



Lessons for Disciples - Marriage (Part 1)

Key idea:

Jesus taught that marriage was given by God at creation to be the lifelong union of one man and one woman, and disciples must look to strengthen marriage, not seek excuses to divorce.

Key text:

Mark 10:1-12

Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them. ² Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” ³ “What did Moses command you?” he replied. ⁴ They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.” ⁵ “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. ⁶ “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ ⁷ ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, ⁸ and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one. ⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” ¹⁰ When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. ¹¹ He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. ¹² And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

Key points:

1. The Pharisees asked a question about divorce, but they were actually setting at least two traps for Jesus:
 - a. The arguments in Judaism over divorce meant that any answer Jesus gave might alienate people who were following Him.
 - b. Jesus was in the territory ruled by Herod Antipas, who had killed John for saying that the divorce of Herodias and remarriage to John was not lawful. Thus, if Jesus spoke against divorce it might prompt Herod to kill Him as well.

2. The Pharisees' question was about divorce, but Jesus shifted the conversation back to God's original intent in marriage.
3. Jesus quoted Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24 to identify 4 key things we must understand about humanity and marriage:
 - a. Humans are created either male or female
 - b. Marriage is the union of male and female
 - c. Marriage is the union of one male and one female
 - d. Marriage joins the two into a lifelong bond
4. Jesus' teaching radically resets the conversation regarding marriage and divorce, pointing us back to God's intent in marriage, and it calls disciples to live in light of God's design rather than the cultural confusion surrounding us.
5. NOTE: This text does not give the full range of biblical teaching on the subject of divorce and remarriage. For a fuller discussion of this topic, see the teachings at the end of this guide.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. How does our culture think about divorce? What does that reveal about the underlying assumptions about the nature of marriage?
3. The Pharisees asked Jesus a question with hostile intent. Can I think of other examples of this happening? What can I learn from how Jesus responds?
4. The Pharisees' question was about divorce, but Jesus shifted the conversation back to God's original intent in marriage. Can I think of other times He did something similar? Why does He do this? Is He just evading a difficult question, or is this important to get at the real issue?
5. Jesus stated that the Old Testament law in Deuteronomy 24:1 that gave regulations concerning divorce was done because of the hardness of people's hearts. Can I think of other areas where God regulated sin in the Old Covenant, even though the behavior was not according to His original intent for humanity?
6. In key point 3 above, Jesus goes to God's original design in creation to note 4 key facts related to marriage. How do each of these address current confusions in our culture? Why is it critical that these points all arise from the creation account before the fall?

7. Matthew 19:10 includes an “exception clause” for when divorce is allowable - for marital unfaithfulness (sexual unfaithfulness). Why do I think Mark does not include this phrase in his report of the conversation?
8. As I consider Jesus’ teaching in this text, is there any area where my thinking, emotions, or behavior do not line up with the Word of God? How do I respond to this? How can I line up my mind, emotions, and will with the Word of God in this area?
9. Who can I reach out to this week to share the Gospel or strengthen their faith?

Additional Teaching Resources:

[Teachings on Divorce and Remarriage](#)

[Freedom – Embracing the Limits of Marriage and Sex](#)

[The Covenant of Creation – Part 2](#)

[Marriage: When Two Become One](#)

[Love and Respect](#)