

Introduction

According to Wilkinson & Finbeiner Family Law Attorneys, roughly 50% of all marriages in America will end in divorce.¹ The United States has the fourth highest divorce rate in the world. The divorce rates get worse for every subsequent divorce. For first time marriages, the divorce rate is 41%. For second marriages, the divorce rate is 60%, and for third time marriages, the divorce rate is 73%. Some recent statistics show that the divorce rate is going down. However, those statistics can be misleading. Roughly 40% of all children today are born outside of marriage, so many more people are cohabitating rather than marrying, and so their break-ups do not end up in the divorce statistics. In America, there is a divorce every thirteen seconds, which equates to 277 divorces per hour, 6,646 divorces per day, 46,523 divorces per week, and 2,419,196 divorces per year.

Divorce is not something that I have looked forward to teaching about. I much prefer to talk about marriage and ways for couples to strengthen their marriages. I would much rather share with men how to love their wives as Christ loved the church. But, God included passages in the Old Testament and New Testament about divorce. In order to teach the whole counsel of God, we have to talk about issues like this. I may not like to discuss divorce, but it is an important topic because it affects so many people.

Divorce was also very common in the first century during Jesus' ministry, particularly among the Pharisees. There were two schools of thought on divorce. There was a Rabbi by the name of Shammai, and he had taught that there was to be no divorce, but most people did not agree or follow his teaching. It was too strict in their eyes. There was another Rabbi named Hillel that had taught that divorce was allowable for any reason. Rabbi Hillel's teaching was very popular and practiced by the majority of Pharisees. He had taken Deuteronomy 24:1 very loosely, where Moses wrote that when a man's wife no longer finds favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he can write her a certificate of divorce and send her out from his house." Hillel said when a man finds a more beautiful woman than his wife, that qualified as a legitimate reason for a wife to lose favor in his eyes. If a woman cooked a bad meal or put too much salt on the food, it was sufficient reason for divorce. If a woman could not bear children, she would have no favor and could be divorced. Indecencies could include letting her hair down in public. Hillel did not bother looking to see how that Hebrew word was used in other parts of the law. He used a very liberal and unbiblical interpretation and application of this law. Divorce was very prevalent among the Pharisees.

(Deut 24:1) "When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts *it* in her hand and sends her out from his house,"

It was not just the Pharisees that had a lot of divorces. It was very common among the Romans, Greeks, and other Gentiles. Divorce in Jesus' day was probably not much different than it is in our generation. It was prevalent. In our text today, Jesus answers three questions about divorce. He answered the Pharisees' question, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" Second, He answered a question that He implied, "What is God's intent for marriage?" Third, Jesus answers the question, "Is remarriage after divorce lawful?" Those are the questions that are answered in our text today.

¹ <https://www.wf-lawyers.com/divorce-statistics-and-facts/>

Jesus Answers Question about Divorce?

1. Is Divorce Lawful?
2. What is God's Intent for Marriage?
3. Is Remarriage After Divorce Lawful?

(Mark 10:1-12) "Getting up, He went from there to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan; crowds gathered around Him again, and, according to His custom, He once more *began* to teach them. {2} *Some* Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and *began* to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. {3} And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" {4} They said, "Moses permitted *a man* TO WRITE A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND *her* AWAY." {5} But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. {6} "But from the beginning of creation, *God* MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE. {7} "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, {8} AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. {9} "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." {10} In the house the disciples *began* questioning Him about this again. {11} And He *said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; {12} and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery."

1. Is Divorce Lawful? (Mark 10:1-5)

Our text begins by saying that Jesus got up. He had been sitting down and teaching them, which was the seat of authority in the Jewish culture. He got up, signifying that the teaching was over. What had He been teaching? He had been teaching His disciples a number of important messages, including how He was going to be rejected, killed, and how He would rise from the dead after three days. Jesus taught them about humility. He knew that His disciples had been discussing who was the greatest, and Jesus taught them about being the last, not the first. He taught them to be servant leaders. Jesus also taught them living at peace with others, and not insisting that they follow them. He also taught them to be radical in their efforts to live righteous lives that do not give offense to others. These were Core Values.

