

## Community Group Discussion Questions

“Kingdom People”    Matthew 5:31-32    Sept 14, 2019

### Getting Started

To understand that Jesus reframes the conversation of divorce in order to create HONOR **FOR** marriage and HEALING to those who have been wounded **BY** marriage.

What does our current culture think about divorce?

Growing up, what were you taught about divorce?

### Going Deeper:

1. Conviction TOWARD Divorce: “*It was also said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’*” (Matthew 5:31)

A. Marriage is a Picture:

Created to Complete: Matthew 19:3-5

Since Eve came from Adam, females are created as complements to males. When a couple marries, they are returning to that perfect picture God gave in the Garden of Eden when we brought Adam and Eve together. In what ways does your spouse complement you? How do their gifts and strengths complete your weaknesses?

Covenant not a Contract: Matthew 19:6

When God joins people in relationship, it creates a covenant, a binding agreement. Marriage is not meant to be a human-made contract that can be broken for any reason.

How does this understanding strengthen the importance of marriage?

B. **Divorce gave Permission:**

Not a Commandment, but a Concession: Matthew 19:7-9

The Pharisees were trying to twist Moses' concession into a commandment, so they could excuse their own sin regarding divorce.

**How does our culture do this today in regards to marriage?**

Convenience instead of Commitment: Deuteronomy 24:1-4

The Pharisees of Jesus' day had taken this provision and given it a very broad interpretation that a man could divorce his wife for any reason at all (such as if she burned his dinner). Wives were completely at the mercy of their husbands. Many of us have tried to justify our sin with lame excuses or explanations. **Is God calling on you to repent about something in this area?**

Special Note: This was a controversial conversation in an effort to trap Jesus.

2. **Clause FOR Divorce:** *"But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality (Porneia) makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."* (Matthew 5:32)

A. **Adultery:** Matthew 19:9

Violates Oneness

Violates Openness

As we heard last week, adultery means you, as a married person, have sexual relations with someone you are not married to. Joining your body to someone else violates the 'one flesh' principle and disregards the open trust 'they were naked and not ashamed' your spouse has placed in you. **See 1 Corin 6:15-20**

**What does this passage teach you about adultery vs. sexual integrity?**

B. **Abandonment**: 1 Corinthians 7:13-16

Unbelieving Spouse that Separates

The Bible tells us not to be 'unequally yoked' meaning a Christian should not marry a non-Christian because you both don't serve Jesus Christ. However, some people become Christians after they are married and then are in a marriage where their spouse is still an unbeliever. Paul's answer here is that you don't automatically need to divorce them. If they want to stay married, then you should too, because you may be able to win them to faith in Christ. However, if they choose to leave you because of your faith in Christ, you can let them go. You are not obligated to insist that they stay, as you have no guarantee that you will see them become saved. **See 1 Peter 3:1-4.**

Have you seen a marriage situation where the Christian was able to lead the non-Christian to faith in Jesus?

Unrepentant Spouse that Abdicates

In other cases, you may be two married Christians, but one of you chooses to sin without repentance, giving no regard for the moral demands of our faith. If this sin continues without repentance, the faithful spouse has the right to divorce the unfaithful, as they have abandoned their vow to marital faithfulness. In this case, the wounded spouse would be within their rights to ask church leaders to help them through the Matthew 18:15-17 process. Hopefully, this will produce what 2 Corinthians 7:10 calls 'godly sorrow that leads to repentance' and will allow the guilty partner to ask forgiveness and be reconciled to the spouse they have wounded.

Special Note: Reconciliation is always the goal demonstrated by both parties with counsel.

C. **Abuse**: Romans 13:1

Report it to the Authorities

Seek Safety

Share with CBC Cares

As humans made in the image of God, all people deserve to be treated with dignity. Abuse is not only against humanity's laws, but God's law too. That person you are married to is not only your spouse, but is also God's son or

daughter, purchased with the precious death of Jesus. We have no right to abuse anyone. What we have learned is that 'hurt people hurt people'. Almost always, those who abuse others have been abused themselves and have never learned how to resolve conflict in a healthy, honoring way.

Share with us about someone who taught you a great lesson in resolving conflict that honors, not abuses, other people.

3. **Clarity ABOUT Divorce:** *He declared, "I will make you my wife forever, showing you righteousness and justice, unfailing love and compassion. I will be faithful to you and make you mine, and you will finally know me as the Lord."* (Hosea 2:19-20 NLT)

A. **God does NOT hate divorced people.** (Malachi 2:13-16)

He hates the carelessness of Divorce

He hates the consequences of Divorce

B. **Divorce is NOT an unforgivable sin.** (Luke 12:10)

'Divorced' is not your Identity.

Remarriage is possible.

C. **Your Pain has Purpose.** (Romans 8:28)

If you have been divorced, what did God teach you through that experience?

Take Away: Caution to those thinking about Divorce:

- Fear is never a good motivator.
- Don't ignore ongoing problems.
- Fix You versus You Fix