



**Title:** What Does the Bible Say about Divorce and Remarriage?

**Text:** Matthew 19:1-12

*“And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; **2** And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. **3** The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? **4** And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, **5** And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? **6** Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. **7** They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? **8** He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. **9** And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.**10** His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry.**11** But he said unto them, All men cannot receive this saying, save they to whom it is given.**12** For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive it, let him receive it.”*

**Introduction:** The goal of this lesson is to look into the Scriptures to reaffirm God's plan for marriage, and recognize divorce as a deviation from that plan. By acknowledging divorce as a product of the sinfulness and brokenness of the world, we will ultimately see how the grace of God can take the brokenness in our lives, and do with it what we could never think possible! In the Gospel of Jesus Christ, there is hope, healing, and restoration!

## I. Marriage

### A. The Origin of Marriage

**Genesis 2:18, 21-24** *"And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him. 21 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; 22 And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. 23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh."*

- God established the marriage relationship at creation. Marriage is God's idea!

### B. The Definition of Marriage

**Matthew 19:4-6a** *"And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh..."*

- Marriage is the coming together of one man and one woman in a sacred covenant before God.

### C. The Plan for Marriage

#### 1. A Permanent Union

**Matthew 19:6b** *"...What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." God's plan is that when a man and woman come together in this covenant commitment we call marriage, that they remain in this relationship for the remainder for their natural born lives, and that they only thing that separates them be death."*

- God's plan for marriage is that once a man and woman have come together in this covenant, that they would remain in that covenant for the entirety of their natural born lives, and that the only thing that separates them is death.

## 2. A Picture of Christ and the Church

**Ephesians 5:22-33** *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. **23** For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. **24** Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. **25** Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; **26** That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, **27** That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. **28** So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. **29** For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: **30** For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. **31** For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. **32** This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. **33** Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”*

- When a husband loves and cherishes his wife in the way Christ loves and cherishes the church, and when a wife loves and respects her husband, this functions as a testimony to the grace of God, and the power of the Gospel.

## II. Divorce & Remarriage

### A. The Origin of Divorce

- Where did divorce come from? Divorce is a result of the sinfulness and brokenness of the world. Divorce represents the rebellion of humanity against God, His authority, and His design.

**Matthew 19:7-8** *“They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? **8** He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.”*

- The phrase, “*hardness of your hearts*” carries the idea of being spiritually destitute and lacking spiritual discernment.
- Divorce is not a good thing, because divorce is always the result of sin.

## B. *The Definition of Divorce*

- Practically, divorce is the renunciation of the covenant commitment that was made.
- The word “*divorcement*” means to repudiate or to renounce.
- Legally, divorce is the dissolution of a marriage by a court.

## C. *The Permissible Reasons for Divorce and Remarriage*

### 1. **Sexual Immorality**

**Matthew 19:9** *“And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.”*

- The Greek word translated “fornication” is the word *pornia*, and it refers to illicit sexual behavior which would include the sin of adultery.

### 2. **Abandonment by an Unbelieving Spouse**

**I Corinthians 7:1-17** *“Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. 2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. 3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. 5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency. 6 But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment. 7 For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. 8 I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, it is good for them if they abide even as I. 9 But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. 10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: 11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. 12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away. 13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy. 15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under*

*bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace. 16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? 17 But as God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches.”*

- Paul reaffirms the covenant nature of marriage and challenges those who are married to stay married, and those who separate to not remarry, and instead focus on reconciliation with their spouse.
- In what is sometimes referred to as the “abandonment clause”, this passage indicates that when a believer is married to an unbeliever, and the unbeliever wants a divorce, divorce is permissible in this circumstance.

### **3. Physical Abuse**

- While Scripture does not specifically speak to the issue of physical abuse in relation to marriage, we understand that divorce is a reasonable outcome in such cases, especially when the abusive spouse is unrepentant.

## **III. Divorce and the Grace of God**

- When we consider how seriously God takes divorce, it can feel overwhelming to those who have been impacted by it. What does God think of me? How useful can I be to God? The answer to these questions is the same for all those who struggle with guilt and shame over mistakes in the past—**God’s grace is sufficient!** Through the Gospel, we are not defined by our sin! We are forgiven, loved, and accepted because of Christ!

**1 Corinthians 6:11** *“And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.”*

**Ephesians 1:6-8** *“To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. 7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; 8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;”*

- God takes our messes and uses them as testimonies of His grace, and to bring glory to His name! If you are married and struggling, don't quit! Stay married! Fight for your marriage! Invest in your marriage! If you have been divorced, don't live with guilt or shame! Go forward and follow Jesus with your life!

**Conclusion:**

1. Marriage was established by God at creation. (Genesis 2)
2. God's plan for marriage is that it be a permanent union and that it functions as a picture of Christ and the Church. (Matthew 19:6, Ephesians 5:22-33)
3. Divorce is a result of the Fall and represents the sinfulness and rebellion of humanity against God. (Matthew 19:7-8)
4. The ideal outcome for all married people is that they would stay married, but ultimately divorce is permissible in the case of sexual immorality, abandonment of an unbelieving spouse, and unrepentant physical abuse. (Matthew 19:9, I Corinthians 7:15)
5. The Gospel has the power to heal and restore! (I Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 1:6-8)