(Mark 10:1) "Getting up, He went from there to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan; crowds gathered around Him again, and, according to His custom, He once more *began* to teach them."

After getting up, Jesus went from there to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan. This ended Jesus' two-year ministry in Galilee. Jesus has started making His way to Jerusalem where He will be crucified. Crowds began to gather around Jesus, and according to His custom, He began to teach them. Jesus proclaimed the gospel wherever He went. He also demonstrated the gospel by healing people and casting out demons. That was His custom. Wherever Jesus went, people got healed, delivered, and saved.

Jesus went to the region of Judea, and beyond the Jordan. In Luke 9:51-53, as He went from Galilee towards Samaria, they did not receive Him. The disciples wanted to call down fire from heaven because of this. Jesus rebuked them for their attitude and said that He came to save, not to destroy. Then, Jesus went across over the Jordan to the other side, known as Peran or the land beyond. This is critical information in regard to the question that the Pharisees were going to ask Him. The term beyond is *peran* (Strong's G4008) in the Greek. The area east of the Jordan

River was known as Perea or the land beyond. We discussed this area when we were in Mark 6. King Herod had built a palace called Machaerus, and in that palace he also had a prison. Herod had two palaces and this one was a little north of the Dead Sea.

(Luke 9:51-56) “When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem; {52} and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him. {53} But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem. {54} When His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?" {55} But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "You do not know what kind of spirit you are of; {56} for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them."] And they went on to another village.”

We saw in Mark 6 that Herod had John the Baptist arrested and bound in prison. John was being kept at Machaerus, and it was there that Herodias had her daughter request John the Baptist's head on a platter. Why did all this happen. Mark told us that Herod had John arrested because he had told him that it was not lawful for him to have his brother's wife. Herodias had divorced her husband, Philip, and married Herod. John told him that this was not lawful. This is significant because Jesus is in the same area, and the Pharisees know that if Jesus says something about divorce and adultery, King Herod may arrest Jesus and put Him to death. (See also Luke 20:20.)

(Mark 6:17-27) “For Herod himself had sent and had John arrested and bound in prison on account of Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, because he had married her. {18} For John had been saying to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife." {19} Herodias had a grudge against him and wanted to put him to death and could not *do so...* {27} Immediately the king sent an executioner and commanded *him* to bring *back* his head. And he went and had him beheaded in the prison.”

Some Pharisees were in the crowd and they came up to Jesus, testing Him. The Greek word that is translated as testing is *peirazo* (Strong's G3985). The majority of times it is translated as tempting, which is more in line with what the Pharisees were trying to do. If you recall when Jesus went into the desert for forty days to fast, He was tempted by the devil. That is the same Greek word. The devil was not trying to test Jesus; He was tempting Him to sin. The Pharisees were trying to cause Jesus to stumble. They are trying to destroy Him in any way possible.

(Mark 10:2) “*Some* Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and *began* to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife.”

In Mark 3 Jesus had healed a man with a withered hand. It infuriated the Pharisees, and they began conspiring with the Herodians as to how they might destroy Him. Where is Jesus right now? He is in Perea, not far from Machaerus, where Herod lives. The Pharisees, and probably some Herodians with them, are trying to find a way to destroy Jesus.

(Mark 3:6) “The Pharisees went out and immediately *began* conspiring with the Herodians against Him, *as to* how they might destroy Him.”

In Mark 11:18, we find that the chief priests and scribes were trying to destroy Him. (See also Luke 19:47.) In Mark 14:1, the chief priests and scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth and kill Him. In John 11:53, Jesus had raised Lazarus from the dead, and the chief priests

and the Pharisees convened a council, and they began planning together to kill Him. The Pharisees wanted to destroy and kill Jesus in any way that they could. They had been planning how to do this, and now they see an opportunity.

(Mark 11:18) “The chief priests and the scribes heard *this*, and *began* seeking how to destroy Him; for they were afraid of Him, for the whole crowd was astonished at His teaching.”

