majority of research discovered that domestic violence was more common and to blame for divorce among those with low incomes. This is not meant to suggest that individuals with higher incomes are protected from abuse. As a result, the study looked at the prevalence of domestic violence among middle- and upper-class people as well as its origins, symptoms, and personalities. For the investigation, two equipment sets were used. The target group had a high prevalence of domestic violence, which had a detrimental impact on productivity and the emergence of HIV/AIDS, according to the study's findings. The study included strong

recommendations for implementing domestically and internationally binding agreements on women's rights, as well as lobbying campaigns employing the media, open forums, and seminars to alter societal attitudes about women.

Conservative Christians seem to be more in favour of divorce if a husband physically abuses his wife or if she fears for her safety, but not so much if her spouse verbally abuses her or breaks her spirit (Vaaler, et al., 2009). Physical violence has been demonstrated to be far less harmful to people's long-term health than chronic emotional abuse. Even there are instances when partners mastermind the kidnap of their fellow partners for the purpose of financial gain (Ottuh & Aitufe, 2014). A 2011 study funded by the National Institute of Mental Health and the National Institute on Drug Abuse revealed that our brain reacts in the same manner to physical pain and severe social rejection. On the other hand, physical wounds are more likely to recover. Injuries to the soul and spirit are often more severe and last longer.

Why should someone who is suffering from emotional abuse be told that they must stay married because verbal abuse is not severe enough to warrant a biblical divorce? Biblical counsellors should never suggest doing this. Most pastors and church leaders would be in favour of biblical separation if the same person's spouse often punched, kicked, or stabbed them. Who can tolerate a broken soul? asks the Bible, and careless words cut like a blade, according to Proverbs 12:18. A person who is stabbed with a sword or knife sustains serious, occasionally fatal injuries. According to the Bible, using careless words can have the same fatal consequences as being stabbed (Ottuh & Idjakpo, 2021). According to Proverbs 18:21, the mouth has the ability to both give and take life.

There seems to be a great deal of ambiguity around the definition of a covenant, as well as the divorce-related verse from Malachi 2 that is frequently misquoted. Roberts (2008) argues in her book, *Not under Bondage*, that God did not say, "I abhor divorce," nor did he condemn all types of divorce. Hence, we must no longer utter the proverb "God hates divorce." If we still need a motto, then this might be a better one: God hates treacherous divorce, but he does not detest disciplined divorce. Alternatively, to put it another way, her in-depth research demonstrates the existence of biblical grounds for divorce, among which is abuse.

Several biblical scholars disagree with the notion that the marriage covenant is a unilateral, one-sided commitment (Maclean, 2022). The core of a covenant can be found in a certain kind of relationship between individuals. According to Ottuh and Idjakpo (2021), this form of connection can be characterised by shared moral duties and obligations. As contrasted with just being friends, a covenant relationship requires a commitment to duty and action. In order to express this commitment, the Bible heavily relies on the word "faithfulness," which is employed in the context of a lasting relationship. To completely comprehend the many Old Testament (OT) regulations concerning matrimony and divorce, it is essential to remember that marriage was initially a covenant commitment. By exchanging solemn promises, a man and a woman created the covenant duties. When such promises were honoured, marriage was

good (Psalm 128; Proverbs 18:22); nevertheless, when those pledges were violated, marriage was cursed (Roberts, 2008).

Many covenant kinds are described in another source. According to Payne, marriage is a parity covenant according to OT scholarship (Hugenberger, 2014). A parity covenant is a contract in which two or more equal parties each make promises to the other. While each partner was supposed to uphold the covenant and their commitments, this did not always happen. If not, the pact was deemed void, violated, and useless. If someone breaks their commitment, serious repercussions might result. In Malachi, God detested it when husbands violated their covenant oath for trivial reasons (Sprinkle, 1997). When is a separation or divorce resulting from abuse permitted by the Bible? The majority of individuals would concur that chronic adultery is a biblical reason for divorce, but not all infidelity-related marriages should result in divorce. For instance, it has been seen that relationships may be repaired and rebuilt when regret is expressed and forgiveness is offered. God consequently rejoices greatly and is highly regarded. Separation or divorce should not be pursued only for religious reasons.

