

Avoiding Divorce

While weddings are beautiful and inspiring events, they are often followed by tragedy. For many couples, what begins with happiness and optimism ends with separation and divorce.

Divorce is viewed by many as an easy way out of marriage. They go into a marriage thinking, "We will try it, and if it doesn't work, we can bail and get a divorce.

The topic of divorce was also controversial in the time of Jesus. The Pharisees attempted to turn people away from Jesus by asking Him about this hot-button issue. What does Jesus say about divorce (Matthew 19:1-10)?

- Jesus rehearsed God's original intent for marriage. When God created marriage in the beginning, His will was for it to be a lifelong relationship. The only exception God allows for a divorce is when an innocent person is putting a guilty person away for sexual immorality (Matthew 19:9).
- The innocent person can marry another (not bound to another), and the guilty person must remain single (Romans 7:2-3).

While the "exception" to divorce is the main thing many focus on in this text, that is not what the Lord focuses on. Jesus focuses more on marriage than divorce. He clarifies that divorce is not God's will, and couples must seek to avoid it.

Let's consider some things that will help us avoid divorce.

Understanding the importance of commitment.

- Couples make vows on their wedding day. They promise to be faithful and remain together no matter their circumstances.
- These are promises they make to one another and God.
 - God expects His people to fulfill their promises (Ecclesiastes 5:5).
 - It is a treacherous thing to break covenants (Malachi 2:14-16).
 - The disciples must honor their commitments (Matthew 5:33-37).

Understanding what it does to the relationship.

- Divorce does not aid couples in fulfilling their obligations to one another (Ephesians 5:22-33).
- Jesus powerfully describes what occurs when a man and woman marry (Matthew 19:4-6).
 - God joins them. He "glues" them together. This denotes permanency.
 - They become "one flesh." They share purpose, goals, achievements, children, time, and space. They also become one through the sexual relationship.
 - "Let not man separate." Paul offers a similar thought in 1 Corinthians 7:10-11. When we divorce, we do exactly what God says not to do. We tear apart what God has joined!

Understanding what it does to our souls.

- A divorce never occurs without one or both people sinning (Matthew 19:6, 9).
 - Sometimes people will commit to being single after a divorce, but once loneliness kicks in, they "restudy" the issue, twist Scripture, and participate in an unlawful marriage.
 - They exchange their souls for earthly happiness (Matthew 16:24-26).
- When we divorce for unlawful reasons, we sin and jeopardize our souls!

Understanding what it really demonstrates.

- The Pharisees were not satisfied with God's will for marriage (Matthew 19:7-8). They had "hard hearts" towards the will of God.
- What about us? Whenever we begin having problems in our marriages, will we develop hard hearts? Or will we be humble, committed, and determined to work things out and have a marriage that God intended from the beginning?

Conclusion:

The disciples understand that marriage is a huge commitment (Matthew 19:10). Let us also understand the same thing.

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