

Love^{and} Marriage

Lesson 10: Divorce & Remarriage

Questions & Objectives

- Understand divorce culture in the Old and New Testaments and today.
- Are there Biblical reasons for divorce? Is there a better way?
- Remarriage and Adultery

Lesson

Divorce Today

We live in an age of “no fault” divorce – that is:

Civil Arguments

Proponents argue that a spouse would _____ a reason in order to justify the divorce;

Opponents contend it makes divorce too easy, is _____ to children¹, and allows an at-fault party to avoid judicial review and oversight.

The law is incapable of addressing the _____ issues that lead to divorce.

Divorce in the Old Testament

¹If a man marries a woman, but she becomes displeasing to him because he finds some indecency in her, he may write her a certificate of divorce, hand it to her, and send her away from his house.

²If, after leaving his house, she goes and becomes another man's wife, ³and the second man hates her, writes her a certificate of divorce, hands it to her, and sends her away from his house, or if he dies, ⁴then the husband who divorced her first may not remarry her after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination to the LORD...

- Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (BSB)

What is the reason for divorce given here?

What does “indecency” mean?



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We should understand two things from this passage:

1. Divorce was not permitted for _____ reason, but because of _____ sin, which violated a foundational aspect of the marriage contract.
- SECOND, The husband wasn't allowed to _____ her if she had been married again.

Why do you think this was stated?

Divorce in the New Testament

Matthew 19:3-9

1. The Pharisees were essentially asking about _____ — _____ divorce.
2. Jesus then addresses the root of the issue: the _____.
 - a. FIRST: Divorce is not God's original design or purpose for man and woman.
 - b. SECOND: it was _____ due to hardness of heart.
 - c. THIRDLY: Jesus _____ the exception for sexual immorality.

God Hates Divorce

*"For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel.
"He who divorces his wife covers his garment with violence," says the LORD of Hosts.
So guard yourselves in your spirit and do not break faith.*

- Malachi 2:16



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A Narrow View

There is a perspective that all divorce is sinful or unjustified and that any subsequent remarriage is an ongoing adultery.

- The basis is that the marriage bond is only ever broken by _____.
 - Based on 1 Corinthians 7:39 – “a wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.”
- “Except for sexual immorality/fornication” is interpreted very _____, as a specific use case:
 - During the _____ period, if sexual infidelity were discovered.
 - Matthew 1:19 – Joseph determining to do so with Mary – is the key example.
- To remarry after divorce, while your spouse lives, puts you in a continual state of adultery, in which you will not inherit the Kingdom. (Matt. 5:32, 19:9; 1 Cor. 6:9-11). The only solutions to this:
 - Remain _____;
 - Remain _____ after a divorce; or
 - Reconcile with your _____ spouse (1 Cor. 7:10-11).

Biblical Exceptions

Death self-evidently terminates the marital covenant. Paul uses this as an analogy to our being dead to the Law and alive in Christ (Romans 7:1-6).

Biblical Exceptions:

1. **Sexual Immorality** – *porneia*
 - a. Matthew 5:32, 19:9

REFLECTION What is the effect of not allowing a divorce on grounds of sexual immorality?



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2. **"Pauline Privilege"** – abandonment/divorce by an unbeliever.
 - a. 1 Corinthians 7:15

Remarriage

Should Christians who divorce remain unmarried while their partner lives?

Is a second marriage adulterous throughout the lifetime of that marriage?

Adultery

1. If remarriage is ongoing adultery, it is essentially an _____ sin.

Why is this important? What are the solutions if it is considered ongoing adultery?

ONE SIN NEVER JUSTIFIES ANOTHER.



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2. Secondly, the enemy can use this more narrow view for destruction.
3. The instances where the Bible talks about adulterers not inheriting the Kingdom refer to _____ adultery.
 - a. Notably: 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Hebrews 13:4; Revelation 21:7-8.

It is necessary to address a second marriage (without Biblical grounds) from the lens of adultery. True repentance on both partners is required.

Conclusion

My conclusion is this:

- **God hates divorce.**
 - It's a devastating thing that has lasting impacts on spouses, families, and which disproportionately impacts children;
 - It breaks a covenantal vow, a reflective image of His unity and trinity;
 - And is something that should be avoided at all costs.
- **The Law couldn't address the heart issue**, but Jesus can! It's why He came.
- Given the hardness of our hearts, **divorce is permitted in only two, limited scenarios**, though reconciliation and forgiveness are the better way.
 - In the case of sexual infidelity, as this shakes the very foundation of the marriage covenant
 - In the case of an unbeliever divorcing a Christian over their beliefs.
- God hates divorce, but that **doesn't mean it's the unforgiveable sin**. It means we should take things very seriously.
 - In the case of a divorce not for Biblical reasons, you should pursue God in holy singleness.
 - Should you choose to remarry, know that this is adultery. And do not take this lightly. Repent in true repentance, and bear fruit in keeping with repentance (2 Cor. 7:10; Matt. 3:8).

REFLECTION After additional study, prayer, and meditation: what's your conclusion?



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Wrap-Up

- Divorce was permitted in the Old Testament due to hardness of heart. By the New Testament, this was being used for the most trivial and dubious matters; and as a means to dominate one's spouse.
- Jesus addresses the root of the issue of divorce: the heart, and says the only Biblical allowance is for sexual immorality.
- While divorce is "permitted" under certain circumstances, the better way is forgiveness and reconciliation – to address the heart issues.

Follow-Through

Meditate

Malachi 2:13-16

Consider

Why does God hate divorce? What negative effects does it have on families and children?

Act

- Determine to seek the Lord and not to separate, but to work through issues with forgiveness and by centering Jesus.

Research

1. The impact of family structure on the health of children: Effects of divorce, Anderson; 2014: <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC4240051/>

