

MARRIAGE

-God's Invention & Intention-
Matthew 19:1-12

37: **MARRIAGE: God's Invention & Intention** (Mt 19:1-12)

Some say marriage is a man-made establishment that can be altered to whatever mankind desires. Jesus had a different view. Discover why God created marriage and how marriage is intended to be a living example to the faithfulness of Jesus & His followers

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teachingnotes

Is Divorce Allowed for Any Reason?

Matthew 19:1-3 (NIV) When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. Some **Pharisees** came to him **to test him**. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"

Jesus left His home region (**Galilee**) & headed toward **Judea**, to lay down His life in Jerusalem for the sins of the world (Jn 1:29).

Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason? The Pharisees are hoping to *find a crack in the theology of Jesus* and turn others against Him. They had been plotting how they might kill Jesus (Mt 12:14), and this is one of several times they came to test & trap Him (Mt 16:1), as they believed He was sent by the devil (Mt 9:34; 12:14). *They probably knew that Jesus would likely take the conservative route (like John the Baptist who called Herod an adulterer (Lk 3:19) - costing him his life.*

The answer to the question about divorce was hotly debated at the time because of a term that is found in Deuteronomy (written by the prophet Moses, 1400 years earlier).

Deuteronomy 24:1 (NIV) If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and **he writes her a certificate of divorce**, gives it to her and sends her from his house...

In Jesus' day there was a long standing controversy over what something **displeasing** or **indecent** meant. The **Mishnah** (collection of oral and written traditions including rabbinical teachings relevant to the time of Jesus), mentions at least 3 differing views on marriage & divorce.¹

- **Rabbi Hillel** taught **displeasing** meant one could divorce a wife for spoiling a meal.
- **Rabbi Aquiba** said a man could divorce his wife if he found someone prettier than her.
- The more conservative **Rabbi Shammai** said divorce was only an option because of the act of adultery.

Jesus Points to the Scriptures

Matthew 19:4-6 (NIV) Haven't you **read**," he replied, "that at the beginning **the Creator 'made them male and female,'** and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be **united** to his wife, and **the two will become one flesh?** So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore **what God has joined together, let no one separate.**"

Jesus points the Pharisees to the Scriptures, asking: "**Haven't you read**" about **God** creating 2 genders - **male** and **female**, so that **the two will become one** (physically, emotionally, and spiritually)? The sex act was invented and intended for marriage between 1 man and 1 woman - where **two become one flesh** during the course of their 1 lifetime.

Therefore - Jesus concludes - **what God has joined together, let no one separate.**

God invented & intended Marriage to Unite one man and one woman until death.

The New Testament teaches that **Jesus is God the Son**, who created all things (Jn 1:3 & Col 1:16) - includes *people & marriage*.

¹ Jacob Neusner, The Mishnah : A New Translation (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1988), 487.

Moses vs. Jesus?

Matthew 19:7-9 (NIV) "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that **anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.**"

While the Old Testament punishment for **adultery** was death by stoning ([Deut 22:22](#)), ending the marriage & allowing the living spouse to remarry, stoning adulterers was not the practice of the Jews of Jesus' day, under Roman occupation.² In the case of **sexual immorality** when the offending spouse still lives, Jesus says the offended spouse could **remarry**.

The man who **divorces his wife** *without Biblical grounds* and **marries another** **commits adultery**. *How could that be? If God doesn't recognize the previous marriage as being over, then intimacy with another is **sexually immoral** and that person **commits ADULTERY**- even if their 'marriage' is recognized by civil authorities.*

🔍 Beyond **ADULTERY**, Paul mentions **ABANDONMENT** as an acceptable reason for divorce & remarriage ([1 Cor 7:15](#)), and many think that Jesus would certainly allow divorce & remarriage in the case of **ABUSE** of a spouse.

🔗 But rather than finding loopholes for people to find a way out of their marriages, Jesus is reminding people that **God invented & intended Marriage to Unite one man and one woman until death**.

Jesus is not focused on *why a person might get out of marriage*, but *why a person should stay IN marriage*. The first reaction for the follower of Jesus should always be attempting to RESTORE RELATIONSHIP, just as God does with us when we have sinned against Him.

Marriage is NOT a relationship to be taken lightly. **God invented & intended Marriage to Unite one man and one woman until death**.

Evidently, *even the disciples of Jesus struggled with His answer*. Just like us, their culture had infected their views.

Better to NOT Marry?

Matthew 19:10-12 (NIV) The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are **eunuchs** who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. **The one who can accept this should accept it.**"

The disciples of Jesus are so blown away by Jesus' expectation of marriage that they conclude, "*Then maybe...it is better not to marry.*" And surprisingly, Jesus agrees. If people are going to dismiss God's intention for marriage and leave when things get tough, then maybe some should never get married.

