



Exploring the Kingdom of God in Matthew:

Divorce-Proofing Your Marriage 3.0!

Nov 26, 2017

TEXT: MATTHEW 5:31-32

- Scripture gives us precepts and principles to help us **protect** and **prosper** in this most critical of institutions!
- We desperately need to recover the doctrine of marriage and family; we need to understand the ramifications of divorce and the blessing of biblical **boundaries** concerning marriage.

Mat 5:31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

- Our Lord continues His raising up of the Law of God, recasting the vision of Old Testament commands, showing the necessity of spirit-changed hearts, and demonstrating the principles of **holiness** behind the commands.
- It seems that our LORD is referencing Deuteronomy 24:1-4 in Matthew 5:31.
- Even if the Deuteronomy passage intended to allow for divorce only based on marital unfaithfulness (which is a bit unclear), the Jews in Jesus' day certainly didn't see it that way.
- In other words, presumably there were divorces in Israel for reasons that did not comport with the greatness of the covenant of marriage! Too many "no-fault" dissolutions; too much casual **violence!** (*"For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts..." Mal 2:16*)
- When Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees on this subject, scripture records it in Matthew 19:1-9.
- There were "every cause" divorces happening! Jesus says this should not be! He lifts up the covenant of marriage in unmistakable language and with unambiguous, indisputable clarity:
 - Marriage was made at the beginning. It was God's first **institution**. Family is the FIRST, and due to its order, the most crucial jurisdiction! (Matt 19:4)
 - Marriage WAS, and in the Kingdom IS, between ONE MALE and ONE FEMALE. Period! (Matt 19:4)
 - Marriage reorders **family** dynamics. Even one's relationship with one's parents must shift in priority to behind the marital covenant. There is a "leaving" that must occur in order to cleave! (Gen 2:24) Principle: In order for new marriages to thrive it needs its own household. (Matt 19:5)
 - There is a "one flesh" aspect to marriage...an emotional and physical bond unique to marriage. (Matt 19:5) Crucially, the bond is also spiritual, as God is its author!
 - God is the **author** of marriage, not the State; God is the true officiant in a godly wedding! (Matt 19:5)
 - Old Testament allowance for divorce had its root in the hardness of men's hearts. (Matt 19:8) That was not God's original purpose. Marriage was and IS meant to be for LIFE!

Mat 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

- In the Kingdom something VERY **serious** has to take place in order for a divorce to be sanctioned by heaven: someone within the marriage must commit fornication; they must engage in physical, sexual relationship outside the marriage.
- This exception clause also speaks to the grievous nature of sexual sin.
- Now, understand that the divorce itself doesn't cause adultery (1 Cor 7:11); any subsequent **remarriage** would cause the adultery. (Matt 19:9)

ANOTHER EXCEPTION CLAUSE (1 COR 7)

- Now, there is one other exception clause in the New Testament found in 1 Cor 7:10-16.
- Paul issues a new command that covers a situation heretofore uncovered: **abandonment**. He issues an apostolic directive on the matter. This doesn't mean his words aren't spirit-breathed scripture; it means he's dealing with a situation scripture had not previously covered, and the Holy Spirit providentially used Paul to bring revelation.
- In 1 Cor 7:15, we find the case of an unbelieving spouse who abandons the marriage. Although time limits aren't given, the principles are:
 - Work as hard as possible to stay in the marriage (neither are to depart)
 - Even in an unequally yoked situation, stay. There is a setting apart that occurs!
 - If abandoned, the believing spouse is not bound.
- To the question, "How long do I wait?", I'd say each case would vary and the abandoned spouse would do well to prayerfully walk this process out with the elders of his/her church before a decision is made.

DIVORCE-PROOFING YOUR MARRIAGE 3.0!

- Divorce-Proofing Your Marriage involves five things that must be done, according to biblical mandates and methods, together:
 - 1. Protecting your Covenant**
 - 2. Practicing your Communication**
 - 3. Prioritizing your Cash**
 - 4. Pursuing your Call**
 - 5. Parenting your Children**

Next week, we will go over each one in detail!

FAMILY WORSHIP/PERSONAL DEVOTIONS:

1. Please reread Matthew 5:31-32 and Matthew 19:1-9. Also, read Genesis 1-3, Ephesians 5:22-33, 1 Peter 3:1-7, Colossians 3:18-25, and 1 Corinthians 11:1-16. Discuss and pray through God's Word concerning marriage, marital love and respect, and order.
2. At CRCC, our working definition of a covenant is, "a binding and solemn agreement to do or keep from doing a specified thing; a spiritual, conditional agreement between God and His children."
3. Discuss the covenantal nature of marriage.