

Your Notes

Marriage is to be a monogamous, heterosexual, permanent one-flesh relationship.

10:1 JESUS LEAVES GALILEE AND ENDS UP IN PEREA.

:2-9 JESUS IS ASKED ABOUT DIVORCE BUT ANSWERS ABOUT MARRIAGE! MT. 19:1-9

When questioned about current issues, compare the issue with **God's words in the Bible.**

Divorce is a recognition of **hardness of heart, of sin.** It makes public what has been going on in private.

Jesus goes clear back to **God's original intent** for marriage: Gen. 1:27, 5:2.

The becoming of **1 from 2,** an indivisible union, literally one flesh.

If **God Himself unites together** a male and female in marriage, then it is not humanity's right to separate the union.

Marriage is a **school for faith;** we learn that we need God in order to accomplish this drawing together of one to another.

:10-12 JESUS TALKS ABOUT ADULTEROUS RELATIONSHIPS.

The Christian's response should be: "**Marriage must be serious.** I need to learn how to carry out my role and responsibilities as a Christian mate."

Marriage is God's way of putting two lives together to produce a oneness that will be a testimony to the whole world of the grace and the power of God to change human lives, to make two one. If married, you are one with your mate. May our thinking, decisions, and lifestyles reflect this reality.

Divorce is not the unforgiveable sin. Yes, divorce is a violation of God's intention for marriage. Yet God's grace comes to tell us that sins and sinners can be forgiven. There is the wonderful possibility of healing, of God's beginning again. His plan includes repentance and confession of the sin and trusting Him alone. However, realize that what God joins together, no one should separate (except for the two permissions). If you do, you will live with the consequences. And, consider this: If you've been divorced by someone, the Holy Spirit still wants to soften your heart and mind toward an ex-spouse, even an adulterous or abusive one. Unforgiveness is a horrible way to live. READ Col. 3:12-17.

FOR NEXT WEEK: Please read Genesis 2:18-25. What are the main points in :18-20? In 21-22, what does God emphasize? In :23, how does the man respond? Why? In :24, what are the three elements of marriage? How does :25 fit in? What are you learning about God's original plan for marriage?

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Jesus goes clear back to _____ for marriage: Gen. 1:27, 5:2.

The becoming of _____, an indivisible union, literally one flesh.

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Marriage is a _____; we learn that we need God in order to accomplish this drawing together of one to another.

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Marriage is to be a monogamous, heterosexual, permanent one-flesh relationship.

When I was growing up, divorce was practically considered the unforgivable sin. Today divorce is commonplace. It is even expected and encouraged. It is doubtful that there isn't anyone here that hasn't been impacted by it. But, although you can't change the past, it's the choices you make now that count. We are compassionate for those who bear the scars of divorce or are in a difficult marriage.

Sociologist Andrew J. Cherlin observes "While our forefathers wisely recognized that a nation's citizens could not enjoy freedom without exercising responsibility, today we have become a people who live for our personal freedoms but show little concern for our responsibilities toward God, family, or community. Nowhere is this more evident than in the home. Marriage as an institution is held in such low regard that cohabitation has replaced courtship." It has resulted in such a breakdown in our society.

In Mk. chapters 1-9, we've had Jesus' Galilean ministry. Now that's over. Between Mk. 9:50 and 10:1, Mark omits the events of Lk. 9-19 and Jn. 7-11.

READ :1. JESUS LEAVES GALILEE AND ENDS UP IN PEREA.

:1 Getting up, He went from there to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan.

:1 Jesus went to an area known as Perea (MAP). Jesus would minister in this area for some time until leaving for Jerusalem shortly before Passion Week.

Crowds gathered around Him again, and, according to His custom, He once more *began* to teach them. Jesus did many things but it was His custom to teach, to give God's truth.

READ :2-9. JESUS IS ASKED ABOUT DIVORCE BUT ANSWERS ABOUT MARRIAGE! MT. 19:1-9

:2 Some Pharisees came up to Jesus, testing Him, and *began* to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife.

:2 READ. Like a pack of hounds, these religious legalistic 'judges' trailed Jesus everywhere. They believed Jesus was guilty of breaking the OT and the rabbis' regulations. Attempting to stir up trouble, they asked Jesus about divorce.

It was a trick question. "Moses permitted divorce. How about You?" The controversy sprang from different interpretations of Dt. 24:1 **READ.** One rabbi believed Dt. 24 was teaching that a man could divorce his wife if he found anything in his wife that displeased him, including burnt toast or a fairer female. Another taught that divorce was strictly limited only to adultery.

