

Divorce and Remarriage

Chapter 32

I. Introductory comments:

A. If you are presently married:

→ you are married to the right person!

→ God's will for you is to make this marriage a good one!

B. Two legitimate grounds for divorce:

1. Physical act of adultery

2. Irreconcilable desertion by an unbeliever

- a. If divorce is on one of those grounds, then the divorced persons are free to marry someone else.

II. God's fundamental plan for the human race is lifelong, monogamous marriage

A. Matthew 19: And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" 4 He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh"? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

1. Jesus thus corrects a current practice of easy divorce for trivial reasons.

B. Malachi 2:13 And this second thing you do. You cover the Lord's altar with tears, with weeping and groaning because he no longer regards the offering or accepts it with favor from your hand. 14 But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the Lord was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. 15 Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth. 16 "For the man who does not love his wife but divorces her, says the Lord, the God of Israel violence, says the Lord of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."

C. The great destructiveness of divorce

II. But God allows divorce to give some relief to one spouse when the other has desecrated the marriage by adultery.

A. Implications

1. If "marital unfaithfulness" (Greek *porneia*) occurs, divorce is allowed but not

required (forgiveness and reconciliation should be first option).

- B. Divorce and remarriage because of marital unfaithfulness are not wrong (divorced person is considered single again)
 - C. If divorce is obtained for other reasons, God still counts the couple as married.
 - 1. The unfaithful partner can't initiate a divorce on account of his (or her) own adultery!
- III. Teachings from other verses
- A. The "innocent party" in wrongful divorce is not free to remarry.
 - 1. Mark and Luke omit the exception for adultery
 - 2. Paul faces a new situation (Christian and non-Christian married) and allows divorce for desertion by unbeliever.
 - 3. What about desertion by one who claims to be a Christian?
- IV. Practical questions
- A. Are there other legitimate grounds for divorce?
 - B. What if someone is divorced for other reasons, and then marries someone else?
 - 1. The marriage began with adultery
 - 2. It is still a marriage in God's sight (further sin to dissolve it!)
 - 3. Ask God for forgiveness and blessing, and make this marriage a good one
- V. Practical words for people in different situations
- A. If you plan to get married someday: Matt. 19:6
 - B. If you are married
 - C. If you have wrongfully gotten a divorce, and neither one of you has remarried
 - D. If you have experienced a painful divorce -- you didn't want it, but your husband or wife divorced you anyway --