

What Does God Think About Divorce?

Introduction:

This needs to be preached to all...to our children, to older single people, to young couples, to older couples, to those already divorced. I realize some have been through a divorce, and I will try to be kind and considerate, but I owe it to those who have not experienced a divorce and to our young people hearing some of this for the first time, to teach the lesson. And I owe it to those who have divorced, for it can be repeated.

If we shun to declare the whole counsel of God on the subject, it will still judge us in the last day. We can refuse to speak of the subject ever again, to make it taboo, but God word will never fail. It will still condemn or save in the Last Day. We need to speak about it.

Today we hear of no-fault divorces...divorces after only a day or so...multiple divorces....all pointing to either complete ignorance or disdain for this precious relationship of God called marriage. Though we may think it bad today that such a high percentage of marriages end in divorce, it is not necessarily the worst of times. So, do not become defeated when dealing with the problem.

So, what does God think about divorce?

There is only ONE way to find out...in the pages of the revealed Scripture. My opinion and your's, church traditions or regulations, do not amount to dust on the subject, when compared to the **truth** of Almighty God. And never is this more true than on the topic of marriage, as HE is said to join a man and woman in marriage. It is not at all a church institution, nor even primarily a civil ordinance, but a **God bound and ordained** relationship that applies to all mankind, no matter their race or religion. He joins Hindus and Muslims, atheists and the rankest of sinners, as He does faithful saints. And His rules about it apply to all. And what He says about man divorcing (separating or dissolving HIS union) is said across the board, whether a man reads a Bible or not. Ignorance does not give one a pass, nor does a lack of obedience or compliance. When Jesus was asked about divorce, He began His reply with, "Have you not read?" It is imperative that we **read** what the bible says to rightly know what God thinks on this and every subject.

I) So, What does God think about divorce?

1. God thinks marriage is HIS Business and man is out of bounds to divorce without His approval.

Malachi 2:13-16...

"The Lord has been WITNESS"...God not only saw and heard what happened at your wedding, but is a legal witness to the contract. A third party involved.

She is "your wife by COVENANT"... your partner joined to you by GOD. This is HOLY matrimony.

"Did HE not make them ONE?"....It is not solely at sexual consummation that makes one flesh, but the two are also made ONE by God.

Matthew 19:3-6.. "What GOD has joined together, let not MAN put asunder" This is true of everything God joins together. Man is not allowed to divide what ultimately he did not join.

2. God thinks divorce is injurious to people

Malachi 2:14-16...

"With whom you have dealt treacherously"... "Let none deal treacherously"... "Take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."

"He hates divorce, for it covers one's garment with violence."

In divorce there is often damage done to one's conscience, one's confidence, one's life.

Damage to children in some cases...scarred for life...far more than many today wish to acknowledge...even small children too naive to know what is going on. There are some who will argue divorce is worse than death...Acceptance of death as the reason Daddy does not come home or live with us, can psychologically be better be dealt with than the other reasons supplied.

Sometimes, there is a tug-of-war over custody. The efforts to compensate for not being there may go overboard and become counterproductive for the child's well-being.

Then there is the damage done to the extended family members. Parents on both sides, who may also be grandparents now, as well as the in-laws and uncles, aunts and cousins.

The worldly idea of "no fault" divorce is just that...worldly. Even in a divorce that God permits, sin has occurred and injury therefore done.

Jesus says in Matthew 5:32 if you divorce your spouse for reasons other than fornication YOU CAUSE her to commit adultery (assuming she remarries) and whoever marries her as well. Lots of damage being done.

3. God thinks divorce can vitally affect one's relationship with Him

Malachi spoke of the hypocrisy of people who would "cover the altar of the LORD with tears" (2:13-14), yet be unfaithful in their marriage. They then wondered why God wasn't pleased with them and wouldn't accept their offerings. It seems that how you treat your marriage relationship does indeed impact your relationship with God—and how (or whether) he chooses to respond to your prayers. See also I Peter 3:7. God may refuse your worship and offering because of your mistreatment of your spouse.

4. God thinks His rules about divorce may be hard for some to accept

In Matt 19:10-12 some thought the Lord's response to their question about divorce was hard to receive. "If this is the case, then it is better never to marry." It is hard for some. What He has said is not an easy thing to accept or practice. Impossible? Never. God's commandments are for OUR good always and are not grievous. But, Jesus acknowledges that not all can accept it and some may even choose not to marry for the sake of king Jesus.

It was hard for Herodias, Herod's wife to take the word of John the Baptist that she and Herod's marriage was not legitimate. In fact, it grated on her so much that eventually she had him killed. You can read about it in Mark 6:14-18.

5. God thinks nothing of divorce when He thinks about marriage

God uses the marriage bond to describe to our minds the union of man and Christ. (II Cor. 11:2) Why would he do that if it was some sort of capricious relationship that we can take up and put down at our whim?!! Ephesians 5:22-33 likens the relationship of Christ and the church to the husband-wife relationship. Divorce casts a cloud over that beautiful analogy. Romans 7:1-4 says the Jews relationship with the law of Moses was like marriage...until death. Divorce spoils that imagery.

