

Matthew: Shall Become One Flesh

Discussion Guide for June 20 and 21, 2026

Summary

In Matthew 19:1-12, the Pharisees try to trap Jesus in an ongoing rabbinic debate by asking whether divorce is lawful for any reason. Instead of answering from the Law, Jesus points them to God's original design for marriage: one man and one woman, joined together as one flesh, in a relationship meant to be life's highest priority and a lifelong covenant. Because marriage was created by God with this design in mind, divorce is meant to be rare, permitted only on narrow biblical grounds, and never the automatic response as the world teaches. The passage calls us to root our view of marriage in God's design rather than in culture, and points forward to the perfect, eternal marriage between Christ and His Church.

Ice Breaker

What's one belief about marriage you grew up with – from your family, your culture, or the media – that you've had to rethink as an adult?

Key Verses

1. Matthew 19:1-12
2. Genesis 2:24
3. Ephesians 5:31-32
4. 1 Corinthians 7

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus was asked a legal question about divorce, but He answered from the perspective of God's design instead of the Law. Where do you find your own views on marriage shaped more by culture, past experiences, or family patterns than by Scripture?
2. The sermon outlined three parts of God's design for marriage: one man and one woman, the highest-priority relationship, and a one-flesh union. Which of these three feels hardest to live out, and why?
3. The Harvard Study of Adult Development found that nearly every long-term marriage had a moment when one or both spouses were ready to divorce – but they stayed and worked through it. What helps a couple stay committed through a hard season instead of walking away?
4. Jesus said the Law allowed divorce "because of hardness of heart," even though that was never God's original intent. The sermon named three biblical grounds for divorce –

adultery, abandonment, and abuse — and was clear that even then, divorce is a last resort, not a first response. How does that change the way you'd walk alongside a friend going through a difficult marriage?

5. Jesus used the imagery of eunuchs to make the point that marriage isn't for everyone, and singleness is not a lesser calling. Have you ever felt pressure, from church culture or otherwise, to treat singleness as something to "get over"? How can we better honor both marriage and singleness as good gifts from God?

Life Application

Marriage was designed by God to reflect Christ's covenant love for the church — but this passage speaks to married and single people alike. This week, ask God to show you what it looks like to honor His design in your own life: serving your spouse more selflessly, taking a real step toward reconciliation, processing pain from a hard marriage or divorce with a pastor or trusted believer, or resting in the truth that your worth isn't tied to your marital status.

Key Takeaways

- 1.** Marriage was created by God, not invented by culture; so we are to ground our beliefs about marriage in God's original design.
- 2.** God's design for marriage is one man and one woman, elevated as each other's highest-priority relationship, and joined together as a one-flesh union.
- 3.** Divorce is permitted in Scripture only on narrow biblical grounds (adultery, abandonment, abuse) — and even then, it's never required. It's a last resort, not a first response.
- 4.** Singleness is not a lesser calling. Jesus Himself was single, and our worth was never meant to be tied to marital status.
- 5.** No earthly marriage is perfect, but every Christian marriage points forward to the perfect, eternal marriage between Christ and His Church.