



Divorce and Remarriage

RECAP

This week's focus: The sacred bond of marriage is intended to last a lifetime, but when it's broken, God offers healing and restoration.

Just like the church in Corinth, we live in a culture filled with confusion about identity, sexuality, and morality. From the beginning, God's design for marriage has always been a lifelong covenant between one man and one woman. God intended this intimate union to be an illustration of His love for mankind. However, in the name of sexual freedom and the pursuit of happiness our view of marriage has been skewed.

The problem of divorce is a massive one. Experts say that over the last seventy years divorces have increased by 700%. Unfortunately, over half of all marriages end in divorce. In turn, half of the children in America have not been raised in the traditional home. Those statistics have been exacerbated by the court allowance of "no fault divorce". It is clear the negative impact of divorce has been deeply felt by individuals, family members, the local church, and society.

Anyone who has been married knows that it is hard work. There's an old Jewish proverb that says, "Love is a sweet dream, and marriage is the alarm clock." Many start out in marriage with the idea, "If I get married I won't..." The idea of a brand-new life together filled with high ideals and high expectations is soon met with a brutal reality. We married a sinner! It's true that opposites attract but they also attack. Our sinful nature has a way of elevating self over others. In marriage this can be catastrophic.

In Corinthians 7, Paul follows Jesus' teaching in Matthew 19:1-12 and instructs married couples not to divorce but to remain committed to each other. He emphasizes that a wife should not separate from her husband and that a husband should not divorce his wife. However, Paul acknowledges that there may be situations where separation occurs. He advises that if a separation does occur, the couple should either remain unmarried, reconcile with each other or in some cases are free to remarry.

Paul takes his stance on marriage right from the teaching of Jesus. In Matthew 19:1-12 Jesus stresses that God designed marriage as a lifelong covenant elevating the importance of commitment and reconciliation within marriage. Both Paul and Jesus would say to the married, "Stay married". While the scripture acknowledges the reality of marital difficulties and the possibility of separation in certain circumstances, it also encourages believers to prioritize the preservation of marriage and to seek reconciliation whenever possible.

Divorce is a last resort. It is as radical as amputating an arm or a leg. Many times, divorce increases complications and sorrows that last a lifetime. However, there are times when the covenant has been destroyed and divorce is unavoidable. In those cases, individuals should act carefully under close advisement of a Christian counselor and Pastors.

The Good News for those feeling the loss and devastation of divorce is that God can redeem anything. Consequences may continue but God's grace can turn beauty into ashes if you let Him.



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SHARE (5-10 min)

1. Icebreaker Question: Share your reaction to something that recently broke or stopped working.

STUDY (about 30 min) Read 1 Corinthians 7:10-15, Matthew 19:1-12

2. What stood out to you about the passages or message on Sunday? Is there anything that was unclear, or that you have questions about?
3. What are some of the impacts of divorce? Why do you think people seek biblical approval regarding their reason to divorce?
4. Read 1 Corinthians 7:10-15. What principles are provided for handling marital conflict and difficulties? How do these principles reflect Paul's concern for reconciliation and unity within marriage?
5. Read Matthew 19:3-9. What did Jesus say are the grounds for divorce? In your experience, what has been taught are grounds for divorce?
6. Read Jeremiah 3:7-10. How does this passage influence your view on divorce?
7. Marriage is hard but divorce is destructive. What factors can lead to the erosion of the marriage covenant? What factors reinforce the marriage covenant?
8. If you have recovered from a difficult season of marriage/divorce, would you consider sharing how you made it through that season? What can you do for those around you struggling through a difficult marriage/divorce

SUPPORT (15 min)

Consider dividing the group between men and women. Give your group an honest "status check" regarding the stage of your life (married/single). Share a current joy/struggle/trial or victory. Then pray for each other.

Books:

Sacred Marriage by Gary Thomas
 The Meaning of Marriage by Tim Keller
 The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work by John Gottman
 The Case for Marriage by Linda Waite
 The Sacred Search by Gary Thomas
 Passion and Purity by Elizabeth Elliot
 Healthy Me, Healthy Us, by Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott
 Boundaries in Dating by Henry Cloud and John Townsend
 Keep Your Love On by Danny Silk

Support:

Divorce Care: <https://www.divorcecare.org>
 Retrouvaille: <https://www.helpourmarriage.org/>
 Branches Counseling: <https://gatewaybible.org/counseling/>
 Relational Resources Counseling: www.relationalresources.org