

DIVORCE

I. Scriptures which pertain to divorce.

Lev. 21:7, 14 - (priests) "shall not take a woman divorced from her husband"

Deut. 22:19, 29 - "if a man falsely accuses wife...or rapes a woman...she shall be his wife and he cannot divorce her all his days."

Deut. 24:1,3 - "if wife does not find favor in his eyes because of some indecency, he writes her a certificate of divorce and sends her out from his house."

Isa. 50:1 - (God asks) "Where is the certificate of divorce?"

Jer. 3:1 - "If a husband divorces his wife, and she goes from him, and belongs to another man, will he return to her?"

Ezek. 44:22 - (priests) "shall not marry a divorced woman"

Mal. 2:16 - "I hate divorce," says the Lord."

Matt. 5:31,32 - Quotes Deut. 24 - "But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

Matt. 19:3, 7, 8, 9 - (Pharisees) "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all? (Jesus) "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

Mark 10:2, 4, 11, 12 - (parallel to Matt. 19)

Luke 16:18 - "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery."

I Cor. 7:10-16 - "the wife should not leave her husband..the husband should not send his wife away. If unbelieving one leaves, the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases."

II. God's intent for marriage relationship.

A. Stick like glue to your mate. Gen. 2:24

B. "What God has joined together, let no man separate" - Matt. 19:6

C. Intimacy of marriage is utmost picture of oneness of believer and Jesus Christ - Eph. 5:22-33

III. Varying attitudes toward divorce and remarriage among Christians.

A. No divorce and no remarriage.

1. "God hates divorce" - Mal. 2:16

2. Therefore the church will not allow. Roman Catholicism, Fundamentalism

B. Divorce allowed, but no remarriage.

1. Divorce allowed in case of adultery.

2. Remarriage constitutes adulterous situation.

C. Divorce and remarriage allowed for adultery and desertion.

1. Divorce allowed for

a. Adultery - Matt. 5:32; 19:9

b. Desertion - I Cor. 7:15

2. Remarriage based on same allowable exceptions - Matt. 19:9

D. Divorce and remarriage allowed in variety of circumstances.

1. Avoid legalism and judgementalism.
2. Cultural necessity to accommodate and respond to such with compassion.

IV. Questions for consideration

A. Since Deut. 24:1-3 is quoted in New Testament, does the interpretation of these verses provide the basis for interpreting Jesus' comments on divorce?

1. Divorce permitted, but not commanded.
2. Was the permission of divorce for the protection of women?
3. Was the permission of divorce part of the Law which was to reveal the inability of man apart from God's sufficiency?

B. Is adultery an act or a state of being?

C. If the violation of oneness has already taken place in adultery, then is remarriage still to be considered as an act of adultery?

D. Is divorce allowable in cases of spousal abuse? Physical? Emotional?

E. Is divorce an unforgivable sin?

F. Is God's grace sufficient for divorce?

G. Is remarriage allowable if the divorce occurred prior to conversion? II Cor. 5:17

H. Should divorced persons be regarded as "second-class citizens" in the Church?

I. Should divorced persons be allowed in church leadership? I Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:6

J. Should divorced persons continue to engage in Christian ministry? Above reproach? I Tim. 3:2.

K. Is the real issue whether Christ is our righteousness (Matt. 5:20; I Cor. 1:30), rather than technicalities of adultery or divorce?

L. If a marital divorce serves to keep one from being "diverted" from God's purposes in their life, or serves to "divert" one from a course of self-sufficiency, can it then be regarded as serving a good purpose in one's life? Rom. 8:28.

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