

- C) With Christ's clear and forceful answer to the Pharisees, he attaches "Therefore, that which God joined together a man must not separate" (Mark 10:9). This is not a suggestion, but an imperatival command!
- D) Matthew parallels this passage (the parallels are clearly of the same event) with the inclusion of an "exception clause" that divorce is allowable in cases of "immorality" (Matthew 19:9).
- E) The Apostle Paul adds a further "exception clause" for those abandoned by an unbelieving spouse (1st Corinthians 7:15). The "exception clauses" are not meant to encourage divorce, but give guidance for remarriage.

 ✱ Note Fredrick Bruner's provocative observation, "...if God has supremely intended a solitary life, God would have created humans one by one; if God had intended polygamous life, God would have created one man and several women; if God had intended homosexual life, God would have made two men or two women; but that God intended monogamous heterosexual life was shown by God's creation of one man and one woman..." From *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage, And Celibacy: An Exegesis of Matthew 19:3-12*, Craig L. Blomberg, Trinity Journal (Trinity Evangelical Divinity School), Fall 1990, Page 166.

✚ Mark & Luke use the same word for adultery (μοιχάω), however Matthew uses a broader term (πορνεία). This has led some teachers to believe that Matthew is not referring to marital adultery, but to pre-marital sex. Thus, those already married may never pursue divorce, and Matthew's "exception clause" is actually for those who are betrothed (e.g. Joseph & Mary), and was never intended for married couples. I disagree with this view on clear biblical grounds articulated here by David MacLeod from Emmaus Bible College: "First, in a number of Old Testament passages (Hosea 2:4; Jer. 3:1-9; Ezek. 16:38-41; 23:35-37, 43-45) πορνεία and μοιχάω or their derivatives are used side by side to express the same thing. In such contexts it is evident that πορνεία is linked to adultery. Second, "adultery" is a well attested meaning for πορνεία. Third, πορνεία as "adultery" would suit the context in that it was the term used more often when women were the subjects (e.g., Gen. 38:24; Prov. 6:26; Hosea 1:2; 2:2, LXX), while μοιχάω was more commonly used of men (Exod. 20:13; Lev. 20:10; Prov. 6:32, LXX). Fourth, πορνεία is a broad term which may be used of all forms of illicit sexual intercourse, including μοιχάω. Finally, Matthew may have felt that to use μοιχάω twice in the same sentence would have been literarily ungraceful. The translation of πορνεία that best fits Matthew 5:32 and 19:9, then, is a modification of the "adultery" view. I would suggest the translation "immorality" (NASB), "unchastity" (NEB), or, perhaps best, "marital unfaithfulness" (NIV). Jesus permits divorce on the sole ground of extramarital and unnatural sexual intercourse of any sort. The most common of such sins will most likely be adultery, but πορνεία is chosen to include other varieties (homosexuality/lesbianism, bigamy, prostitution, incest, and bestiality) as well..." From *The Problem of Divorce, Part 3*, David J. MacLeod, Emmaus Journal (Emmaus Bible College), 1994, No. 1, Pages 28-29.

'Til Death Do Us Part

Long Beach Alliance Church • May 31st, 2009 • Pastor Chris Lankford

Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And so I direct in all the churches.
 ~1st Corinthians 7:17 (NASB)

1) The Scope Of Our Divorce & Remarriage Conversation

- A) Because it affects so many people, divorce and the related issue of re-marriage, is a sensitive topic of discussion. Since this is the case, we will we will study several passages on divorce in order to arrive at some comprehensive conclusions (Genesis 1:27, 2:24; Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Malachi 2:16; Mark 10:1-12; Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-12; & 1st Corinthians 7:10-16).

2) A Reminder Of The Ground Rules

- A) First, the Word of God is our guiding authority (2nd Timothy 3:16). The Scriptures are our measure, particularly on difficult and/or controversial issues, for direction regarding life and practice (Hebrews 4:12).
- B) Second, the Holy Spirit provides wisdom for individual situations (John 16:6-11). Anyone who feels they have a "unique situation" is probably correct. This is why Jesus provided the unifying Spirit of God (John 14:16-17).

- C) Third, our relationships with each other should be marked with both truth and compassion (Ephesians 4:14-15). The truth of Scripture, spoken with the wisdom of God's Spirit, delivered in compassion for the purpose of building up the family of God (Ephesians 4:29).
- D) Fourth, as followers of Christ, it is important to not get overly fixated on one or two selected issues from Scripture. The church is far too well-known for being issue oriented rather than Christ-centered and love-driven (John 13:35).
- E) Fifth, let's all be honest with one another. There is no one in our church who does not need the grace of God because of personal sin. None of us want to feel like we are being "2nd-Class Citizens" in Christ. Remember that receiving grace and giving grace are the same thing, one cannot exist without the other (Ephesians 4:31-32).

3) Old Testament Teaching On Divorce

- A) Jesus' teaching on divorce is always in response to a "hostile" inquiry from the Pharisees (cf. Mark 10:2; Matthew 19:3). Their hostility was due to disagreements on how to interpret the abiding OT teaching (Deuteronomy 24:1-4) regarding "indecency."

The School of Shammai said a man could not divorce his wife unless she was found committing adultery. The School of Hillel said that a man could divorce his wife even if she spoiled his dish. Famed Rabbi Akiba said a man could divorce his wife if he found a better looking woman.

- B) The teaching on divorce from Deuteronomy is focused on the rights of women in divorce, especially forbidding the forced remarriage of a previously divorced couple.

- C) Divorce in the Old Testament assumed that those who were divorced were both eligible for remarriage. Most passages that mention divorce are actually dealing with stipulations of remarriage (Leviticus 21:7, 14; Ezekiel 44:22; Jeremiah 3:1).
- D) There are several examples of divorce in the Old Testament, even involving God (Isaiah 50:1; Jeremiah 3:8). The issue of mixed marriages even led Ezra (an expert in the Law) to prescribe divorcing foreign wives (Ezra 9-10).
- E) The teaching in Malachi 2:16 (normally translated as "God hates divorce") is a very difficult passage to translate, but within its context, has more to do with God's hatred for dealing treacherously with one another than a blanket statement about God hating/forbidding divorce.
- F) Certainly Joseph, Jesus Christ's human father, did not perceive Old Testament teaching to forbid divorce in all cases (Matthew 1:19), which indicates that divorce was permissible in the mind-set of God's people.

4) New Testament Teaching On Divorce

- A) The simplest statement by Jesus regarding divorce is found in Mark's gospel in response to a hostile inquiry (Mark 10:1-12). Rather than focus on the Deuteronomy passage, which was in heated dispute (note 3A), Jesus goes back to Genesis 1:27 & 2:24 to deal with God's divine purposes.
- B) Christ's appeal to God's intentions in His creation are instructive, these are God's intentions despite the exceptions detailed in the Old Testament.* Jesus here is making an unequivocal statement in favor of the permanency of marriage!