

6/10/12

Christian Marriage And Divorce
1Cor. 7:11-16

One day the Pharisees came to Jesus asking Him if it was lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason? Jesus said, “Have you not read”, taking them back to Genesis to God’s creation of male and female, the joining of the two and resulting in becoming one flesh, therefore that what God joined together, no man is to separate. They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?” He said to them, “Moses, because of the **hardness of your hearts**, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.” His disciples said to Him, “If such is the case of the man with *his* wife, it is better not to marry.” Matt. 19:3-10

* The point being, marriage is the most serious decision in life, apart from salvation and it should not be entered into lightly, Jesus said it is for life!

The Corinthians had asked Paul the apostle different questions about marriage, one of them being divorce for a Christian, so Paul gave a three-fold answer. 1Cor. 7:10-16

- I. The instruction regarding marriage and divorce for Christians. vs. 10-11
- II. The instruction regarding marriage for an unequally yoked Christians. vs. 12-14
- III. The instruction regarding divorce for unequally yoked Christians. vs. 15-16

I. The instruction regarding marriage and divorce for Christians. vs. 10-11

- A. The apostle Paul qualified the teaching as from Jesus. vs. 10
 - 1. Paul was about to express the standard for all married believers. vs. 10a
 - * “Now to the married I command.”
 - a. He addressed the married.
 - 1) Those who had been joined together a husband and wife.
 - 2) Those who had forsaken all others.
 - 3) Those who recognized marriage as the ordinance of God for a man and a woman in society. Gen. 2:24-25
 - b. He addressed them with strong authority.
 - 1) Paul used the personal pronoun “I”, alluding to his apostolic authority.
 - 2) The one who had brought them to Christ through the gospel.
 - c. He addressed them with a mandate.

- 1) The word command “paragello” means to transmit a message along from one to the other, a military one for orders to be obeyed.
 - 2) The tense is present, it is still in affect then and today.
2. Paul strengthens the authority of His command to the married by attributing it to Jesus. vs. 10b
 * “yet not I but the Lord.”
- a. He was simply expressing what he was about to tell them originated with Jesus, the Captain of their salvation.
 - 1) Paul was an apostle of Jesus Christ.
 - 2) Paul was taught by Jesus in Arabia for three years. Gal. 1:16-18
 - b. He was not indicating his authority different from that of Jesus.
 - 1) Paul speaks with full authority various times. vs. 7a, 8, 25
 - 2) Paul is not saying his words are not inspired by the Holy Spirit, but re-enforcing the authority and origin of the instruction from his own.
- B. The apostle Paul focused on the woman. vs. 10b
 * “A wife is not to depart from *her* husband.”
1. Paul addressed the woman because he was addressing Gentiles, not Jews.

- a. The Gentile women could divorce their husbands.
 - 1) Gentile women initiated divorce, evident as Mark wrote to a Roman society and mentions a woman divorcing her husband. Mk. 10:12
 - 2) Roman law granted the right to both mates.
 - b. The Jewish woman could not divorce her husband.
 - 1) Matthew wrote to the Jews, so he focused on the man to not divorce his wife. Matt. 5:32
 - 2) Jewish woman could divorce her husband for insanity and leprosy.
2. Paul strictly gives the mandate for the wife, not to depart from her husband.
- a. The word depart “chorizo” means to separate, divide, put asunder or leave.

* The same word is used by Jesus, “Let no man separate “chorizo”, depart, the context is divorce, not separation. Matt. 19:6d
 - b. The institution of marriage is permanent for Christian, till death.

* Again the context is dealing with two people who are Christians or married as Christians.
- C. The apostle Paul addressed the disobedient or rebellious wife to his mandate. vs. 11

1. Paul instructed the departing wife by way of warning. vs. 11a-b
 - * “But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to *her* husband.”
 - a. The word but “de”, marks the sharp contrast, in disobedience to the command of the Lord Jesus.
 - 1) Some couples in the Lord in their attempts to resolve issues separate and only give room for their emotional involvement with another that can lead to disobedience and adultery.
 - 2) The Christian mars their character!
 - b. He gives her two options, after having departed or divorced.
 - 1) If she depart “chorizo” or divorce, in disobedience and rebellion, she is to remain unmarried.
 - 2) Or she must be reconciled to her husband.
 - 3) The reason being, there is no biblical grounds for her divorce, adultery.
 - 4) By the way, divorce for adultery is a personal option not a command!
2. Paul instructed the husband, whose Christian wife has departed or divorced him to remain faithful. vs. 11c

