



## Covenant Love

Community Study Guide: **Mark 10:1-16** –Week of February 18th, 2024

### 1. Marriage is Joined Together by God

The Pharisees once more confront Jesus, to try and test Him. They have hostile intentions and seek to trap Him. The method to trap Him? Asking Him if it is lawful for a man to divorce his wife. The hope is to pit Jesus against the law given by Moses; to put Jesus at odds with Moses. Jesus counters their question with a question. He requires the Pharisees to articulate what the law allows for. They tell Jesus that Moses allowed them to give a wife a certificate of divorce, and send her away. As Jesus had done many times before, He corrected the framing the Pharisees had placed on the law. Moses wrote the ability to give a certificate of divorce, not as a concession (or a way that marriage was to be viewed) but as a consequence. In other words, divorce is just an outcome of sin and not something that is within the design of the marriage covenant. Giving a certificate of divorce is not complying with God's law, as much as it is affirming the reality of the situation: that the hard-hearted sinfulness of man had already destroyed the marriage through adultery. Moses had given divorce as an alternative to death. Divorce is a consequence of sin, not part of God's commands or instruction. Jesus then further clarifies this point by pointing to the Garden of Eden. He reminds the Pharisees that from the very beginning, God specifically designed men and women for a sexual marital covenant. God joins them together, creating them for His purpose. It is His divine decree and direction that creates this union, and man should not attempt to override God.

### 2. Adultery is Breaching of the Martial Covenant

The disciples again come to Jesus after He taught them to get a greater understanding of what He had said. This

#### DISCUSSION GOALS

##### Head

Marriage is a sacred design given by God for the flourishing of His creation. It is a covenant between a man and a woman before God. It is designed to only be separated by God, when He calls His children home through death. There is no righteous means by which this covenant can be undone, only properly ended by the Lord

##### Heart

We must press forward by sacrificially loving one another. We must guard our hearts, staying true to what the Lord has called us to. Christ has shown us the example of faithfulness in marriage that we should focus our hearts on. We do so realizing we are forgiven and no longer condemned.

##### Hands

Love your spouse as Christ has loved you. Keep yourself from temptation, knowing that God's commands purity, sacrifice, and faithfulness.

helps to reinforce how radical and outside the norm Jesus' teaching was. Ultimately, Jesus wants the disciples to properly comprehend the what and why of divorce. Divorce comes when someone sinfully acts and breaks the covenant that they committed to. The divorce is the outcome of the broken covenant. It is not a tool of the law, but a formal recognition that the law has been broken. This is why even God uses the analogy of divorcing Israel after they have committed adultery against Him. Jesus further emphasizes, however, that divorce can only come after the adultery, after the destroying of the covenant.

### **3. God Loves Humanity, Therefore Jesus Loves Children**

One of the results of the divine gift of marriage is that it brings about children. Furthermore, Jesus shows us His love and value of children, by bringing them to Him, and blessing them. We are told that these children are a model for us, in that we should receive the kingdom of heaven in the same way a child would. To receive the kingdom of heaven, one must allow oneself to be given it.

## Read Mark 10:1-16

1. What are the essential and non-negotiable qualities that constitute marriage? Where/how does scripture articulate those qualities? How does our text inform us regarding marriage?
2. In the passage, there are two questions posed. Considering the passage and the sermon, how would you answer those two questions (Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife & what did Moses command)?
3. Consider the framing of the topic given by the Pharisees and by Christ. How are they different? What was the perspective of the Pharisees missing, and how did Jesus correct that framing?
4. Jesus asserts that “because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment.” What does He mean? How does it change the way we consider the implication or purpose of divorce?
5. Pastor Jan mentioned that “Divorce in God’s law is a manifestation of God’s holy wrath against sin.” What does this mean? Where do we see an example in scripture of the holy use of divorce (Isaiah 50:1, Jeremiah 3:8)?
6. **Read Verse 14-15** What is the meaning of Jesus’ response to the disciples? How are we to apply this to our lives?
7. How has the Word of God changed your understanding of marriage, adultery, and divorce?