Last but not least, leaving might lead to the marital oath being broken. When one partner deserts them—either physically or emotionally—the abandoned spouse is not obligated to maintain their vows, or the marriage that was intended to be a blessing instead turns into a burden. A marriage may end up feeling empty and cease to embody God’s ideal of “oneness,” regardless of the cause of divorce. Marriage is, after all, intended to unite people rather than keep them apart. If you notice that despite your best efforts to resolve disagreements, you are feeling more and more alone in your marriage, consider whether your partner has given up on the responsibility to be “one” with you. God created marriage to be a blessing, yet because of our shortcomings, it frequently turns into an arduous burden (McQueeney, 2009). It was not God’s intention, and there are biblical reasons for divorce when a marriage has broken down. If you are a Christian in a turbulent or dangerous marriage, speak with a family lawyer who is a Christian and who shares your views. A Christian attorney might be of assistance to you as you explore your alternatives on a legal and spiritual level.

***Effects Of Marital Vows Violations On Couples, Families And Society***

Results of the analysis of responses to questions 26 – 31 are dealt with here.

**Table 7a. Effects of marital vow violations**

Statement	A		D		UD	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Divorce or separation is a resultant effect of violation of Christian marriage vows.	423	89.4	50	10.6	0	0
When Christian couples violate their marital vows, the result is marital discord which leads to feelings of despair, worry and high levels of tension, anxiety, and mental depression.	452	95.6	21	4.4	0	0
When Christian couples violate their marital	396	83.7	74	15.6	3	0.6

vows, it results to antisocial behaviour and maladjustment in their children.						
As a result of Christian couples violating their marriage vows, both partners suffer extreme spiritual liabilities.	226	47.9	237	50.1	10	2.1
Christian couples who break their marriage vows can feel a sense of autonomy that allows them to be free of undesirable relationships, heal from their grievances, and go on with their life as a result of breaking their marriage.	139	29.4	262	55.4	72	15.2

**Table 7a. Summary responses on the effects of marital violations**

Variable ( <i>v</i> )	Frequency ( <i>f</i> )	Percentage (%)
Agree	1636	69.2
Disagree	644	27.2
Undecided	85	3.6
Total	2365	100

The degree to which people agree or disagree with the assertions about the consequences of breaking a marriage promise is shown in Table 7 above. According to Table 7b's summary, respondents who agreed with every item made up 69.2% of the sample, those who disagreed made up 27.2%, and those who did not react at all made up 3.6%.

The majority of respondents believed that, particularly in the Urhobo cultural and traditional environment, failure to have children might lead couples to break their marriage vows. Participants agree that failing to read and learn can result in one or both parties breaking their marriage vows. A couple's post-wedding experiences, the denial of spousal conjugal rights and privileges, peer-group and familial pressures, poverty, and poor health are other contributing factors. This supports Ottuh and Erhabor's (2022) assertion that any human action that violates the rights of other beings is anti-human. A marital infraction occurs when a spouse deserts their marriage during a tough moment. Many couples split up because of sickness, destitution, job loss, or business failure.

Such partners violate the wedding vow's provision that reads, "For better for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part, according to God's holy ordinance; and thereto I plight thee my troth," and I hereby beg your pardon. Adultery and divorce, which are both on the rise nowadays, violate the bond of marriage. The aforementioned point to a violation of the vows of marriage. There are other elements that are not highlighted here. Nonetheless, it is against the rules of one's marital vow to do any action that is detrimental to the wellbeing of one's spouse. Some people's lives just come to an end and get awful. Some could perceive it as achieving freedom from a taxing relationship. Broken marriages may signify various things to different individuals based on who was involved and what went wrong (Taylor, 2017).