- * “And a husband is not to divorce *his* wife.”
- a. The natural response out of hurt or anger, would be to divorce the rebellious and disobedient woman.
 - 1) The word divorce “aphiemi”, means to send away for the purpose of remarrying. Matt. 19:6d
 - 2) The husband is not to make her leave.
- b. The husband has to be Spirit controlled and understand that they are still married, until their is unfaithfulness by his wife.
- c. The context of our text is a prohibition to disrupt or dissolve the marriage through divorce.
 - 1) The double prohibition to the wife and the husband is for emphasis.
 - 2) Jesus used the word divorce “apoluo”, means to release, put away or send away and used by Jesus in all other passages of divorce. Matt. 5:32, 19:3, 7, 8, 9, Mk. 10:2, 4, 11, 12, Lk. 16:18
 - 3) The word is used of being relieved of one’s occupation, permission to leave a country and a veteran released from his long service.
 - 4) If there is no adultery, then the one who divorce their Christian

husband or wife causes them to commit adultery and whoever marries the divorced person commits adultery also. Matt. 5:32, 19:9, Mk. 10:11-12, Lk. 16:18

Illustration

I never met a Christian who regretted sticking it out in marriage, but many who regretted divorcing.

* A certificate of divorce does not free you from the marriage, if there has not been adultery!

Application

1. The Bible teaches that marriage is a God-ordained institution, not a human one.

- a. To provide the completion of a man.
- b. To provide a man a companion for life.
- c. To provide sexual contentment.
- d. To produce children to populate the world.
- e. To provide moral and ethical order for community.

* “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed.” Gen. 2:24-25

2. The Bible teaches when we come to Christ we are forgiven for all our sin, even failed marriages.

- a. Some sinners married and divorced once.
- b. Other unbelievers have married and divorced two or three times.

- c. Even if you had been married and divorced twenty times, as a sinner, if you are divorced when you come to Christ you are forgiven for everything, you have a brand new start.

* “Therefore, if anyone *is* in Christ, *he is* a new **creation**; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2Cor. 5:17

3. The Bible teaches when two believers marry as Christians they are married for life, till death.

- a. The only scriptural basis for divorce is adultery by the highest authority, Jesus. Matt. 5:32, 19:9, Mk. 10:11-12, Lk. 16:18

* A Christian divorcing, apart from adultery causes their mate to commit adultery and if they marry, they also commit adultery.

- b. A Christian is to remain unmarried if they depart or divorce their believing mate, the other option is reconciliation. 1Cor. 7:11b
- c. A Christian separating from their Christian mate does not allow them to date or go out with any other person, for they are still married and in fact is an act of unfaithfulness to their mate!

* “For the LORD God of Israel says That He **hates divorce**, For it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the LORD of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.” Mal. 2:16

The instruction regarding marriage and divorce for Christians is very narrow, remain single or reconcile!

II. The instruction regarding marriage for an unequally yoked Christians. vs. 12-14

- A.** The apostle Paul addressed the situation of a believer married to an unbeliever. vs. 12-13
- 1.** Paul directed himself to a different category of marriages. vs. 12a-c
 - * “But to the rest I, not the Lord, say.”
 - a.** He says they stand in contrast to the ones he just addressed, two believers.
 - 1)** The word but “de”, marks contrast.
 - 2)** The word rest “loipoy”, indicates the obvious contrast, which means the class under consideration with a certain distinction or contrast.
 - b.** He is the one addressing this category and class of marriages.
 - 1)** The personal pronoun “I”, is indicative of Paul.
 - 2)** The admission that the instructions to follow are not the words of Jesus, does not lessen the authority nor the Inspiration of the instruction. vs. 12a-c
 - 3)** Paul finishes the chapter by saying, “And I think I also have the Spirit of God.” 1Cor. 7:40c