(Mark 14:1) “Now the Passover and Unleavened Bread were two days away; and the chief priests and the scribes were seeking how to seize Him by stealth and kill *Him*;

(John 11:53) “So from that day on they planned together to kill Him.”

The Pharisees knew what Jesus taught. They knew that in His sermon on the mound He had spoken about divorce and adultery. Jesus had already addressed this issue. He said, “It was said, ‘whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce,’ but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.” They knew that this is what got John the Baptist arrested and beheaded. They know that if they can get Jesus to repeat this now, there is a good possibility that Herod will arrest and behead Jesus. The Pharisees had a devious plan to destroy and kill Jesus, and this was the perfect time, place, and opportunity.

(Matt 5:31-32) “It was said, ‘WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE’; {32} but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

So, the Pharisees ask Jesus the question, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce a wife?” They don’t really want to know this, because many, if not most of them, were divorced. They were not trying to find out what the word of God says about divorce and then repent. They were trying to get Jesus to say something that will offend people, and most importantly, offend Herod.

Jesus answered their question with a question. He was really good about doing that. He asked them, “What did Moses command you?” He takes them back to the Scriptures, not opinion. The word of God is the authority that we go to for all of our questions and answers.

(Mark 10:3) “And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?”

The Pharisees knew the passage of Deuteronomy 24 very well. Hillel had used this passage to justify divorce for any reason. If a wife no longer found favor in the husband’s eyes, he could divorce her and get another wife. If the husband found any indecency in her, he could divorce her and get another wife. They had taken the liberal interpretation of this passage and were treating their wives treacherously. The Pharisees said that Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away. They were quoting Deuteronomy 24:1, where Moses permitted divorce.

(Mark 10:4) “They said, “Moses permitted *a man* TO WRITE A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND *her* AWAY.”

(Deut 24:1) “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house,”

Moses gave permission to divorce; he did not give a command to divorce. The Pharisees did not answer His question. They were seeking justification from the Law about what they were doing. What was the command in that passage? Let’s take a look at all four verses in that passage that Jesus has asked them about?

(Deut 24:1-4) “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house, {2} and she leaves his house and goes and becomes another man's wife, {3} and if the latter husband turns against her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her to be his wife, {4} then her former husband who sent her away is not allowed to take her again to be his wife, since she has been defiled; for that is an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.”

The command was that if a man divorces his wife, he is not allowed to remarry her after she has become another man’s wife. After a woman has married another man, the first man was not allowed to take her back. Then, Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.” Even if a man or woman has a flaw, and we all have flaws, that does not mean that we should divorce our spouse. We need to forgive one another, and that requires a soft heart. We need to accept one another, and love one another. Moses permitted or allowed divorce because of the hardness of our hearts.

(Mark 10:5) “But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment."

Does that mean that everyone who is divorced is hard-hearted? No, that does not mean that at all. I know a lot of people who are divorced. I know some of them tried to do everything they could in that marriage but their spouse was hard-hearted. These people were willing to go to counseling, follow all the counsel that was given, but their spouses were not willing to follow any counsel. Their spouses were not committed to working through things, and to forgive their spouses. It only takes one hard heart to file for divorce. We all sin, so in a marriage it is only a matter of time when we do or say something that offends our spouse. Marriage is a covenant relationship that requires commitment and a willingness to work through things.

Let me talk about one of those words in the passage. The NASB said if a man finds an “indecency” in his wife, he could write her a certificate of divorce. Rabbi Hillel said that if a woman went around with loose hair, or said something unkind about your mother, or spoke to loud to her husband, that was considered indecent and sufficient grounds for divorce. The Hebrew word is ervah (Strong’s H6172), which literally means nakedness. In the NASB it is translated forty-eight out of fifty-four times as nakedness. That does not literally mean naked in this passage; it refers to doing something that was shameful.

In Deuteronomy 23:12-14, Moses spoke about going to the bathroom outside the camp. He said that we need to carry a spade with us and to cover up our excrement. Then, Moses said, “Since

the Lord your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy, and He must not see anything indecent among you or He will turn away from you.” That word indecent is the same word. In the context of marriage, our marriages are holy, and our sins and indecencies need to be likewise covered. Love covers a multitude of sins (1 Pet 4:8). When we do something in a marriage that violates the sanctity of marriage, like adultery, that would be considered indecent.

