

The “D” Word (Part 2 of 2)

“And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” Matthew 19:3 ESV

In Part 1 of this article, we established that God created marriage as a means by which a man and a woman can glorify God as husband and wife. He intended for the marriage to be a lifetime covenant between a man and a woman and their God that is to never be broken. According to God’s original purpose and plan, marriage is to be for life...till death do us part. Nevertheless, because of sin and the hardness of men’s heart, Moses implemented the bill of divorce, a legal dissolution of a marriage.

In Deuteronomy 24:1, in establishing the policy of divorce, Moses included the only grounds for a husband to divorce his wife. The man desiring a divorce had to have “*found some uncleanness in her*” as described in the King James Version. So, the question then becomes what is considered as “uncleanness”? During the time of Christ, two schools of thought among Jewish rabbis had developed around that word “uncleanness” and the grounds/cause sufficient for divorce. There was the Shammai group who believed unchastity or adultery was the only “uncleanness” that is grounds for divorce. However, the Hillel group took a more liberal view of “uncleanness”. They believed that if the wife did anything to lose favor with her husband that is the uncleanness that is grounds for a divorce (*any/every cause*). This broad view meant that if the wife’s cooking no longer pleased her husband, he could divorce her, or if he find another woman who he liked better than his wife, he could divorce his wife. So, as you can imagine, just as is today, the subject of divorce was a topic of great confusion and debate amongst God’s people...including the church.

Nevertheless, in Matthew 19, Jesus was asked a question by the Pharisees to see which school of thought regarding divorce he would agree with. Christ’s response should be our response when it comes to divorce – go back to God’s original design and purpose for marriage (Matthew 19:4-6). Christ spoke God’s view of marriage and divorce (Marriage 19:7-9). Couples considering divorce need to know what God says. If you are considering getting married, you need to understand what God says about marriage, divorce and remarriage. It is a serious matter in the sight of God and should not be entered into lightly. God intended for marriage to be an inseparable and unseverable relationship that glorifies Him; and, unfortunately, divorce for every cause goes against that purpose.

Just because your marriage is in trouble does not mean you have to get a divorce. Do all you can to save your marriage. Avoid becoming selfish and self-centered. Each of you must humble yourselves and seek God’s guidance and blessings upon your marriage. Get professional counseling if possible and be willing to submit to God’s will and forgive one another. Where there is a will, there is a way and with God, all things are possible. If a married couple is willing to obey God and work hard, they can avoid the “D” word and have a marriage that lasts a lifetime. God is able.