- 2.** Paul stated the unequally yoked condition of a Christian brother. vs. 12d
 - * “If any brother has a wife who does not believe.”
 - a.** The Christian man is married to a non-Christian woman.
 - 1)** She could have been an idolater?
 - 2)** She could have been an atheist?
 - b.** The conversion of the man is omitted.
 - 1)** We are not told if he was a Christian before he was married.
 - 2)** We are not told if he became a Christian after he was married.
 - 3)** Either case could be the reason.
- 3.** Paul stated the high integrity of the unbelieving wife in marriage. vs. 12e
 - * “and she is willing to live with him.”
 - a.** She is willing to live with her Christian husband.
 - b.** She is willing to honor the institution of marriage and love her husband.
 - c.** She is not rebelling against his Christianity or commitment to Christ.
- 4.** Paul directed the Christian husband to remain married to his unbelieving woman. vs. 12f
 - * “let him not divorce her.”
 - a.** The Christian husband is not to use this unequally yoked condition as an excuse to brake from the marriage.

- 1) The word divorce “aphiemi”, means to send away for the potential or purpose of remarrying.
- 2) The word is the same used by Jesus about divorce. Matt. 19:6d
- b. The command to the Christian man is regardless of two possible things.
 - 1) That he disobeyed Christ and married the unbelieving woman.
 - 2) That he came to Christ after the marriage.
- 5. Paul then stated the exact same unequally yoked condition for a Christian wife with an unbelieving husband. vs. 13
 - a. She equally is to remain married to the unbelieving husband. vs. 13a-b
 - * “And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her.”
 - 1) Whether she married him in disobedience to the Lord.
 - 2) Or if she became a Christian after marriage, it doesn’t matter!
 - b. She equally is to not initiate a divorce. vs. 13c
 - * “let her not divorce him.” vs. 13
 - 1) He being willing to live with his Christian wife.
 - 2) He being willing to honor the institution of marriage and love and his wife.

- 3) He is not rebelling against her faith or commitment to Christ.
- c. There is no partiality with God.
 - 1) The man has to live under the same standards of the word and obey.
 - 2) The woman is not diminished in any way, but has the same scriptural rights before God, as well as responsibilities.
 - 3) Ezra did require divorce from their pagan wives. Ezra 10:11
- B. The apostle Paul addressed the spiritual benefit to the marriage by the committed obedience of the Christian. vs. 14
 - 1. Paul first stated the benefit to the unbelieving husband in the unequally yoked marriage then the wife, they are identical. vs. 14a-b
 - * “For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband.”
 - a. The unbelieving husband and wife are blessed, due to the believing mate.
 - 1) The word sanctified “hagiazō”, means set apart or consecrated.
 - 2) The verb is placed at the beginning emphasizing this benefit coming through the Christian mate, present tense continuous.

- 3) The passive is used, referring when the two were joined into one, under the institution of marriage that God ordained and honors.
- b. The implication being that he receives the blessing by a godly mate.
 - 1) The Corinthians probably believed that the unbeliever would hinder their relation to Christ, when in reality it blessed the unbeliever.
 - 2) This does not mean they are saved, but simply that they are better off, then married to an unbeliever, void of spiritual influence and witness.
 - 3) The two are joined into one, under the institution of marriage that God ordained and honors.
2. Paul next, stated the benefit to the children born to the unequally yoked marriage. vs. 14c

* “otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.”

 - a. The children born to the unequally yoked marriage are classified clean.
 - 1) The word unclean “akathartos”, means unclean in a spiritual sense towards God, no spiritual relation.
 - 2) The clear spiritual benefit being derived from the saved parent, despite the unbelieving parent.
 - b. The children of Christians are holy.

- 1) The word holy “hagios”, means pure due to the parental benefit, but not sinless.
- 2) The term holy does not mean they are saved, for each child at the age of knowledge, 6-9 or so, must receive Christ as personal Lord and Savior by repentance.
- 3) They are under godly parental influence, teaching and discipline.
- 4) God is righteousness, His judgment of children will be absolutely just!

Illustration

Abigail of the Old Testament was married to Nabal, the fool and God honored her and she became the wife of David after Nabal’s death.

Application

1. The Christian husband, who is married to an unbelieving mate have a great responsibility.
 - a. To be a loving a caring husband towards his wife through the love of Jesus Christ.