(Deut 23:12-14) “You shall also have a place outside the camp and go out there, {13} and you shall have a spade among your tools, and it shall be when you sit down outside, you shall dig with it and shall turn to cover up your excrement. {14} Since the LORD your God walks in the midst of your camp to deliver you and to defeat your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy; and He must not see anything indecent among you or He will turn away from you.”

Turn in your Bibles to Leviticus 18. I want to show you where this word is used twenty-four times out of the total of fifty-four. God said not to uncover the nakedness of your father, that is the nakedness of your mother. We are not to uncover the nakedness of sisters, grandchildren, or any other blood relative. God was not speaking of just seeing them naked. He is speaking of sexual immorality. We are not to have sexual relations with anyone other than our spouse, and the term that is used is uncovering their nakedness. So, when we look at Moses’ words finding an indecency or nakedness about his wife, I believe he is referring to an immoral relationship that she has had. That was the reason for the permission given by Moses.

(Lev 18:6-20) “None of you shall approach any blood relative of his to uncover **nakedness**; I am the LORD. {7} You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your father, that is, the **nakedness** of your mother. She is your mother; you are not to uncover her **nakedness**. {8} You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your father's wife; it is your father's **nakedness**. {9} The **nakedness** of your sister, *either* your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether born at home or born outside, their **nakedness** you shall not uncover. {10} The **nakedness** of your son's daughter or your daughter's daughter, their **nakedness** you shall not uncover; for their **nakedness** is yours. {11} The **nakedness** of your father's wife's daughter, born to your father, she is your sister, you shall not uncover her **nakedness**. {12} You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your father's sister; she is your father's blood relative. {13} You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your mother's sister, for she is your mother's blood relative. {14} You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your father's brother; you shall not approach his wife, she is your aunt. {15} You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your daughter-in-law; she is your son's wife, you shall not uncover her **nakedness**. {16} You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of your brother's wife; it is your brother's **nakedness**. {17} You shall not uncover the **nakedness** of a woman and of her daughter, nor shall you take her son's daughter or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her **nakedness**; they are blood relatives. It is lewdness. {18} You shall not marry a woman in addition to her sister as a rival while she is alive, to uncover her **nakedness**. {19} Also you shall not approach a woman to uncover her **nakedness** during her menstrual impurity. {20} You shall not have intercourse with your neighbor's wife, to be defiled with her.”

When we look at what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount, this lines up with it. He said, “Everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery.” The Greek word for unchastity is *porneia*, which means sexual immorality or fornication. In the parallel account in Matthew 19, the same Greek word is used, but it is

translated as immorality. All of these are in line with the intent in Deuteronomy 24. This was a strong statement against what the Pharisees were practicing.

(Matt 5:32a) “but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery...”

(Matt 19:9) “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

The answer to the question, is it lawful for a man to divorce a wife, is yes. It is lawful for immorality. It does not mean that you have to get a divorce. Sins and indecencies can be covered with love and forgiveness. Marriages can be restored. God knew that we would sin against one another, and because of our hard hearts, people would not forgive one another. Therefore, He allowed divorce, but as we will see in Jesus’ response, it was not God’s intent.

2. What is God’s Intent for Marriage? (Mark 10:6-9)

Next, Jesus answers an unspoken question. He said, “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother, and the two shall become one flesh, so they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” The question is what is God’s intent in marriage? The Pharisees are looking for an excuse to divorce a wife, and Jesus takes them back to the foundation of marriage, and gives them God’s intent for marriage. The two are to become one or to cleave together.

(Mark 10:6-9) “But from the beginning of creation, *God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.* {7} “FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, {8} AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh. {9} “What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

I spoke one day on marriage and gave an hour-long message on this word cleave. The Hebrew word in Genesis 2:24 for cleave is *dabaq* (Strong’s H1692), which means to cleave, cling, join, closely pursue, or overtake. In marriage, the man and woman are to cleave or join together through a pursuit of one another until they overtake each other.

