

# Reference Document

"Got My Son Out. Lost My Wife."

Every Claim, Source, and Verification Status

## How to Use This Document

Each entry below identifies a specific factual claim made in the video, the source it is based on, where to verify it, and any notes on confidence level. Claims are organized in the order they appear in the video.

### Verification levels:

- **PRIMARY** — Sourced from official Watchtower publications (including internal manuals like *Shepherd the Flock of God*), court rulings, legislation, peer-reviewed research, or direct first-person accounts from named individuals. Primary sources can stand on their own.
- **SECONDARY** — Sourced from established cult-research and advocacy organizations, academic researchers, reputable investigative journalism, or legal-resource sites. Secondary sources support claims and are most defensible when paired with a primary or another independent secondary.

Some statements in the video are clearly framed as personal analysis or commentary drawing on forty years inside the organization. Those are marked as editorial opinion rather than factual claims requiring external verification.



## SECTION 1: The Reddit Post

**Claim: The story discussed in this video — a man whose son left the organization but whose wife left the marriage, returning with a JW friend as a chaperone to collect her belongings — was originally posted on the r/exjw subreddit.**

- **Source:** Original post titled "Got my son out, lost my wife" on r/exjw
- **URL:** [https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1rohjf3/got\\_my\\_son\\_out\\_lost\\_my\\_wife/](https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1rohjf3/got_my_son_out_lost_my_wife/)
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — The source post itself, published by the original author on a public forum.
- **Note:** All details about the OP, his wife, his son, and the circumstances of the separation are drawn directly from this post and its comment thread.

**Claim: The abbreviation PIMI (Physically In, Mentally In) is community vocabulary used on r/exjw to describe a Jehovah's Witness who is both attending meetings and fully believing. Related terms include PIMO (Physically In, Mentally Out) and POMO (Physically Out, Mentally Out).**

- **Source:** r/exjw community glossary; widely used across exJW discourse
- **URL:** <https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/wiki/index/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Community-established terminology; widely recognized in former-member literature and cult-research contexts.

## SECTION 2: Fear, Obligation, and Guilt

**Claim: FOG — Fear, Obligation, and Guilt — is a well-documented psychological framework used by high-control groups to retain members. It is part of the BITE Model of Authoritarian Control developed by cult-research expert Steven Hassan.**

- **Source:** Steven Hassan, PhD — BITE Model of Authoritarian Control, Freedom of Mind Resource Center
- **URL:** <https://freedomofmind.com/cult-mind-control/bite-model/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Established cult-research organization. BITE (Behavior, Information, Thought, Emotional control) has been referenced in peer-reviewed research and academic dissertations, including Hassan's own 2020 doctoral dissertation.
- **Key quote / Direct text:** *"Instill fear, such as fear of: ... Losing one's salvation ... Leaving or being shunned by the group ... Promote feelings of guilt or unworthiness."*

**Claim: Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Armageddon is imminent, that the majority of humanity will be destroyed, and that survival depends on being in good standing with Jehovah's organization.**

- **Source:** Watchtower publications — repeated and foundational teaching across decades of literature
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Core doctrine taught continuously in official Watchtower publications, convention programs, and in the bedrock publication *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*.
- **Note:** This doctrine is the central fear component of the FOG mechanism as it applies to Jehovah's Witnesses specifically.

**Claim: In Watchtower theology, baptism represents a "dedication vow" to Jehovah that is lifelong and binding. Walking away is explicitly framed as breaking a vow made to God.**

- **Source:** "What You Vow, Pay" — The Watchtower, April 2017 study edition
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/watchtower-study-april-2017/what-you-vow-pay/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower doctrinal publication.
- **Key quote / Direct text:** *"There is no way to undo a dedication vow, taking back what we promised God. ... From that day forward, 'he belongs to Jehovah.'"*

**Claim: Jehovah's Witnesses baptize minors, including children as young as early adolescence, and hold them to the adult dedication vow.**

- **Source:** "Christian Baptism and Your Dedication to God" — Bible Teach book, jw.org
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/bible-teach/christian-baptism-dedication-to-god/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower teaching publication.
- **Note:** Supporting secondary analysis of Watchtower's historical baptism practices and the explicit youth-baptism endorsement is documented by JWfacts.com.

### **SECTION 3: Marriage, Authority, and the Organization**

**Claim: Elders in a Jehovah's Witness congregation are authorized to counsel a married Witness privately, including advising on whether a spouse is a spiritual danger, without the spouse being present.**

- **Source:** *Shepherd the Flock of God* — the internal elders' manual published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc. (current edition circulated to appointed elders only)
- **URL:** <https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/shepherd-the-flock-of-god.php>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — The manual itself is the governing document for elder conduct. The JWFACTS link provides analysis of the manual's contents alongside excerpts; the manual is not distributed publicly.
- **Note:** The video explicitly notes that the behavior described is not itself written as a directive in the manual. The claim is about the institutional culture that surrounds the written rules — a distinction made directly in the narration.

**Claim: The observation that the "true husband" in a Witness marriage is the Governing Body — i.e., that loyalty to the organization supersedes loyalty to a spouse — was raised by a commenter on the r/exjw thread.**

- **Source:** Comment on the r/exjw post "Got my son out, lost my wife"
- **URL:** [https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1rohjf3/got\\_my\\_son\\_out\\_lost\\_my\\_wife/](https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1rohjf3/got_my_son_out_lost_my_wife/)
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Direct citation of a comment on the source post.

**Claim: The observation that a non-Witness spouse can be painted as spiritually dangerous to justify a Witness spouse's emotional or physical withdrawal is an editorial interpretation drawn from forty years of firsthand experience inside the organization and from repeated patterns observed on r/exjw.**

- **Source:** Creator analysis / editorial opinion — not a factual claim requiring external verification
- **Verification:** N/A
- **Note:** This is framed in the video as the creator's own reading of the pattern, not a sourced factual claim.