How can I get out of my marriage covenant? What are the legal loopholes? Today we continue to ask, "Is it legally permissible?" when we should be asking, "What does God say about this?" So important to have God's perspective!

:3-4 And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" :
4 They said, "Moses permitted *a man* TO WRITE A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND *her* AWAY."

:3-4 READ. "What do the Scriptures teach?" WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT CURRENT ISSUES, COMPARE THE ISSUE WITH **GOD'S WORDS IN THE BIBLE.** The Pharisees responded that Moses allowed, not commanded, divorce (Dt. 24:1-4).

:5 But Jesus said to them "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment."

Why did Moses give such a commandment? DIVORCE IS A RECOGNITION OF **HARDNESS OF HEART, OF SIN.** Skleros means hard, harsh, rough, calloused, insensitive to God and His words. Jesus knows we are but human. Dt. 24:1 does not promote divorce; it acknowledges that it happens; IT MAKES PUBLIC WHAT HAS BEEN GOING ON IN PRIVATE. It reveals a behavior that threatens to destroy a nation built upon the family. We aren't sure what indecency is.

The Biblical provision for divorce is a sad concession God has made due to hardness of our hearts. This clearly was not God's original intention.

However, divorce is not the unforgivable sin. With Jesus as Lord, you can start over. If a Christian, recognize you have a new heart and begin living in line with it. And, this also means our ministry to divorced people should not be to treat them as lepers but as people who have sinned like we have.

:6 But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.

:6 READ. NOW JESUS GOES CLEAR BACK TO **GOD'S ORIGINAL INTENT** FOR MARRIAGE. This was before human sin. In the beginning, God created only two humans, literally a male and a female, and then Jesus quotes from Gen. 1:27, 5:2.

“Male and female He created them.” “He created them male and female and He blessed them.” The image of God is most fully reflected in both male and female (Gen. 1:27). Distinct, yet fully complementary to each other. They are biologically and psychologically different from one another. Christian marriage is for a male, a female, and our Lord.

:7 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER.

:7 READ. By their own scriptures, they must admit that God’s original intention for marriage had not changed. Marriage is the highest relationship possible in life, closer even than that of blood relationships. ‘to leave behind, to depart from, to forsake.’ Mt. 19:5 and later manuscripts add what is recorded in Gen. 2:24 **“and be joined to his wife.”** *Proskollao* ‘to glue to, to stick to, the initial act of joining one’s self to another and remaining joined.

:8 AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh.

:8 READ. This is what they were made male and female for, that they might be joined together and become one. God’s plan does away with all the other kinds of “marriage” being practiced today. In fact, the sexual union is the visible picture of what a Biblical marriage ought to be. This is why God reserves sex for marriage. THE BECOMING OF **1 FROM 2**, AN INDIVISIBLE UNION, LITERALLY ONE FLESH.

If the man and woman are ‘no longer two but one flesh’. then the Pharisees were wrong in thinking the two were so loosely joined that the husband could easily send his wife away. They were made one. The key concept is oneness!

:9 What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.

:9 READ. How could a written certificate of divorce dissolve a bond that God has established? IF **GOD HIMSELF UNITES TOGETHER** A MALE AND FEMALE IN MARRIAGE, THEN IT IS NOT HUMANITY’S RIGHT TO SEPARATE THE UNION. Marriage is not something that can be terminated at human will or because a law says they can. If married, they are not to split up over every problem or difficulty that arises between them. They are not to separate. They are to live as the one they are!

Discover any hardness of heart or mind that is there, and learn how God can soften it. MARRIAGE IS A **SCHOOL FOR FAITH**; WE LEARN THAT WE NEED GOD IN ORDER TO ACCOMPLISH THIS DRAWING TOGETHER OF ONE TO ANOTHER. If not a Christian, the place to start is with Jesus. We need His life to follow God’s plan.

Divorce formed no part of God’s original plan for marriage. Anyone who instigates a divorce is tearing apart an intimate union that God has created, a ripping of 1 into 2 halves. Jesus only gives one exception to this (Mt. 5:31-32, 19:3-9): immorality. Sexual betrayal destroys the work God has been doing. A divorce in that case recognizes that the marriage has been broken, that someone’s heart or mind is hard. God either has to begin it again, or it ends.

