

Fulfilled: Heart Abandonment

Matthew 5:31-32

Opening Discussion:

1. How has divorce impacted you and your family?
2. How is divorce different in the 21st century compared to the 1st century?
3. What damage does divorce cause in a marriage, family, church, and society?
4. What is the connection between lust, easy divorce, and adultery?

Marriage is a covenant with God, and _____ that _____ is always sin.

Explore the Passage

1. The _____ commandment: whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.

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. Deuteronomy 24:1-4

2. The _____ commandment: you shall not commit adultery through divorce and abandonment.

- Consider three difficult phrases from this passage:

“Except on the ground of sexual immorality”

- Proneia: sexual sin of many kinds
 - Adultery
 - Fornication
 - Homosexuality
- Where we get the word “pornography”

“Makes her commit adultery”

- First possibility: the woman would be forced to remarry, thereby committing adultery. In addition to being very unfair to women, this interpretation seems to indicate that a person could be in a situation where it is impossible not to sin.
- Second possibility: the breaking of the marriage itself is an act of adultery, and the husband's actions have forced his former wife into a broken marriage. In this case the woman is not committing any sin, but she still experiences the brokenness of divorce.
- Third possibility: the passive verb phrase translated “makes her commit adultery” should be translated, “commits adultery against her.” This is an attractive option, but it has not gained much traction with translation scholars.

“Whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery”

We should not assume that all remarriage is sinful for three reasons:

- i. Not all anger is sinful, calling someone a fool is not always sinful, not all sexual desire is sinful, praying out-loud is not always sinful, letting others know you are fasting is not always sinful.
- ii. Jesus is addressing specific practices in the Sermon on the Mount such as the practice of easy divorce as taught by Rabbi Hillel and Aqiba who taught divorce was allowed if a wife burned a dish or was no longer attractive to her husband.
- iii. Jesus and Paul both allowed divorce in specific cases, and Jesus specifically permits remarriage in the case of legitimate divorce (see Matthew 19:9 and 1 Corinthians 7).

3. The _____: stay faithful to the marriage covenant.

- Deuteronomy 24:1-4 was twisted to make divorce an easy option when it should have been a last resort.

*They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.” **Matthew 19:7-8***

- Even in the case of adultery, we should do our best to maintain the marriage covenant.
 - Divorce damages both spouses.
 - Divorce negatively impacts children, grandchildren, and 3rd and 4th generations.
 - Divorce destabilizes society.

God’s desire is for us to experience joy and flourish through the
good gift of a _____.

Fill in the Blank Answers:

Opening Discussion

Marriage is a covenant with God, and breaking that covenant is always sin.

Explore the Passage

1. original
2. full
3. Application

God’s desire is for us to experience joy and flourish through the good gift of a marriage covenant.