When two individuals officially pledge their commitment to each other's wellbeing, marriage is a covenant. A promise made by the parties is as enforceable against them as a

covenant. A law is not merely enforceable; those who breach it, whether on purpose or accidentally, face substantial repercussions (Otu & Mohammed, 2009; Otu & Enyia, 2015; Otu & Nabiebu, 2022). Simply explained, divorce is a legal process that releases both spouses from the duties that the covenant imposed. To be clear, sin breaks the covenant, not divorce; divorce just gets rid of the rules that were part of the agreement. Covenant infractions are causing significant harm to the west. All other virtues, such as endurance, honesty, bravery, and patience, are destroyed when a promise is broken (Ottuh & Idjakpo, 2021). Marriage vows have serious repercussions when broken. There is a lot of mental, physical, social, professional, family, and situational stress that follows any reason for breaking a marriage as a result of a marriage vow breach. The opinions of respondents on the implications or penalties of breaking a marriage promise are listed in the table below.

Participants concur that Christian married couples who divorce have a feeling of autonomy that enables them to be free from unhappy marriages, get over their hurts, and go on with their lives. Due to breaking their marital vows, both couples experienced severe spiritual regression. Marriage vow violations result in divorce or separation. History informs us that the height of immorality occurred at the same time as the fall of the Roman Empire. It is unlawful and unethical to break a promise, so we must stop sugar-coating injustice (Dorothy & Otu, 2012; Otu, 2018).

Divorce is the worst form of covenant break since it will curse subsequent generations (Hahn, 2009). As it undermines the basis of marriage as a whole, it ultimately leads people to question whether they should get married at all. Violations of the marriage bond ignite a fire that burns for years. It also breeds bitterness, anger, fury, rejection, and suffering, which erode the foundation of the marriage both now and in the future. A strong country is built on the foundation of marriage, which is the centre of the family (Dooley, 2016). Covenant violations weaken morals, and a nation's principles make it or shatter it.

For instance, the United States (US) has the highest divorce rate in the West (Mark, Janssen, & Milhausen, 2011). The most terrible fact is how many more people attend church in the US than in most other western nations. This suggests that the church's current American stance on morality is fundamentally incorrect. Simply put, efforts to draw attention to the sin of covenant violation and to compel the congregation and the clergy to repent have failed. Loving someone while ignoring their crime has no redeeming qualities. Adultery takes away from a good marriage's benefits. Every time adultery decimates a family, society as a whole is weakened (Lieberman, 1988). The country as a whole is not more powerful than the households that make it up. Everything that devastates a home also devastates a nation. The church is harmed when adultery destroys a family.

In collaborating with the argument of Ottuh and Aitufe (2014), it could also be said that a diminishing church is a sign that society no longer has a strong moral foundation. When starting an adulterous relationship, one should consider the negative effects of their actions. Every Christian parent desires and prays for the stability of their children's marriages (Marks, 2005). The pain that a married couple goes through when one of them violates their marriage

vows by having an affair is excruciating. They would be unwilling to talk about it. They will still love their child even if they are the guilty party, but it hurts. The children lost their secure household because a parent violated the wedding vows. It is odd that God places this at the top of His priority list while He says in Malachi that He detests divorce. He says that He combined them to bring out a “godly seed.” In order to give them the best opportunity of becoming godly adults in the future, Jesus wanted children to grow up in stable, godly households. Infidelity breaks the marriage vows, which harms the children. Everything that affects the primary family unit has much larger reverberations.

## **Conclusion**

This research has addressed the issue of marriage vow abuses and breaches and aims to inform the Christian communities in Urhoboland and Nigeria of the risks associated with doing so. Additionally, it is intended that the results would be used by church marriage and family counselors as tools to assist married couples. By shedding light on attitudes, warning signals, and methods for resolving marital issues, this research may also be helpful to educational planners and designers. This sort of research is important because it may ultimately foster stable marriages among Christians. Teachers and students at theological institutions may be able to guarantee that marriage vows are properly kept by putting the study’s results into practice, helping church couples sustain stable marriages. Happy marriages have a tendency to flow with the pastor and support the pastor’s job.

The most significant breach of any contract that has ever occurred is probably the divorce brought on by breaking a marriage promise. Marriage vows are promises given to a spouse in front of God, family, and friends. It is a system that God established at the beginning of time and has persisted for countless years. This promise or vow has nevertheless been ignored, even in Christian marriages, since it has been seen to be of little importance under stressful circumstances.

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