

Remarriage & Divorce

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While Jesus was miraculously healing people beyond the Jordan, the Pharisees came testing Him asking a question that is still asked by many today; "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" (Mt. 19:3). Many today are confused concerning what the Bible teaches concerning divorce and remarriage. Yet, Jesus' answer to the Pharisees is still the answer for us today.

Jesus replied, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? "So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together, let not man separate" (Mt. 19:4-6). To answer their question Jesus referred back to God's institution of marriage in the beginning (Gen.1-2). This record of God's creation of man and woman and their union should have told them the answer to their question. From the beginning God made male and female and united them as one. Anything that would break this union would be a violation of God's original plan.

Notice that Jesus did not say, **who** God has joined together, but "**what** God has joined together." It is a man and a woman who submit to be joined, but what God binds is the marriage covenant. The courts of our nation state all kinds of conditions for the marriage union to be broken. Some preachers declare there are many reasons for breaking the marriage bond. But it is God that joins man and woman in woman in this holy union and only He has the authority to

allow and state an exception to this lifetime bond. After Jesus' reply the Pharisees said, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" (Mt. 19:7). Jesus reminded them that this was not a command, but only something God permitted them to do because of the hardness of their heart. This, however, was not God's original design for marriage (Mt. 19:8).

He then said, "And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery" (Mt. 19:9). In this statement Jesus brought marriage back to God's original design (one man and one woman for a lifetime) and gave only one divine exception which allows the innocent party to divorce and remarry-- the sexual immorality of one's spouse. To divorce and remarry for any other reason is to be guilty before God. Neither can a person marry one who has been put away without being guilty (Lk.16:18). "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge (Heb. 13:4; see Rev. 21:8).

Jesus stated the truth concerning marriage in a way that should not be misunderstood. If men and women enter into marriage with this understanding they will have happier, fulfilling and lasting marriages. How we follow God's truth concerning marriage, like all other things in life, will not only have consequences in this life, but throughout eternity.

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