**Claim: The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society has existed since 1881, giving the organization over a century of institutional practice.**

- **Source:** Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania — founding date 1881
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/jw-yearbook/yearbook-2017/part-1-north-america/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Self-reported and corroborated across Watchtower's own historical yearbooks and publications.

## SECTION 4: Divorce Doctrine

**Claim: The only scripturally approved ground for divorce — the only one that allows a Witness to remarry and remain in good standing — is sexual immorality (often cited by Witnesses as "adultery" or porneia).**

- **Source:** "What Does the Bible Say About Divorce and Separation?" — *God's Love* book, jw.org
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/books/gods-love/bible-says-divorce-separation/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower publication directly stating this policy.
- **Key quote / Direct text:** "*Jehovah grants the innocent mate the right to decide whether to remain with the guilty partner or to seek a divorce. ... Jehovah hates adultery and sexual immorality. ... he allows it as grounds for divorce.*"

**Claim: Watchtower has reaffirmed in recent Questions From Readers guidance that a Witness who divorces without scriptural grounds and then remarries is considered to have entered an adulterous marriage and would face judicial action.**

- **Source:** "Questions From Readers" — The Watchtower, April 2022 study edition
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/magazines/watchtower-study-april-2022/questions-from-readers-april-2022-2/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower doctrinal publication.
- **Key quote / Direct text:** *"A man who divorces his wife without Scriptural grounds and then marries another person without being Scripturally free to do so would be subject to judicial action on the charge of adultery."*

**Claim: The "unspoken apostate clause" — the understanding that leaving a spouse who has been labeled an apostate is treated as acceptable or even virtuous — was raised by the OP as his own read of the informal Witness culture around divorce.**

- **Source:** r/exjw OP, post titled "Got my son out, lost my wife"
- **URL:** [https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1rohjf3/got\\_my\\_son\\_out\\_lost\\_my\\_wife/](https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1rohjf3/got_my_son_out_lost_my_wife/)
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — The OP's own stated observation on the source post.
- **Note:** This is specifically described in the video as an unwritten informal understanding, not an official Watchtower policy. No published Watchtower document lists apostasy as a scriptural ground for divorce.

## SECTION 5: Watchtower's Public-Facing Messaging

**Claim: Watchtower's public-facing literature claims that Jehovah's Witnesses build families up rather than break them apart.**

- **Source:** "Do Jehovah's Witnesses Break Up Families or Build Them Up?" — jw.org FAQ
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/families/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Watchtower's official public-facing position as stated on jw.org.
- **Key quote / Direct text:** *"As Jehovah's Witnesses, we work to build up families, both our own and those of our neighbors. We respect God as the Creator of the family arrangement."*

**Claim: Watchtower publishes study books and public brochures teaching family unity, including the *Happy Family* brochure directed at both members and the general public.**

- **Source:** "Look to God for a Happy Marriage" — Happy Family brochure, jw.org
- **URL:** <https://www.jw.org/en/library/brochures/happy-family/god-happy-marriage/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — Official Watchtower publication.

**Claim: *Shepherd the Flock of God* is the internal manual used by Jehovah's Witness congregation elders, covering judicial matters, appointments, and congregation procedure.**

- **Source:** *Shepherd the Flock of God* — internal elders' manual, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.
- **URL:** <https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/shepherd-the-flock-of-god.php>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — The internal manual itself. The JWFACTS link provides analysis and contextual excerpts; the manual is distributed only to appointed elders.
- **Note:** The video makes the explicit point that many cultural practices — including how family members respond to doubts or apostasy — are NOT written in the manual as directives, but function as an understood culture that surrounds the written rules.

## SECTION 6: Additional Supporting Sources

## JWFacts — Watchtower Quotes on Divorce

- **Source:** JWfacts.com — research archive by Paul Grundy
- **URL:** <https://jwfacts.com/watchtower/quotes/divorce.php>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Established researcher archive of Watchtower literature with direct citations to original publications.
- **Contains:** A compiled history of Watchtower's divorce and remarriage teaching across multiple decades, with direct quotations from official publications.

## AvoidJW — Watchtower's New Light on Divorce and Remarriage

- **Source:** AvoidJW.org — investigative analysis
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/opinion/watchtowers-new-light-on-divorce-and-remarriage/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Established advocacy and analysis site covering Watchtower policy changes, with citations to primary publications.
- **Contains:** Detailed analysis of Watchtower's 2021 Announcements to Bodies of Elders and the 2022 Questions From Readers regarding unscriptural divorce and remarriage.

## Freedom of Mind — Full BITE Model PDF

- **Source:** Steven Hassan, PhD — Freedom of Mind Resource Center
- **URL:** <https://freedomofmind.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/BITE-model.pdf>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — Downloadable reference document detailing all four BITE components (Behavior, Information, Thought, Emotional control).
- **Contains:** The complete BITE Model checklist, including the full breakdown of how fear, guilt, and obligation operate as emotional control mechanisms in high-control groups.

## r/exjw — Community Resource and Discussion Forum

- **Source:** r/exjw subreddit — community of former and current Jehovah's Witnesses
- **URL:** <https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — The largest online gathering of former-member testimony. Individual posts vary in verifiability; the subreddit functions as a community-sourced witness archive.
- **Contains:** Thousands of firsthand accounts of disfellowshipping, shunning, custody battles, and the patterns described in this video. The specific post discussed in this video can be found at the URL cited in Section 1.



If you spot a broken link or believe a source has been misattributed, let me know in the comments and I will update this document. Accuracy matters to me. Thank you for taking the time to check the work.