- Those **born as eunuchs** are those with person born with misshapen private parts.
 - Those **made a eunuch by others** were castrated by another (e.g. men who protected royal women).
 - Those who **choose to live like eunuchs** are people who choose not to marry & to abstain from sexual activity throughout their lives for the sake of furthering the **kingdom** work - *like John the Baptist, the apostle Paul, and Jesus Himself*.
- ✓ If you're not a eunuch and don't desire to live like one, then you **should accept this** - *accept what Jesus - God is skin - is saying about **His invention & intention for marriage***. That...*God invented & intended **Marriage to Unite one man and one woman until death***.

Marriage is a living example to the faithfulness of Jesus & His followers

Ephesians 5:24-26a (NIV) Now **as the church submits to Christ**, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy...

Our marriages are to be living examples to the faithfulness of **Jesus & His church/followers** to one another!

Ephesians 5:30-33 (NIV) ...for we are **members of His body**. "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." This is a **profound mystery**—but I am talking about **Christ and the church**. However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

🌟 Denny Burk

"Our marriages were always meant to be about this other marriage (Eph. 5 - the mystery of Christ and the Church)...Our marriages are supposed to be saying something about the gospel...marriages are supposed to be these little dramas of redemption put on display for the world."³

² Douglas Sean O'Donnell, Matthew: All Authority in Heaven and on Earth, ed. R. Kent Hughes, Preaching the Word (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2013), 540.

³ Denny Burk interviewed by Greg Koukl on podcast ("Denny Burk - The Meaning of Sex")

Marriage is supposed to last for life - through the good times and the bad times, in sickness & in health. So too, the covenant relationship with Jesus and His people is meant to last the THIS LIFE and BEYOND!

❓ Jesus will be faithful to us; the only question is...will WE be faithful to Him?

Marriage is a living example to the faithfulness of Jesus & His followers

The **2 become 1** - the husband and wife are *UNITED* and...Jesus & His Church are *UNITED*, and **what God has joined together, let no one separate**. We must beware anything & anyone who would get in the way of those relationships.

Sincere & Pure Devotion or Led Astray?

2 Corinthians 11:2-3 (NIV) I am jealous for you with a godly jealousy. I promised you to one **husband**, to **Christ**, so that I might present you as a pure virgin to him. But I am afraid that just as Eve was deceived by the serpent's cunning, your minds may somehow be led astray from your sincere and pure devotion to Christ.

Paul is afraid that the *BRIDE* of **Christ** (His Church/followers) could be seduced by *another lover* other than *JESUS*. If you're a follower of Jesus, you must beware false teachings/teachers attempting to lead you **astray**, and keep kindling the fire of **sincere and pure devotion to Christ** Jesus.

God invented & intended Marriage to Unite one man and one woman until death.

What is your devotion to your spouse showing your family/friends/community about the significance of marriage?

Marriage is a living example to the faithfulness of Jesus & His followers

What is your devotion to JESUS showing your family/friends/community about the importance of knowing & following Jesus?

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

* Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Christy** (850-673-9764), **Caleb** (864-315-8015), **Gary** (850-673-2507), **Betty** (850-973-3266), or another follower of Jesus soon!

* Or call our **deacons & wives: Alan & Christy Androski** (850-464-1428), **Steve & Debbie Bass** (850-673-7952), **Noel & Patricia Barnes** (813-767-2881), **Tim & Joni Hughey** (850-464-1156), **Rob & Rebecca Leatherberry** (229-232-1087), or **Mark & Dot Mancil** (850-253-5405).

discussionquestions

Take some time to discuss these questions with your family, friends, or group.

1. Whose marriage do you most admire? Why?
2. What ingredients make for a happy marriage?
3. What factors tend to undermine a marriage and make a couple more susceptible to divorce?
4. **Read Matthew 19:3 & Deut 24:1**. Why was there a debate over whether a man could divorce his wife *for any reason*? What were some of the views during Jesus' day? (Look back in your notes.)
5. **Read Matthew 19:4-6, Gen 1:27 & 2:24**. Where does Jesus go to answer the question? What does this tell you about how Jesus viewed the authority of the Scriptures versus rabbinical traditions? According to Jesus, is there ever an option for same-sex marriages? Explain your answer based on what Jesus says.
6. Read **John 1:1-3 & Colossians 1:16**. Why should the words of Jesus regarding marriage & divorce carry such weight?
7. **Read Matthew 19:7-9**. If you were approached by a friend who wanted out of their marriage, what kind of questions could you ask to see if they have Biblical grounds to divorce? Even if they have Biblical grounds for divorce, why should you encourage restoration before seeking divorce?
8. **Read Matthew 19:10-12**. Did it surprise you to hear that the disciples of Jesus were blown away by the high standard Jesus expected from marriages? What can we do to make sure we follow the teachings of Jesus rather than what our culture teaches? In what ways is singleness a great advantage?
9. **Read Ephesians 5:24-33**. Spend time talking about how married couples should honor one another AND how marriage is a living example to the faithfulness of Jesus & His followers.
10. **Read 2 Corinthians 11:2-3**. What are some deceptions we must beware among our culture?
11. What challenged or encouraged you *most* from today's teaching & what does God want YOU to do with what we studied today?
12. Share prayer needs and pray for one another.