

2023



Week Three Devotional

“Living PG (Providentially Guided) in an X-Rated Society.” Series



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Matthew 5:31-32 ESV

31 “It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’
32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Matthew 5:31-32 TPT

31“**It has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife must give her legal divorce papers.’**
32**However, I say to you, if anyone divorces his wife for any reason, except for infidelity, he causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.**

This passage is one of the most misused, misunderstood yet challenging pieces of scriptural real estate in the Bible. Jesus here deals with the 3rd of the 6 laws, authoritative statements in chapter 5 of the sermon on the mount. His audience then and now should be those of us who seek sincere understanding of his word, even the tough passages of scripture.

We must go beyond the surface in this case in order to comprehend what Jesus is meaning in **verses 31-32**. Christ challenges selfishness and self-righteousness, yet offers a grace for the journey of life as it relates to marriage and divorce. The timing of the text finds there is a demeaning and degrading of women taking place by self-centered men. It was the common belief that men could divorce their wives over anything, even finding another woman more attractive.

Jesus brings this matter up right in the middle of his mountain of a sermon. In what is considered by many as Jesus’ greatest sermon. He addresses this matter as valid and important. If it is important to Jesus then we should see what he says on the matter of marriage and divorce. Let’s look at it through the eyes of Jesus.



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Relevant questions:

1. Have you been impacted by divorce? If so, how have you managed to continue? Therapy? Prayer?
2. What is your attitude regarding divorce?
3. What should be the Christian’s attitude toward, regarding divorce?
4. Is divorce always forbidden?
5. Should someone stay in a relationship, married or otherwise where there is abuse?

To understand what Jesus says about the matter we must look contextually as to why and when he makes the statement. Jesus makes the statements at a controversial and crucial time. Centered over the interpretation of a phrase in **Deuteronomy 24:1**.

Deuteronomy 24:1 ESV

24 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,

The verse taught that a man could divorce his wife if he found “some indecency” in her and that is where the issue was.

There were two rabbinical schools that took positions on this matter.

The liberal Hillel school and Shammai which limited “indecency” to offenses of marital impropriety short of adultery. According to the conservative Shammai rabbinical school “indecency” did not refer to adultery which was punishable by execution, but suggested other types of sexual misconduct such as shameful exposure. The Hillel school believed “indecency” to include even the messing up of dinner, a man’s wife walking around with her hair down, speaking to men in the streets or speaking disrespectfully of her husband’s parents in his presence.

Rabbi Akiba, who was of the Hillel school said the phrase “she finds no favor in his eyes” meant that a man could divorce his wife if he found a woman who was more beautiful. This



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controversy over the meaning of “indecency” as grounds for divorce was the backdrop of the Pharisees’ coming to Jesus about this matter.

Matthew 19:3 ESV

3 And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?”

Matthew 19:3 TPT

The Pharisees were intent on putting Jesus to the test with difficult questions, so they approached him and asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?”

They, like many today, were not after truth, but to try and trip Jesus up in some trite, trivial matters that only lead to more debate. Sound familiar?

Jesus doesn’t endorse divorce, but permits it if all attempts of reconciliation have been unsuccessful. Jesus offered divorce as a concession and never a command, as an option provided because of our fallen and stubborn behavior.

The lesson for us is **NOT** to make divorce our first approach when our relationships are not working the way we want them to.

Knowing this, Jesus in true form took them back to God’s creation design.

Matthew 19:4-12 ESV

4 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” 7 They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”^[a] 10 The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.” 11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. 12 For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are



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eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

Matthew 19:4-12 TPT

4“Haven’t you read the Scriptures about creation?” Jesus replied. “The Creator made us male and female from the very beginning, 5 and ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and live with his wife. And the two will become one flesh.’ 6 From then on, they are no longer two, but united as one. So what God unites let no one divide!” 7 They responded, “So then why did Moses command us to give a certificate of divorce and it would be lawful?” 8Jesus said, “Moses permitted you to divorce because your hearts are so hard and stubborn, but originally there was no such thing. 9But I say to you, whoever leaves his wife for any reason other than immorality, then takes another wife is living in adultery. And whoever takes a divorced woman in marriage is also living in adultery.” 10 His disciples spoke up and said, “If this is the standard, then it seems better to never get married.” 11“Not everyone is meant to remain single—only those whom God gives grace to be unmarried. 12 For some are born to celibacy; others have been made eunuchs by others. And there are some who have chosen to live in celibacy for the sacred purpose of heaven’s kingdom realm. Let those who can, accept this truth for themselves.”