The apostle Paul also permitted divorce if a Christian is married to an unbeliever and the *unbeliever* wants to leave the marriage.

READ :10-12. JESUS TALKS ABOUT ADULTEROUS RELATIONSHIPS.

:10 In the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again.

:10 READ. Mt. 19:10 shows how His view surprised even His disciples. ‘If marriage is this serious, we want to know more.’

:11-12 And He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; :12 and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.”

:11-12 READ. Jesus reaffirms that the disciples heard Him correctly. His reply makes clear that He holds men and women equally responsible. Anyone who unbiblically divorces a person not only sins him/herself but also causes the person he marries to live in adultery. Let’s call sin sin when God does.

Can you imagine how radical a saying like this would have sounded in the lax moral atmosphere of Rome or how it sounds in our world today. THE CHRISTIAN’S RESPONSE SHOULD BE: **“MARRIAGE MUST BE SERIOUS.** I NEED TO LEARN HOW TO CARRY OUT MY ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS A CHRISTIAN MATE.”

If Jesus equates divorce and remarriage with adultery, we should also note how He treated those who were touched by divorce, remarriage, and adultery: the woman at the well (Jn. 4) and the woman caught in adultery (Jn. 8). He offered not condemnation but hope. God's desire for a 'broken' marriage is getting help, forgiveness, and reconciliation (Hos. 1:3; 1 Cor. 7:10-11).

If you know divorced people, have you expressed Jesus' love to them, giving them freedom to admit the hurt, and then liberating them to begin again?

MARRIAGE IS GOD'S WAY OF PUTTING TWO LIVES TOGETHER TO PRODUCE A ONENESS THAT WILL BE A TESTIMONY TO THE WHOLE WORLD OF THE GRACE AND THE POWER OF GOD TO CHANGE HUMAN LIVES, TO MAKE TWO ONE. IF MARRIED, YOU ARE ONE WITH YOUR MATE. MAY OUR THINKING, DECISIONS, AND LIFESTYLES REFLECT THIS REALITY.

DIVORCE IS NOT THE UNFORGIVEABLE SIN. YES, DIVORCE IS A VIOLATION OF GOD'S INTENTION FOR MARRIAGE. YET GOD'S GRACE COMES TO TELL US THAT SINS AND SINNERS CAN BE FORGIVEN. THERE IS THE WONDERFUL POSSIBILITY OF HEALING, OF GOD'S BEGINNING AGAIN. HIS PLAN INCLUDES REPENTANCE AND CONFESSION OF THE SIN AND TRUSTING HIM ALONE. HOWEVER, REALIZE THAT WHAT GOD JOINS TOGETHER, NO ONE SHOULD SEPARATE (EXCEPT FOR THE TWO PERMISSIONS). IF YOU DO, YOU WILL LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES. AND, CONSIDER THIS: IF YOU'VE BEEN DIVORCED BY SOMEONE, THE HOLY SPIRIT STILL WANTS TO SOFTEN YOUR HEART AND MIND TOWARD AN EX-SPOUSE, EVEN AN ADULTEROUS OR ABUSIVE ONE. UNFORGIVENESS IS A HORRIBLE WAY TO LIVE. READ COL. 3:12-17.

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EXTRA NOTES:

6/26/15 U.S. Supreme Court Decision mandating all 50 states recognize same-sex marriage as a legal right marked a turning point for America.

Central to the “New World Order” fantasy is the bizarre notion that people are no longer born male or female and that everyone has the right to determine his or her own gender.

A central goal of the uncompromising militants is the destruction of the family. Gay marriage is paramount to dismantling the fundamental family unit that has been the bulwark of this nation since the country began.

Our cities teem with fatherless children who lack proper role models, guidance, and (in the majority of cases) homes that provide security and the essentials for a stable childhood and productive future.

Through legal proclamations, social discrimination, and militant minority agitation, the antagonists are winning.

The politically correct establishment considers its opposition unprincipled bigots, racists, oppressors, and militaristic suppressors of the innocent and has declared all-out war on everything American.

Rod Dreher, senior editor of the American Conservative says, “Orthodox Christians must understand that things are going to get much more difficult for us. We are going to have to learn to live as exiles in our own country.”

Our available assets include these: The ballot box. Evangelical Christians who opt out of national elections cast a vote for exactly what they profess not to want. The pulpit: Freedom of religion is still a fact of life in this country. We must speak to people as the prophets did, articulating the problems and the remedies, rather than caving in to the culture. A return to God and the Book: Repentance, revival, and restoring God to His right place in our lives by displaying a vibrant faith before a lost generation.

