



DISCUSSION GUIDE

Sermon Series: Welcome to Corinth, Part 10

Sermon Title: The Question of Divorce

Speaker/ Date: Armin Sommer/ November 18, 2018

1 Corinthians 7

Big Idea: God DETESTS divorce; but he LOVES divorced people.

That assertion will become more clear when we consider several biblical realities.

Reality #1: Marriage is for Life

1 Corinthians 7:10–11

Marriage is for life. If you're separated, make every effort to reconcile. This message runs counter to our culture. Bear in mind: Our culture skews our thinking. *Romans 12:2* tells us not to be conformed to the world's way of thinking; allow God's word to inform and transform your mind and your values. Be careful to interpret our experience according to Scripture, rather than interpreting Scripture according to our experience; otherwise we'll produce counterfeit truth.

Reality #2: Divorce Hurts People

Malachi 2:14-16

Why does God hate divorce? Because it hurts people. The 1st century attitude was that a man could divorce his wife for any reason. Just give her a certificate of divorce. Jesus confronts this attitude in **Matthew 19:8**

Reality #3: There Are Grounds for Divorce

But unappiness is not one of them. Every unmarried couple will go through seasons of unhappiness. But that's why marriage is different from dating or even engagement. It is a covenant- something that binds you together physically, legally, socially, financially. **1 Corinthians 7:10–13**

What are adequate grounds for divorce and permission to remarry?

1. **Sexual immorality.** (**Matthew 5:32, Matthew 19:9**)

Jesus permits divorce in the case of marital unfaithfulness (lit. sexual immorality -- illicit intercourse). Jesus doesn't command divorce in such a situation; but it is allowable.

2. Desertion / abandonment. 1 Corinthians 7:12

Why do adultery and desertion allow for remarriage for the aggrieved party? Because the the “one-flesh” (Genesis 2:24) covenant has been devastated.

3. Salvation After Divorce or Death of Ex-Spouse 2 Corinthians 5:17

When you have become a Christ-follower after divorce or when your “ex” has either remarried or died. If reconciliation is possible, be reconciled. But where it’s impossible (such as when the ex has remarried), you are free to remarry. You are a new person in Christ. You can rest in his grace.

4) Persistent Habitual Abuse (of the spouse or children)

Abuse is “a pattern of violent behavior (physical or verbal) that is used by one partner to gain or maintain power and control over another intimate partner.”

If you’re not in a situation where you feel life is being threatened, then before seeking out a divorce-involve the Church leadership for help and counsel. What may result from that is what we call

The Separation Option.

Separation may at times be necessary. Separation may be the only way to protect yourself or your children in an abusive situation, or to get your spouse’s attention. Separation allows for the possibility of reconciliation.

We also need to address consequences of a divorce without adequate grounds 1 Corinthians 7:10b–11. To disobey is to break God’s heart and commit an act Jesus calls adulterous. Matthew 19:9.

If remarriage is not a biblical option, determine in your heart to remain unmarried. Ask God to give you moral conviction and the strength to remain single.

Remarriage after an unbiblical divorce is an adulterous act. Difficult to hear, but Jesus clearly says, “*You get a biblically unjustifiable divorce and remarry, and you’ve committed adultery.*” Adultery is never justifiable. Now, having said all this, What about the person who has divorced inappropriately and remarried?

Reality #4: Grace Remains

What do you do if you divorced without biblical justification and have since remarried. Yet 1 Corinthians 7:27

Basically... Don't try to unscramble the egg. Can't undo what now is, thereby compounding the damage. Instead humbly confess to the Lord that you got it wrong and allow him to shower you with his grace, his undeserved favor.

Psalm 51:17

Don't divorce your 2nd spouse and become single again. Go to God with a truly contrite heart. And release the burden of the accuser saying, "You're living in sin." You and your spouse join hands to serve God.

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- Using the biblical truth learned in this message, what biblical advice could you share with someone contemplating divorce? (Remember – our role is to share truth in love, even when the situation is extremely difficult.)
- How has divorce affected society?
- What effect does divorce have on the younger generation?
- Why is divorce more prevalent today than in the past?
- How has the direction of your life or someone close to you been affected by divorce?
- If someone got married out of necessity rather than love, does that person have biblical grounds for divorce?
- Why do you think so many celebrities divorce and remarry?
- *Why* do we as a society readily view shows/books/movies, etc where divorce is common place and even celebrated, but when those same things happen in "real life", we are shocked?