* “Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.” Col. 3:19
 - b. To be a Christ-like husband through the word and prayer for the good of his wife.
 - 1) “For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body.” Eph. 5:23

- 2) “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.” Eph. 5:25-27
 - 3) “Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.” 1Pet. 3:7
- d. To be a loving, caring and vigilant father to instruct, correct and discipline his children, lest they dishonor the Lord and bring many difficulties to their lives.
- 1) And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Eph. 6:4
 - 2) Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.” Col. 3:21
2. The Christian wife who is married to an unbelieving husband has a great responsibility.
- a. To be a submissive and godly wife for her husband to be saved.
 - * “Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not

- obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward--arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel-- rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.” 1Pet. 3:1-4
- b. To honor and be a blessing to her unbelieving husband.
 - 1) “An excellent **wife** *is* the crown of her husband, But she who causes shame *is* like rottenness in his bones.” Prov. 12:4
 - 2) “Who can find a virtuous **wife**? For her worth *is* far above rubies.” Prov. 31:10
3. The Christian husband or wife’s priority for their children in a divided home, must be spiritual.
- a. To provided a tangible example to their children by living for Christ in the midst of a divided home.
 - 1) “My **son**, if you receive my words, And treasure my commands within you. So that you incline your ear to wisdom, *And* apply your heart to understanding; Yes, if you cry out for discernment, *And* lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, And search for her as *for* hidden treasures; Then you will

- understand the fear of the LORD, And find the knowledge of God.” Prov. 2:1-5
- 2) “Let no one despise your youth, but be an **example** to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity.” 1Tim. 4:12
- b. To mold and shape their children’s character by the word and through prayer.
* “My **son**, hear the instruction of your father, And do not forsake the law of your mother; For they *will be* a graceful ornament on your head, And chains about your neck.” Prov. 1:8-9
- c. To direct and guide the steps of their children through the corrupt and evil world they are exposed to and the danger of being captivated by it.
1) “My **son**, if sinners entice you, Do not consent.” Prov. 1:10
2) “My **son**, do not walk in the way with them, Keep your foot from their path.” Prov. 1:15
- d. To fear and obey God.
1) “The **fear** of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge, *But* fools despise wisdom and instruction. Prov. 1:7
2) “The **fear** of the LORD *is* to hate evil; Pride and arrogance and the evil way And the perverse mouth I hate.” Prov. 8:13

- 3) “My **son**, do not despise the chastening of the LORD, Nor detest His correction. For whom the LORD loves He corrects, Just as a father the **son** *in whom* he delights.” Prov. 3:11-12

The instruction regarding marriage for an unequally yoked Christians is to abide!

III. The instruction regarding divorce for unequally yoked Christians. vs. 15-16

- A. The apostle Paul declared the reason for a Christian to have a Biblical divorce. vs. 15
1. Paul stated that the unbeliever has to be the initiator in the divorce. vs. 15a
* “But if the unbeliever departs.”
a. The sharp contrast again is marked by the word but “de”.
1) The believer is to remain with their unbelieving mate, if they are willing to live with them. vs. 12-13
2) But when the unbeliever is not willing to live with the Christian, this changes things.
b. The condition is that the unbeliever departs.
1) The word depart “chorizo”, means to separate, divide or put asunder, in the middle voice, he takes himself off and keeps himself separated, a present passive.

- 2) The condition is a reality, the intention is clear by the context, for divorcing the believer.
- 2. Paul stated the believer is to respect the decision of the unbelieving mate. vs. 15b
* “let him depart.”
 - a. The Christian husband or wife is not to try to stop their unbelieving mate.
 - 1) Let him keep himself separated, imperative present passive
 - 2) A believer can not force their unbelieving mate to stay married to them nor force them to honor God’s institution of marriage.
 - 3) The believer can not force their unbelieving mate to love them.
 - 4) This does not mean they are not to pleaded with them.
 - b. The unbeliever is to be released by the Christian.
 - 1) The phrase let him depart is the biblical permission to the believer.
 - 2) The word depart “chorizo”, again means to separate, divide or put asunder. vs. 11
 - 3) The intention is again clear by the context, it is for divorcing the believer, finding it very difficult to live with them.
- 3. Paul stated that the believer is free from the unequally yoked marriage. vs. 15c

- * “a brother or a sister is not under bondage in such *cases*. But God has called us to peace.”
- a. The Christian woman or man is not obligated to the marriage.
 - 1) The word bondage “douloo”, means to make a slave of or reduce to servitude, for that is contrary to the design of marriage by God.
 - 2) The verb is strong and emphatic, put at the beginning, literally “not having been enslaved”.
 - 3) The indicative perfect passive tense reaches back to the day the unbeliever separated, at that point the believer was no longer bound to the marriage.
 - 4) The man and the woman have the right to be free from the marriage.
- b. The verdict is that there is no condemnation.
 - 1) The word but “de” again marks the sharp contrast to the bondage that would exist if a believer attempted to remain married to one who did not want to be married to them.
 - 2) The authority for the Biblical release is from God, “has called us” is the perfect tense, an enduring state.