Taken from Oct-Nov, 2015, from *Israel My Glory*. “Spawning a Genderless Wasteland” by Elwood McQuaid.

INTRO In *Grim Reality Fairy Tales*, part of it reads, “and the prince kissed her and they fell in love, dated a while and moved in together, broke up, got back together, got married, got a baby, got separated, got back together again, broke up, got divorced, spent time alone rediscovering themselves, met someone new, fell in love and repeated the pattern habitually ever after.”

:1 After dealing mostly with His disciples and Gentiles for a period of time, now He again makes Himself available to crowds and teaches them.

:2 Here were the ‘separatists’, everyone-is-unclean-but-me religious leaders approaching Jesus once again.

:2 If they could show Jesus was teaching contrary to the prevailing schools of thought, they’d either get Him in trouble with the people or with Herod Antipas.

:4 The passage recognized the reality of divorce and really sought to protect the wife’s rights and reputation and also regulated remarriage. You must write out a certificate of divorce which would state the reasons for the separation.

:4 They were forced to admit that Moses didn’t command divorce. They were magnifying a minor into a main emphasis.

:5 There is honest recognition in Jesus’ words that marriages are often tragic. Marriages create intimacy, and intimacy carries with it great power. The person who can bless you the most can also hurt you the most. “In a marriage where there is hardness of heart, the possibility for pain is very great.”

:7 Marriage is so deep in the purpose of God that Paul later uses it as the picture of the deeper spiritual union that exists between the Lord and His body.

:7 “The natural phenomenon of a man voluntarily leaving the strongest social group that he already knows (his own kith and kin) to form a new and closer link with a woman previously unknown to him would be inexplicable, were it not seen to be another instance of the outworking of this purpose of God.”

:9 The word “joined” is made up of the Greek word for a yoke, such as is put on an animal, and the prefixed preposition sun which means ‘with’. It speaks of one who pulls well in double-harness. Therefore, which God has yoked together, let not man separate.

:9 He’s not talking about what’s permitted because of sin; He’s talking about what’s possible because of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

:9 God, in making His covenant with His people, gave them permission to divorce. However, He also said He would make a new covenant with them to soften their hearts. In the new covenant, God not only restores His people, He also restores His intention for them in marriage. He saves people; He also saves marriage.

:9 What God has joined together, does not refer to a wedding service; it refers to what has been going on in the marriage. He has been putting their lives together. *He* has been doing it. That is why he has taken them through the trials and conflicts they have gone through.

:9 God’s standards are absolute and He didn’t want humans to come with excuses to get out of a marriage.

:9 Christian partners are allowed to separate for a period of time for the purpose of restoration (1 Cor. 7:10-16).

:9 “In the person of Jesus, a new beginning is in the offing, complete with life-enhancing marriage that reflects the image of God into the world. Marriage is a holy stage where a couple acts out the love story of God and His people.”

:11 Anyone who divorces (*apolyse*’, ‘releases,’ same word in 15:6, 9, 15). Under Roman law a wife could initiate divorce.

:11 Jesus, by putting the husband under the same moral obligation as the wife, raised the status and dignity of women.

:11 It was Jesus' view, marriage was a permanent relationship which united two people in such a way that the bond could never be broken by any human laws and regulations.

:11 'Mere formal divorce does not annul actual marriage consummated by the physical union. Breaking that bond does annul it.'

:11 He assumes as a matter of course that a divorced party will remarry.

:11 "Let us weep for how our world has removed sex, with all its potency, from the sacred exclusivity of marriage."

CONCL If considering marriage, is your future mate a Christian? Is he/she responsive to the Holy Spirit? How does he/she talk about Jesus? How does he/she treat you and others? How does he/she deal with hard-heartedness or hard-mindedness?

When I was growing up, divorce was practically considered the unforgivable sin. When even a Hollywood star divorced, she was barred from the movies. Today divorce is commonplace. It is even expected and encouraged. It is doubtful that there isn't anyone here that hasn't been impacted by it. As Jesus, we have great compassion for those who bear the scars of divorce or are in a difficult marriage. But, although you can't change the past, it's the choices you make now that count.

In *Grim Reality Fairy Tales*, part of it reads, "and the prince kissed her and they fell in love, dated a while and moved in together, broke up, got back together, got married, got a baby, got separated, got back together again, broke up, got divorced, spent time alone rediscovering themselves, met someone new, fell in love and repeated the pattern habitually ever after."