Point to Remember:

In the beginning divorce was inconceivable and impossible.

Genesis 2:23-24 ESV

23 Then the man said, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.”^[a]

This put the emphasis on 2 things....

1. Intimacy of the marriage relationship

Helpful Holy Hint: you never become one flesh with your child(ren)!

We are **NEVER** to replace intimacy with a spouse for the love of our children.



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Marriage is the deepest human relationship period.

2. Permanence of the marriage relationship

In the beginning there was no thought of divorce ever.

God’s idea and ideal was monogamous, intimate, enduring marriage.

God allowed divorce because of the hardness of the heart to which the men of Israel had succumbed. It was a divine concession to human weakness and wickedness.

Jesus’ explanation as to why and when divorce is permitted.

Matthew 19:9 ESV

9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”^[a]

Matthew 19:9 TPT

But I say to you, whoever leaves his wife for any reason other than immorality, then takes another wife is living in adultery. And whoever takes a divorced woman in marriage is also living in adultery.”

Note: Interpretation is everything!

The correct interpretation of the phrase “sexual immorality” is vital to the understanding of what Jesus is saying here. The Greek word here is “porneia” from which we get the English word pornography. “Porneia” means unchastity, fornication, prostitution or other kinds of unlawful intercourse.

When “porneia” is applied to married persons, it means marital unfaithfulness, illicit intercourse that may involve adultery, homosexuality, bestiality and others. All of these sexual acts were originally punishable by death under the mosaic law. These sins terminated marriage not by divorce but by death.

A lot has been said so far. Take some time and journal your thoughts here, be honest with yourself, this is tough stuff.



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Did you see pornography in a different way?

Read

Matthew 19:10-12

Mark 10:11-12

Luke 16:18

On Marriage

Marriage has been trivialized by culture and in even some churches.

Marriage is holy, marriage is sacred. Marriage is not to be entered into frivolously, casually or lightly.

It is my position that marriage is **NOT** a cure or a cover for the undisciplined.

**DO NOT GET MARRIED TO HAVE CHILDREN OR FOR SAFE/FREE SEX!
THERE IS NO SUCH THING.**

Before you enter a covenant, a marriage relationship check the discipline of the other and not just their credit report.

Helpful Holy Hint: Do your homework before you get heartache and a headache.

Exercise:

Name **5** “happily” married couples you know?

Not celebrities and happily doesn’t mean perfect. Remember, you only know so much unless you go home with them.



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Read

I Corinthians 7:8-16

Paul gives consecutive advice to the unmarried, married and to those who have mixed marriages, when one spouse is not a believer.

Paul knew that in Corinth there were many marriages in which either the husband or the wife had become a Christian after marriage which equated a spiritually mixed marriage.

1 Corinthians 7:15 ESV

15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you[a]to peace.

1 Corinthians 7:15 TPT

But if the unbelieving spouse wants a divorce, then let it be so. In this situation the believing spouse is not bound to the marriage, for God has called us to live in peace.

How do you understand this verse?

Remarriage

1. Sexual immorality and unwilling to repent and live faithfully with the marriage partner. Divorce and remarriage are permissible.
2. Desertion, when a believer is deserted by an unbelieving spouse. Divorce and remarriage is permissible.
3. Married,divorced before coming to Christ,remarriage is permissible.

2 Corinthians 5:17 ESV

17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.[a] The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:17 TPT

Now, if anyone is enfolded into Christ, he has become an entirely new person. All that is related to the old order has vanished. Behold, everything is fresh and new.

Ephesians 2:15 ESV

