

Divorce and Remarriage

Jeff Rogers / Lamplighter Bible Study

Matthew 5:27-30

Trends identified in 1979 that were identified as most destructive to the home:

- Mothers of young children work outside the home.
- Frequent family moves.
- The invasion of television.
- Lack of moral control in society at large.
- Lack of communication in the home.
- Divorce

The four basic interpretations of Biblical data related to divorce and remarriage:

- The strictest view is divorce is not permissible under any circumstance or for any reason.
- Divorce is permitted under certain circumstances, but remarriage is never permitted.
- Divorce and remarriage are permitted under certain circumstances.
- The most lenient view is that divorce and remarriage are permissible for any reason or none.

Marriage was God's plan, not man's

- **Genesis 2:24**, *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and **hold fast** [cleave to – firm, permanent attachment, as in gluing] to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*
- Marriage glues together two minds, two wills, two sets of emotions, two spirits.
- The Lord created sex and having children as the full expression of the oneness of marriage.

God's ideal for marriage is still a monogamous, life-long marriage between a man and a woman.

- God makes provision for divorce on the grounds of sexual immorality of a spouse; it is a gracious provision for those who are innocent of defiling the marriage (Matthew 19:3-9).
- The only other provision in Scripture for divorce is in the case of an unbelieving spouse deserting or divorcing a believer. (1 Corinthians 7:12-13, 15)

I. What does the Law of Moses Teach about Divorce and Remarriage?

A. The Scripture

1. **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**, *"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, 2 and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, 3 and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife, 4 then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the Lord. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance."*
2. A summary of this Scripture was also given by Christ in Matthew 19:1-9.

B. The Order

1. The society of Moses' day had gotten out of control, and divorce was prevalent.
2. Men generally held a low view of women.
3. Men had come to believe they had a right to divorce their wives for most any reason.
4. False charges could be brought against the wife, and the man received a divorce.
5. Lust and passion were the real culprits. Moses' guidance in the law was meant to restore order.

C. The Protection

1. The "system" in Moses's day was horribly unfair to women.
2. It prevented the suffering of both women and children.

D. The principles

1. Limitation of cause. Some "indecency" must be proven.
 - a) In Jewish teaching, this "indecency" ranged from rank adultery to a woman simply burning her husband's meal.

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- b) However, the linkage of the Old Testament paints a picture of unfaithfulness.
 - 2. Protection of the woman
 - a) The divorce certificate declared the separation of a husband and wife.
 - b) Protected the woman's rights by providing evidence of her freedom.
 - 3. There were no do-overs.
 - a) If a bill of divorcement was given, the man could not remarry the woman.

II. What did the Pharisees and scribes teach about Divorce and Remarriage?

- A. The Pharisees taught that Moses commanded divorce. The provision within the law was never to be used as a command to divorce. Instead, it was to structure the divorce (Matthew 19:7, the Pharisees misconstrue what Moses taught). **Matthew 19:7**, *They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?"*
 - 1. "If you find something distasteful about your wife, divorce her." But be sure the paperwork is in order.
- B. God never "commanded" divorce but only "permitted" it as a concession to sinful, self-willed mankind. The law never commanded divorce. Instead, it taught if you wanted a divorce, you could do so only under these conditions.
 - 1. The teaching said if a man found his wife displeasing or unsatisfactory that that finding counted as "uncleanness" or "indecent."
 - 2. The result was chaos in the home. Divorce was rampant for less than worthwhile reasons. The only thing the Pharisees were concerned with was the "bill of divorcement." to satisfy the legal requirement.
 - 3. Why there was a divorce was unimportant.

III. What does the Lord teach us about Divorce and Remarriage? (Matthew 19:3-9)

- A. His principles
 - 1. Respect the sanctity of marriage.
 - a) Jesus was teaching that marriage was not a contract or sacrament but a union of a man and woman as one flesh.
 - b) Genesis 2:20-25
 - (1) God fashioned a helper fit for Adam (someone who contributes to fulfillment of a need or purpose; a completer).
 - (2) God gave the picture of one flesh in Adam and Eve (Genesis 2:21-23)
 - (3) God gave the design of marriage – one flesh (physical, emotional, mental)
 - (4) God gave intimacy of marriage (no shame, no secrets, no hidden agenda)
 - 2. God has never commanded divorce.
 - 3. There is only one legitimate cause and reason for divorce.
 - a) Unfaithfulness by a party in marriage is the only cause for divorce.
 - b) 1 Corinthians 7
- B. What is the effect of His teaching?
 - 1. He repealed the death penalty for adultery.
 - 2. He made divorce because of adultery legitimate.

IV. Our Takeaways

- A. "I am divorced; what happens now?" Regardless of the circumstances, there is mercy, forgiveness, and restoration. Even adultery is not an unforgivable sin.
- B. "How should believers treat those who have been divorced?" Divorced people should be treated with empathy, understanding, and compassion. The impact of divorce on an individual ranks with the death of a loved one and other life-altering, life-impacting events.
- C. Divorced parents should mutually seek out the best for their children. Many times, the impact of divorce is greatest on children. Swallow your pride, lay aside the swords, and agree to present a unified front to your kids.
- D. "I am thinking about divorce; what should I do?"
 - 1. Seek reconciliation.
 - 2. On what grounds?