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Crowds gathered around Him again, and, according to His custom, He once more *began* to teach them.

As was Jesus' custom, He gave the people what they needed most: God's truth.

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:2 READ. Here were the 'separatists', everyone-is-unclean-but-me religious leaders approaching Jesus once again. Like a pack of hounds, these legalistic 'judges' trailed Him everywhere. They believed Jesus was empowered by the devil and guilty of breaking the OT and the rabbis' rules and regulations.

Attempting to stir up trouble, they asked Jesus about divorce. Divorce was a subject on which even they had no agreement. There were two basic schools of thought, one allowing divorce for virtually any reason, the other denying divorce except on grounds of adultery. It was a trick question, designed not to learn but to set people against Him. "Moses permitted divorce. How about You?"

The controversy sprang from different interpretations of Deut. 24:1 **READ.** Hillel believed Dt. 24 was teaching that a man could divorce his wife if he found anything in his wife that displeased him, including burnt bread or a fairer female. Shammai taught that divorce was to be strictly limited only to adultery.

What legal details make divorce permissible? If Jesus opposes divorce on legal grounds, He contradicts the law of Moses. If He makes divorce a moral issue, He exposes Himself to the same fate as John the Baptist at the hands of the adulterer, Herod Antipas. Today we continue to ask, "Is it legally permissible?" when we should be asking, "What does God say about this?" Always the right question because He is our Creator and wants best for us.

:3-4 And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" :

4 They said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away."

:3-4 READ. Jesus makes it clear that the issue was not the rabbis' interpretations but the teaching of Scriptures. **:4** The Pharisees, referring to Dt. 24:1-4, responded that Moses allowed for divorce. They were forced to admit that Moses didn't command divorce. They were magnifying a minor into a main emphasis.

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Dt. 24:1 does not promote divorce; it acknowledges that it happens. In fact, it makes public what had been going on in private. It reveals a behavior that threatens to destroy a nation built upon the family. We aren't sure what indecency is.

Why did Moses give such a commandment? Divorce was a recognition of hardness of heart, of sin. Skleros means hard, harsh, rough, stiff, calloused, an insensibility to God, a core of selfishness. Jesus knows we are but dust.

To make it clear what the husband's attitude was, a divorce was to be permitted. The Biblical provision for divorce is a sad concession God has made due to hardness of our hearts, not His. "In a marriage where there is hardness of heart, the possibility for pain is very great." This clearly was not God's original intention.

However, divorce is not the unforgivable sin. You can start over. If a Christian, recognize you have a new heart and begin living in line with it. And, this means our ministry to divorced people should not be to treat them as lepers but as people who have sinned like we have.

:6 But from the beginning of creation, God MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE.

:6 READ. The real question is not "Is it lawful for a man to divorce a wife?" but "What is God's plan for a marriage?" Jesus goes clear back to God's original intent for marriage. This was before human sin. In the beginning, God created only two humans, literally a male and a female, Adam and Eve.

This is a quote from Gen. 1:27 and 5:2, "**Male and female He created them.**" "**He created them male and female and He blessed them.**" The image of God is most fully reflected in both male and female (Gen. 1:27). Therefore, a marriage between a male and female uniquely reflects the image of God into the world. Distinct, yet fully complementary to each other.

Christian marriage is for a husband (male), a wife (female), and our Lord. Male and female, they are biologically and psychologically different from one another.

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:7 READ. By their own scriptures, they must admit that God's original intention for marriage had not changed. Marriage is the highest relationship possible in life, closer even than that of blood relationships. 'to leave behind, to depart from, to forsake.' Mt. 19:5 and later manuscripts add what is recorded in Gen. 2:24 "**and be joined to his wife.**" *Proskollao* 'to glue to, to stick to, the initial act of joining one's self to another and remaining joined. Marriage is so deep in the purpose of God that Paul later uses it as the picture of the deeper spiritual union that exists between the Lord and His body.

:8 AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH; so they are no longer two, but one flesh.

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God's kind of marriage is the only human relationship that constitutes one flesh. If the man and woman are 'no longer two but one flesh,' then the Pharisees were wrong in thinking the two were so loosely joined that the husband could easily send his wife away. They were made to be one. The key concept in Jesus' understanding of marriage is oneness.

:9 What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.