6. God thinks divorce is sometimes necessary and sometimes permissible

In Ezra 10:10-44 we read of Israelite men, who had married pagan women in violation of God's law, having to put those wives away to be pleasing to God.

In Matthew 19:9; 5:32. fornication (sexual immorality) is given by God as a permitted exception to His rule of "no divorce", but it is not a mandated requirement. Many are the couples who have weathered this sinfulness, repented and recovered. But, God does grant it for those who wish or may have no other recourse in dealing with a philanderer.

7. God thinks ideally, divorce should never happen

In Mark's account, chapter 10:11-12, there is no mention of any reason for divorce. The same is found in Luke 16:18....Ideally, divorce should never happen...Jesus said in response to the comment that Moses had said to put divorce in writing, that Moses had said that due to people stubbornly doing what they wanted instead of what God wanted. From the beginning it has always been God's thinking...one man, one woman, until death....ideally divorce never happens. If one goes on and divorces for other reasons, stay unmarried or be reconciled. - I Cor. 7: 10-11.

II) Some Options Married People Do Not Have

*When two people are married, they often vow to love, honor and cherish one another for better or worse, in sickness and in health, and in prosperity and in adversity until death parts them. But many couples, both young and old, later decide that they don't want to and don't have to stay married. **God has given them no such option!***

*Some decide that they want a divorce from a mate because they are "no longer in love" with that mate. Husbands and wives **do not have the option of deciding to stop loving one another.** They promised to love each other until death. If we say we no longer love our mate, then we need to **REPENT!!***

*Some decide that they want a divorce because a mate has contracted a debilitating disease or has been paralyzed by an accident, or is in jail or is overseas in a war, etc., and their continued care constitutes a "hardship." **But God has not given them that option.** The unfortunate mate needs them more than ever, and they need to show the nobility of their love, their character and their commitment.*

*Some decide that they want a divorce because they have found someone else that they "truly love" (or like better), someone who also shows greater love for them (their perception) than their mate. But, again, **God did not give them any such option.** Marriage is for life, and not "until you find someone you like better."*

*Some decide that they want a divorce because they "just don't get along well" with their mate, or they "really weren't ready for such a commitment," or they have found that "they are no longer compatible" with their mate, or they "don't feel loved and important," or they "argue all the time," etc., **but God has given them no such option.***

*When two people marry, they have entered in a serious, life-long relationship. Both need to be sure that they are ready for such a commitment. **God's law is clear and unchanging.***

- by Bill Crews (edited)

III) When The Vows Break

No one enters marriage planning to divorce. Nor do you anticipate the traumatic (and sometimes unexpected) events that lead to that decision. But divorce, unfortunately, does happen. Things do sometimes go wrong and it is no fault of one of the spouses. How does God view this?

These days we are witnessing a huge increase in the number of women leaving their husbands and many times children, for a relationship with another man. I can name two faithful gospel preachers who have had this happen to them and I heard one of them say that in a congregation in Texas where he once lived there were FIVE such men...husbands whose wives had cheated on them and left them. Sometimes it may be due to their wife's financial independence enabling the option, sometimes it may just be a lack of natural affection, sometimes just a desire for pleasure or maybe even escaping the hard work of home life and family. But, whatever the cause...for man or woman, divorce sometimes happens, vows are broken and life has to go on. Below are some excerpts from an article titled: **When The Vow Breaks** by one of these gospel preachers I mentioned. If you wish to read the entire article, I will gladly provide it.

When The Vow Breaks

I Am Divorced: *Like The Alcoholic who finds courage to stand at his first A.A. meeting and admit what he would rather hide and deny, well, that's me. It's not easy writing those words or even admitting them to myself.*

You may wonder why it is that big a deal. After all, many marriages end in divorce and it is a common thing for people to talk in flippant tones about an ex-husband or wife as if they were speaking about a once-loved vehicle they have traded in on a new model. I hate that. My view of marriage is one of permanency -- one man and one woman "until death do you part" (Rom. 7:2,3). I learned, however, a valuable lesson along the road of life -- you cannot make someone else remain committed nor can you make him/her do what is right. You can, however, control yourself.

It has been a long and difficult struggle. Divorce always is. It has been described as the "gift that keeps on giving" and anyone on the receiving end of a judge's gavel knows exactly what that means. It never just "goes away."

I will tell you that as a gospel preacher there have been days when I wished I wasn't. There have been days when I have felt the extra burden that accompanies the glass house in which most of us who fill pulpits are forced to live. And there were days when, even though I knew my innocence, I wondered if others would have confidence in my work. It was an added burden and certainly not an imaginary one.

Seventeen years after the fact, it is still hard to admit. There comes with that word a sense of failure and, although God does not hold one accountable for the sins of another, sometimes people aren't as merciful. But I can't do anything about that. And neither can you.