(Gen 2:24) “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.”

There was a movie called, “Fifty First Dates” and it was crude in parts, but what I loved about the movie is that Adam Sandler pursued Drew Barrymore every day. She had a short-term memory loss because of an accident, and so she never remembers what happened since the accident. So, Adam Sandler tries to make her fall in love with him every day. That is what marriage is supposed to be. The man and woman are to pursue each other every day until they overtake one another and become one.

Let me give you a great example of this in the Old Testament. In Genesis 31, Jacob had fled from Laban without saying good-bye. When Laban heard about it on the third day, he took his kinsmen with him and pursued Jacob for seven days. He must have pushed hard because Jacob had a three-day head start. Finally, Laban overtook him in the hill country of Gilead. That word,

overtook, is dabaq. He was able to join up with Jacob after pursuing him hard for a week. Marriage is not a one-week pursuit, but a commitment to pursue one another for a life time. It is not just pursuing, but the goal is to become one. Some men don't try to be in unity with their wife. I think it is extremely important to be one. And the two shall become one.

(Gen 31:22-23) "When it was told Laban on the third day that Jacob had fled, {23} then he took his kinsmen with him and pursued him *a distance of seven days' journey*, and he overtook him in the hill country of Gilead."

In our text, the Greek word for joined is *proskollao* (Strong's G4347). *Kollao* means glue, so a man shall leave his father and mother and become glued to his wife. They are glued together and they are no longer two, but one. When you glue something together, you are not trying to find a way to separate it; you are trying to get the two pieces to permanently stick together. The Pharisees were looking for a way to separate the two; Jesus was telling them that God's intent for them is to pursue one another and look for ways to glue themselves to their wives. There is a difference in the NASB and KJV in verse seven. In the KJV, they quote more of Genesis 2:24, and in the NASB they leave off the phrase, "and shall cleave to his wife." Some of the earliest manuscripts did not quote the whole verse, just the first part. Some of the later manuscripts included the whole verse. Therefore, some scholars believe the phrase was added in later by those that transcribe the Bible. In Matthew 19:5, the whole verse is included. In Jewish culture, often a Rabbi would start a phrase, and the audience understood the whole passage was being referred to.

(Mark 10:7 NASB) "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER,"

(Mark 10:7 KJV) "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;"

3. Is Remarriage after Divorce Lawful? (Mark 10:10-12)

The third question that Jesus answers is asked by the disciples. After Jesus has answered the Pharisees and survived their trap, He and the disciples went to a house. We do not know whose house they went to, but they went in a house and the disciples began questioning Jesus about this again. This was very common. Jesus would teach something to the crowds, and then the disciples would ask questions about it when they were in private. Another way to look at it is they would wait until their small group met and ask questions there. Small groups are excellent ways of discussing messages and making sure that everyone has understanding. On a Sunday morning, everyone hears the preacher, but the preacher does not hear everyone. There may be a whole bunch of people who leave and don't have all their questions answered. Small groups are wonderful because people have the opportunity to ask their questions.

(Mark 10:10-12) "In the house the disciples *began* questioning Him about this again. {11} And He *said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; {12} and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery."

Mark does not give us the exact question they asked, but by the answer that Jesus gave, it was probably, "Is remarriage after divorce lawful?" Jesus' answer was, "whoever divorces his wife

and marries another woman commits adultery against her, and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.” In Matthew 19:8-9, the parallel account, we find another clause, that Jesus also gave in Matthew 5:31-32. “And I say to you whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” We saw that immorality or unchastity is the nakedness that was mentioned in Deuteronomy 24:1, and this is the exception for divorce.

(Matt 19:9) “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

(Matt 5:32) “but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

A covenant vow was a vow unto death. Therefore, if a man or woman remarried while their first spouse was still alive, it was considered adultery. In 1 Corinthians 7:39, Paul wrote, “A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.” So, when Jesus answered the disciples’ question about is it okay to marry if you are divorced, this was a very strict position, and certainly not what was being practiced in their culture, and by the spiritual leaders of that day. In Matthew’s parallel account, the disciples answered Jesus by saying, “if the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.” His answer gave them some things to think about.