:9 READ. How could a written certificate of divorce dissolve a bond that God has established!? This is another reason why divorce should not be practiced. It's God Himself who does the joining. If God unites together a man and a woman in marriage, then it is not humanity's right to separate the union. Marriage is not something that can be terminated at human will.

And, a male and a female are not to live together as roommates. If married, they are not to split up over every problem or difficulty that arises between them. They are not to separate. They are to stop being rivals and start to live as the one they are!

Discover any hardness of heart or mind that is there, and learn how God can soften it. Marriage is a school for faith; we learn that we need God in order to accomplish this drawing together of one to another. If not a Christian, place to start is with Jesus. We need His power to follow God's plan. Marriage is to be a monogamous, heterosexual, permanent one-flesh relationship.

Divorce formed no part of God's original plan for marriage. Anyone who instigates a divorce is tearing apart an intimate union that God has created.

Jesus gives one exception in Mt. 5:31-32 and 19:3-9: immorality. Sexual betrayal destroys the work God has been doing in developing oneness in a marriage. A divorce then recognizes that the marriage has been broken. God either has to begin it again, or it ends completely. The apostle Paul also permitted divorce and remarriage if a Christian is married to an unbeliever and the *unbeliever* wants to leave the marriage. Christian partners are allowed to separate for a period of time for the purpose of restoration (1 Cor. 7:10-16).

"In the person of Jesus, a new beginning is in the offing, complete with life-enhancing marriage that reflects the image of God into the world. Marriage is a holy stage where a couple acts out the love story of God and His people."

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:11-12 READ. Jesus reaffirms that the disciples heard him correctly. Jesus' reply makes clear that He holds men and women equally responsible. He assumes as a matter of course that a divorced party will remarry, and such remarriage is branded as plain adultery. Anyone who divorces a person with the intention of marrying another causes the person he marries to live in adultery. If a husband or wife tries by human means to break the permanence of God's plan (outside of the two permissions), and then remarries, that person commits adultery.

If you have divorced for non-Biblical reasons, 'Have you faced the sin involved, confessed it to the Lord Jesus, and asked Him for a new life?' Or, if you know people who have been divorced, 'Have you been Jesus' love to them, giving them freedom to admit the hurt, and then liberating them to begin again?' This is not the unforgiveable sin. Restoration is possible. However, what God joins together, no one should separate. If you do, you will live with the consequences. I'm convinced that the innocent party may remarry without being guilty of adultery. 1 Cor. 7:15.

For the Jews, a simple declaration of divorce on the part of a husband could not release him from the divine law of marriage and its moral obligations.

We can imagine how radical a saying like this would have sounded in the lax moral atmosphere of Rome or in the USA. "Let us weep for how our world has removed sex, with all its potency, from the sacred exclusivity of marriage."

If Jesus equates divorce and remarriage with adultery, we should also note how He treated those who were touched by divorce, remarriage, and adultery. In this light, His interactions with the woman at the well and with the woman caught in adultery instruct us. Jesus addressed the woman at the well by offering her living water. With the woman caught in adultery, He said, 'Neither do I condemn you; go your way; from now on sin no more' (Jn. 8:1-11).

In one case involving divorce and remarriage and in another case involving adultery, Jesus offered not condemnation but hope. God's desire for a 'broken' marriage is forgiveness and reconciliation (Hos. 1:3; 1 Cor. 7:10-11).

Marriage is God's way of putting two lives together to produce a oneness that will be a testimony to the whole world of the grace and the power of God to change human lives. What do you think would happen in a marriage if each of the partners, by the power of the HS, made serving his or her spouse the highest priority in the marriage?

We offer hope, not condemnation. We might add that the new covenant doesn't end with the end of a marriage. The HS still wants to soften one's heart toward an ex-spouse, even an adulterous or abusive one.

Divorce is a violation of God's intention for marriage. Grace comes in to tell us that sin can be forgiven. There is the possibility of restoration, of healing, of God's beginning again the work of creating oneness. Though there is this way for forgiveness and restoration, we ought to understand that God's way of restoration involves repentance.

Adultery does end the marriage, yes; but it does not mean that forgiveness cannot come in and make it over into a new and fresh experience in which God can begin again.

When being questioned about current issues, compare the issue with God's plan revealed in Scripture.

READ Col. 3:12-14. Let's call sin sin when God does.

Identity precedes behavior. Only Jesus can make you His new creation.

FOR NEXT WEEK: Please read Genesis 2:18-25.