Finding Faith: *I write these difficult words in the hope that they will help another. Divorce is, in fact, life's greatest tragedy. It has been said that death is easier than divorce and in some ways it is. By no means does that minimize the grief that accompanies death nor do we do anyone any favors by comparing tragedies. But in death, as horrible as it can be, there is some semblance of closure. In divorce, the innocent ones live daily in the wake of someone's sin, and closure is seldom found.*

Debbie Lanphear of Bowling Green, Kentucky got it right when she wrote, "Divorce is like a Civil War triage where you feel a limb had been amputated without anesthesia." Some of you know what she means.

Children of divorce struggle with emotional baggage beyond words -- words they can neither express or understand. In death they will eventually comprehend that mom or dad did not have a choice; in divorce, they will always struggle because mom or dad did have a choice.

It is essential in all of this, however, that you rely upon your faith. If your faith counts for anything, it now must count for everything. The answer is not in denial (I am concerned about those people the most). The answer is not in busy-ness -- which only masks the real problem. The bottom line answer lies in an inseparable link to the Living Lord.

Moving Ahead: *It is important at some point that you move ahead -- although some people never do. Stuck in a time warp, they relive the tragic events over and over. Just as it is not healthy to bypass the natural grieving process, it is equally unhealthy to continue to grieve. As David "arose from the ground, washed, anointed himself, and changed his clothes...and came into the house of the Lord and worshiped..." after grieving over his son (2 Sam. 12:20) and...as Ezra encouraged his people to move on from grief and turn tears into joy (Neh. 8:11), it is essential that we do the same.*

Do you need help to move on? Seek it. For some reason Christians fear turning to others. Doesn't Proverbs speak of the need to "acquire wisdom?" One source of wisdom is found in the advice of qualified people who can instruct with objectivity regarding human behavior. Too often when faced with the emotional trauma of divorce, people turn for support only to those who are emotionally involved -- family and friends. That is a mistake.

While you need the support of those people on one level, they may not be the ones who will help you move ahead. Family and friends tend to fuel pity and you don't need that. Find someone who can be objective -- who will tell you what you need to hear rather than what you want to hear. Or seek advice from a qualified professional who comes recommended by someone you trust.

Regaining Hope: Two verses gave me hope: "Do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength" (Neh. 8:10b), and "We know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God" (Rom. 8:28). Just knowing that God had not forsaken me gave me the blessed assurance to keep going.

I couldn't bring myself to preach or write about home and family, relationships and marriage for years. But I do now. I have been blessed with opportunities to speak about the sanctity of marriage and the tragedy of divorce and, even though it remains painful to discuss, I am willing to do it because of the help it brings to others. Whatever you do, do not cave in to pity. By the grace of God, rise up! Who knows, there may be others who could benefit from your experience and encouragement.

by Wilson Adams in Biblical Insights, Vol. 7, No. 2, Feb. 2007.

IV) How Can A Marriage Last For Life?

Three things are needed: Commitment, commitment, commitment. In every marriage there needs to be:

1. A **commitment** to God - Remember...God Joined You!

2. A **commitment** to the relationship of marriage - Remember...Your Life-long Promise! Keep your word. Marriages are far less likely to dissolve when neither spouse ever entertains the divorce option. In fact, it just is not an option! It is therefore important to not only be committed yourself, but as best you can tell, only marry another who has the same level of commitment as you. Both should express the sentiment of Ruth to each other; "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me." (Ruth 1:16-17)

3. A **commitment** to your spouse - Remember...Do not make your spouse stumble.

V) "Till Death Do Ye Part": A Beautiful Thing

What sounds so negative to many, is actually a statement of joyful commitment. "Until death do ye part"...has a nice ring to it. God's commandments are for **our** good always (Deuteronomy 6:24) including His instruction that marriage be a life-long covenant. God, who knows us better than we know ourselves, has in essence said, that it will be best for us when we marry, to stay married until death do us part. But what is so good about it?

For one, the intimate knowledge of one another by two people in marriage, borderlines on something spiritual. The oneness in body begins the first day, when the union is consummated, but grows into a oneness in spirit that transcends all earthly relationships. They grow to think alike (often being able to read each other's mind without a word being spoken), to view things alike (developing a similar perspective of many matters) and some say even to look alike. A husband and wife can truly grow old together gracefully, experiencing a fulfillment that is almost indescribable.

But, celebrating a golden anniversary will not come without effort. No relationship of any closeness gets that way without hardships along the way. In fact, two can be drawn even closer together by working through their problems. Rather than driving a wedge between them, it produces another degree of intimacy in their relationship. They know each other a little bit better. It is often trials by fire that refine us the most.

The marriage is more likely to be a great success when both parties are **unselfish** in their love of the other. The man will be very fulfilled to have **someone to die for**, to provide and protect, and to lead. The wife will be very fulfilled to have **someone to live for**, to help and support, to love. Both, in their respective, God-given roles, are providing something to the union that is better when joined to the other. In other words, one whole is better than two halves. And speaking of halves, each will think the other is the better half.

Conclusion: Much more could be said about the sadness of divorce and the joy of a permanent marriage relationship, but, hopefully enough has been said to please God and make the point... that “till death do us part” is a beautiful thing.