- 3) The will of God for the believer is peace “eirene”, the tranquil state of the soul assured with well being, having a scriptural basis for their heart braking divorce.

B. The apostle Paul declared the affirming assurance to the Christian about their Biblical divorce by explanation. vs. 16

1. Paul addressed the Christian wife first.
 - * “For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save *your* husband?”
 - a. The question is a rhetorical one, having an obvious answer.
 - 1) How would the wife know if she would be the instrument to save her husband?
 - 2) The only answer possible is, “she would not know”.
 - 3) The understanding being, “then don’t be beating yourself up with guilt”.
 - b. The obligation of the Christian wife was as long as the unbelieving mate was willing to remain married.
 - 1) The expressed desire to end the marriage, releases them from the obligation.
 - 2) The unbeliever is responsible to God for the witness of the believing wife during the marriage.

2. Paul addressed the Christian husband next.
 - * “Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save *your* wife?”
 - a. The question again is a rhetorical one, having an obvious answer.
 - 1) How would the husband know if they would be the instrument to save their wife?
 - 2) The only answer possible is, “he would not know”, so he likewise should not beat himself up.
 - b. The obligation of the Christian husband was only as long as the unbelieving wife was willing to remain in the marriage.
 - 1) The expressed desire to end the marriage, releases them from the obligation.
 - 2) The unbeliever is responsible for the witness of the believing husband during the time of their marriage.
3. Some have taken this verse to mean that the believer is to remain for the sake of their salvation even if they don’t want to continue married, but that would contradict what he just sated. vs. 16
 - a. The verse is saying that no one should feel compelled to remain out of guilt or duty if the non-believer has

- expressed their will to dissolve the marriage.
- b. God alone can save an unbelieving mate.

Illustration

We have known Christians who been in unequally yoked marriages and through their obedience to God some of their mates were saved, others divorced and they were blessed being remarried to a believer, but they did it Biblical!

* Bill and Maria remarried after 20 years!

Application

1. The difficulties of an unequally yoked divorce is very painful.
 - a. The dividing of the assets.
 - b. The dividing of the custody of the children.
 - c. The emotional detachment.
 - d. The relocating of residence.

* “For His anger *is but for* a moment, His favor *is for* life; **Weeping** may endure for a night, But joy *comes* in the morning.” Ps. 30:5
2. The Christian in an unequally yoked marriage is given more grace than two Christians in marriage.
 - a. The believer has the absolute right to be set free from the unequally yoked marriage, when the unbeliever expresses and takes steps to dissolve the marriage and divorce.

- c. The only way two Christians have the right for divorce is adultery, due to the fact they entered marriage being Christians.
- d. The innocent party is free to remarry, but if they forgive their mate they can reconcile.
- e. Christians who divorce, without adultery, are to remain unmarried, or reconcile.

* The principle is this, “For everyone to whom much is given, from him much will be **required**; and to whom much has been committed, of him they will ask the more.” Lk. 12:48c-f
3. The Christian released from an unequally yoked marriage, due to the refusal of the unbeliever to remain in the marriage has all the right to re-marry.
 - a. Hopefully they have learn by experience the difficulty of an unequally yoked marriage. 2Cor. 6:14
 - b. Having the freedom to remarry again, but only to a Christian. 1Cor. 7:39

The instruction regarding marriage for an unequally yoked Christians is much broader, if the unbeliever initiates divorce!

Conclusion

- Paul provided three answers to questions the Corinthians asked him about marriage and divorce:
- I. The instruction regarding marriage and divorce for Christians is very narrow, remain single or reconcile!

- II.** The instruction regarding marriage for an unequally yoked Christians is to abide!
- III.** The instruction regarding divorce for an unequally yoked Christians is much broader, if the unbeliever initiates divorce!