

Disciples Church

Marriage & Singleness Series - Session 4 -

Q29. What is Marriage?-Part 3: Until Death Do Us Part

Week of January 24, 2018

**Handout Notes**

**Q29. What is marriage?**

Marriage is a covenant relationship whereby God joins together one man and one woman into a one-flesh union designed to be faithful and last until the couple is separated by death.

"I, husband, take you, wife, to be my wife, to have and to hold from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, *until death do us part*."

* **As we begin…**

Divorce exists in this fallen world, and divorce’s impact has been far-reaching.

It’s with a sad heart that we have to even know the thing called *divorce*. In a world without sin there would be nothing known like *divorce*.

“Divorce and wrongful remarriage are forgivable sins. We want to start here, at the heart of our faith in Christ. When Jesus died, He did not fail to atone for the misdeeds of His people in this critical area. Even the person who has acted as wrongly as possible in this matter may be fully forgiven, and may have a fulfilled life of service to God after repentance.”

According to God’s word, your pastors and group leaders are here to walk with you, love you, and help you with current marriage struggles or past hurts stemming from divorce.

* **Three main positions** **taken in various churches**

1. God’s design and will for marriage (that it only ends by the death of one spouse) is to be upheld. There is no permission given by God to seek divorce or remarry after divorce if a former spouse is living. (Often this is called the *Permanence View.*)
2. God gave two (and only two) permissions for divorce and remarriage after a divorce, if a former spouse is living.

(This is usually called the *Two Clause View.*)

1. God allows for one more, or many more, than two permissions to divorce and remarry.

(Perhaps we can call this the *Several or Many Clause View.*)

We believe Scripture teaches the Permanence View, and we will be taking the next few lessons to continue to show that from the text of Scripture using proper hermeneutics.

* **The core pillars of the Permanence View**

1. The one-flesh union created in marriage is permanent until the death of one of the spouses.
2. Initiating or longing for a divorce is never lawful.
3. Remarrying after divorce is an act of adultery if a former spouse is living.

* **Hermeneutics**

With this topic—this study on marriage, divorce, and remarriage—we must use proper hermeneutics to understand what God’s word teaches His will is for us. Hermeneutics speak to how one reads and interprets Scripture.

The purpose of biblical hermeneutics is to help us to know how to properly interpret, understand, and apply the Bible.

* **Some of the hermeneutical tools used in this topic**

-We get our hermeneutical method from Scripture itself: How it tells us to understand and interpret things, we accept and follow. For example, often times later revelation tells us how to understand earlier revelation. The Apostle Paul does this often.

-A right understanding of God’s law, particularly Creation Ordinances: Related to this would be having and interpreting from informed and sound Covenant Theology.

-Knowing the highest purpose of marriage: To display Christ and His Church

-Using didactic passages (direct teaching/proclamations) to help inform less clear, narrative, or seemingly contradictory passages.

-Honoring *Tota Scriptura:* This means it is best we interrupt the less clear, narrative, or seemingly contradictory passages of Scripture in light of the whole testimony of Scripture.

-Honoring God’s expressed will as our highest desire: This means it should be our desire to honor what God has expressed rather than searching for loopholes or over desiring exemptions that better fit our temporary circumstances.

* **The Scripture related to our topic**
* **Marriage is a Creation Ordinance**.

After creating man and woman, God brought them together and performed the first human marriage union and disclosed His design for marriage. **Genesis 2:24** **24**Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

This shows us God giving marriage as a Creation Ordinance.

Creation Ordinances are perpetual in this creation.

Human marriage goes away in the resurrection and new creation:

**Matthew 20:30** 30For in the resurrection they neither marry *nor* are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

In this creation, though, God was clear in Genesis 2:24 what His will and design for marriage in this creation is: “man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” God’s design for this creation is that the one-flesh union created in marriage is permanent until death.

* **Human marriage is designed by God to display gospel realities, including the reality of the unbreakable union that Jesus has with the redeemed ones.**

No person that is in the New Covenant that Christ established with His bride will divorce from Him.

**Romans 8:38-39** (NASB) **38**For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, **39**nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

**John 6:37, 39** **37**All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out. **39**And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.

The Apostle Paul teaches that human marriage is designed by God to display the reality of the unbreakable union that Jesus has with the redeemed ones:

**Ephesians 5:31-32** 31“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32This mystery is profound, and *I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.*

He appeals to the marriage’s Creation Ordinance reality to make his point!

* **The other didactic passages on marriage in the New Testament also teach and reinforce the Permanence View.**

When marriage is spoken of in other epistles, there is direct teaching that affirms what we have seen so far.

Look for example at the didactic (didactic means direct, instructional, clear) words from Paul in Romans 7:

**Romans 7:1-3** 1Or do you not know, brothers—for I am speaking to those who know the law—that the law is binding on a person only as long as he lives? 2For a married woman is bound by law to her husband while he lives, but if her husband dies she is released from the law of marriage. 3Accordingly, she will be called an adulteress if she lives with another man while her husband is alive. But if her husband dies, she is free from that law, and if she marries another man she is not an adulteress.

**1 Corinthians 7:10-11** 10To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband 11(but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

When Paul says, “I give this charge (not I, but the Lord),” this means he is restating teaching/instruction that was given explicitly previously by Jesus. At another point he says the opposite: “To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord),” and this means that this is inspired revelation the Apostle is giving that hasn’t been given explicitly previously by Jesus.

So, in verse 10, he is saying that the Permanence teaching of marriage he is going to restate is the same teaching that Jesus taught in His ministry. That is helpful to know for later when we get to Jesus’ words in the Gospels.

**1 Corinthians 7:39** 39A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

“**only in the Lord**.”

Along with some other passages in Scripture, this informs us that it is God’s desire that believers only marry believers.

In Luke chapter 16, Jesus makes the swift and direct statement about marriage, divorce, and remarriage in verse 18:

**Luke 16:18** **18**“Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.”

Mark’s Gospel:

Before we read it, note two things: First, this is a narrative exchange.

And second, you need to identify that the Gospel of Mark was written to a gentile audience--a non-Jewish audience. This audience wasn’t part of the Old Covenant nor familiar with every single one of the Jewish traditions or laws.

**Mark 10:1-12** **1**And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.

**2**And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” **3**He answered them, “What did Moses command you?” **4**They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.” **5**And 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**‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, **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 not man separate.”

**10**And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. **11**And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, **12**and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

Pharisees leaned on a bad interpretation of Moses to justify their wrong idea that “a man [can] write a certificate of divorce and to send [his wife] away.”

So, let’s see what the passage is they are using to try to argue that:

**Deuteronomy 24:1-4** **1**“When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then 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 of his house, and she departs out of his house, **2**and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, **3**and the latter man hates 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 man dies, who took her to be his wife, **4**then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the Lord. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance.

*IF this and that happen--IF divorce and then IF a new marriage happens and ends by death--then I command that the original couple may not get remarried.* That is the command of God given through Moses in this section; the original couple may not get remarried.

Back to Mark’s Gospel; even His disciples wanted to check Jesus’ answer:

**Mark 10:10-12 10**And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. **11**And he said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, **12**and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

Notice closely what Jesus and our third pillar says:

**Commit** adultery. The word is not an ongoing act of repeated sin. The **act** of **getting married** if a former spouse is living is adultery.

This means the whole marriage is not adultery every day; this means the whole marriage should not be thought of as an ongoing act of sin. And that is why our point is written how it is: Remarrying after divorce **is an act of adultery** if a former spouse is living.