(1 Cor 7:39) “A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.”

(Matt 19:10) “The disciples said to Him, “If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.”

I want to talk about this question for just a few more minutes. In the Old Testament, and according to the Law, “if a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman.” So, if a marriage vow was broken, the guilty party would be put to death. That allowed the innocent party to free from their vow. They were free to remarry. At the time of Jesus, they had stopped following that Law a long time before. The Pharisees and the people were divorcing for any reason at all and remarrying. Jesus told them the intent in marriage was to join together, and what God had joined together, no man was to separate. However, in the case of adultery, the adulterers were put to death, allowing the innocent person to remarry.

(Deut 22:22) “If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel.”

In our culture, we do not put someone to death because they committed adultery. So, if a man commits adultery and then he divorces his wife, she may be left to raise a family by herself. According to this passage, she has to remain single all of her days and the guilty one does whatever he chooses to do. Under the law, the woman would have more freedom than not being under the Law. So, in interpreting whether a person can remarry, I think this has to be considered.

God also said that it is not good for man to be alone. I believe that God created some to be single, but the majority of people are not geared that way. Most of us were created to have a partner for life. I have known a number of people that did not want divorce, but their spouse wanted divorce, and under the strict interpretation of remarriage and adultery, they suffer a lifetime of loneliness because of the sin of the other person. I don't think that God's grace works that way. So, I think that this has to be taken into consideration.

Finally, many people do not think the way God thinks about marriage. God said in Malachi 2:16, "for I hate divorce." God hates it when a man deals treacherously with his wife. I believe that we must take our covenants and oaths seriously. Marriage is not a trial; it is intended to be a lifetime pursuit of one another. Marriage is a wonderful gift that God wants us to enjoy.

(Mal 2:14-16) "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. {15} But not one has done *so* who has a remnant of the Spirit. And what did *that* one *do* while he was seeking a godly offspring? Take heed then to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth. {16} For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

Conclusion and Applications

There were three questions asked about divorce. The Pharisees were not really looking for God's view about marriage and divorce; they had evil intentions and were trying to get Jesus in trouble with Herod and His followers. Jesus did not dodge their question; He referred them back to the Scriptures. The answer to the first question is that God allowed divorce. He allowed it because of hardness of heart.

The second question is what is God's intent in marriage? His intent was for a man and woman to bond together permanently. They are no longer two, but one, and one is indivisible. God's intent is for a man and woman to pursue one another all the days of their life. His desire is for them to work at being united. His desire is not to pursue divorce, but to pursue oneness. Therefore, when I see a marriage in trouble, I pray for God to soften the hearts of the man and his wife. I also pray for them to work through the issues and to forgive one another. I pray for reconciliation. I pray for love to bond them together again.

The third question was if a man could remarry after divorce. Jesus answered, saying, "whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery." In the context of all three parallel passages in Matthew, Mark, and Luke, it is speaking about divorce and adultery. In the Old Testament, the innocent party could remarry because the guilty party would be put to death. Many scholars today say that when there is a divorce because of adultery, the innocent party is free to remarry. I lean towards this interpretation.

The goal of marriage is to cleave or join together permanently. It is not to justify divorce, for God hates divorce. My heart is to help husbands and wives love one another, be reconciled to one another, and for their marriages to reflect Christ's marriage to the church.

Q&A

Introduction (Deut 24:1, Mark 10:1-12)

1. **Is Divorce Lawful?** (Mark 10:1-5, 6:17-27, 3:6, 11:18, 14:1, Luke 19:47, John 11:53, Matt 5:31-32, Deut 24:1-4, 1 Pet 4:8, Deut 23:12-14, Lev 18:6-20, Matt 19:9)

2. **What is God's Intent for Marriage?** (Mark 10:6-9, Gen 2:24, Gen 31:22-23)

3. **Is Remarriage after Divorce Lawful?** (Mark 10:10-12, Deut 24:1, Matt 19:9-10, 5:32, 1 Cor 7:39, Deut 22:22, Mal 2:14-16)

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