

Is Getting a divorce a sin?

What is the true meaning of adultery and covenant in regard to marriage and divorce?

Hard Questions

Scriptures on Marriage

Genesis 1:26-28 (NET1)

- ²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make humankind in our image, after our likeness, so they may rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move on the earth.”

■ ²⁷ **God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them, male and female he created them.**

²⁸ **God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it! Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.”**

Genesis 2:18 (NET1)

- ¹⁸ The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a companion for him who corresponds to him.”

Genesis 2:22-25 (NET1)

- ²² Then the LORD God made a woman from the part he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.
- ²³ Then the man said, "This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

■ ²⁴ **That is why a man leaves his father and mother and unites with his wife, and they become a new family.**

²⁵ The man and his wife were both naked, but they were not ashamed.

Marriage is...

- Exclusive
- Heterosexual
- Agreement (covenant)
- Between one man and one woman
- Ordained and sealed by God
- Preceded by a public leaving of parents
- Consummated in sexual union
- Often blessed with the gift of children

Scriptures on DIVORCE

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 (NET1)

- ¹ If a man marries a woman and she does not please him because he has found something offensive in her, then he may draw up a divorce document, give it to her, and evict her from his house.
- ² When she has left him she may go and become someone else's wife.

- 3 If the second husband rejects her and then divorces her, gives her the papers, and evicts her from his house, or if the second husband who married her dies,
4 her first husband who divorced her is not permitted to remarry her after she has become ritually impure, for that is offensive to the LORD. You must not bring guilt on the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Some Thoughts On This Scripture

- Divorce actually broke a marriage covenant bond.
- Following the divorce, the single person was free to remarry.
- Church leaders have sometimes advocated breaking up a second marriage in order to reunite with the first marriage partner.
- This is one thing that scripture says is offensive to God.

Jeremiah 3:1-9 (NET1)

- ¹ “If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him and becomes another man’s wife, he may not take her back again. Doing that would utterly defile the land. But you, Israel, have given yourself as a prostitute to many gods. So what makes you think you can return to me?” says the LORD.

- ² “Look up at the hilltops and consider this. You have had sex with other gods on every one of them. You waited for those gods like a thief lying in wait in the desert. You defiled the land by your wicked prostitution to other gods.

- ³ That is why the rains have been withheld, and the spring rains have not come. Yet in spite of this you are obstinate as a prostitute. You refuse to be ashamed of what you have done.

- ⁴ Even now you say to me, 'You are my father! You have been my faithful companion ever since I was young.
⁵ You will not always be angry with me, will you? You will not be mad at me forever, will you?' That is what you say, but you continually do all the evil that you can."

- ⁶ When Josiah was king of Judah, the LORD said to me, “Jeremiah, you have no doubt seen what wayward Israel has done. You have seen how she went up to every high hill and under every green tree to give herself like a prostitute to other gods.
⁷ Yet even after she had done all that, I thought that she might come back to me. But she did not. Her sister, unfaithful Judah, saw what she did.

- ⁸ She also saw that I gave wayward Israel her divorce papers and sent her away because of her **adulterous** worship of other gods. Even after her unfaithful sister Judah had seen this, she still was not afraid, and she too went and gave herself like a prostitute to other gods.
- ⁹ Because she took her prostitution so lightly, she defiled the land through her **adulterous** worship of gods made of wood and stone.

Some Thoughts on this Scripture

- Adultery is not just sex outside of marriage.
- Israel and Judah committed adultery by following after other gods than the LORD.
- Adultery is the breaking of a sacred covenant bond.
- In that regard, divorce is adultery, because a sacred covenant bond has been broken.
- How does God view that?...Let's see.

Malachi 2:13-16 (NET1)

- ¹³ You also do this: You cover the altar of the LORD with tears as you weep and groan, because he no longer pays any attention to the offering nor accepts it favorably from you.
¹⁴ Yet you ask, "Why?" The LORD is testifying against you on behalf of the wife you married when you were young, to whom you have become unfaithful even though she is your companion and wife by law.

- ¹⁵ No one who has even a small portion of the Spirit in him does this. What did our ancestor do when seeking a child from God? Be attentive, then, to your own spirit, for one should not be disloyal to the wife he took in his youth.
¹⁶ **"I hate divorce,"** says the LORD God of Israel, "and the one who is guilty of violence," says the LORD who rules over all. "Pay attention to your conscience, and do not be unfaithful."

Some Thoughts On This Scripture

- **God hates divorce!**
- Divorce is equated with violence.
- God had stopped blessing His people because they were trading their wives in on the newer, more appealing, or just different models.
- So what did Jesus say?...

Matthew 5:31-32 (NET1)

- ³¹ “It was said, ‘***Whoever divorces his wife must give her a legal document.***’
³² But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Matthew 19:3-9 (NET1)

- ³ Then some Pharisees came to him in order to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful to divorce a wife for any cause?”
- ⁴ He answered, “Have you not read that from the beginning the Creator ***made them male and female,***

- ⁵ and said, '*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and will be united with his wife, and the two will become one flesh*'?

⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."

- ⁷ They said to him, “Why then did Moses command us *to give a **certificate of dismissal** and to divorce her?*”

⁸ Jesus said to them, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of your hard hearts, but from the beginning it was not this way.

- 9 Now I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another commits adultery.”

Mark 10:2-12 (NET1)

- ² Then some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?"
- ³ He answered them, "What did Moses command you?"
- ⁴ They said, "Moses permitted a man *to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce* her."

- 5 But Jesus said to them, “He wrote this commandment for you because of your hard hearts.
- 6 But from the beginning of creation ***he made them male and female.***

- ⁷ ***For this reason a man will leave his father and mother,***
⁸ ***and the two will become one flesh.*** So they are no longer two, but one flesh.
⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”
¹⁰ In the house once again, the disciples asked him about this.

■ ¹¹ So he told 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.”

Luke 16:18 (NET1)

- ¹⁸ “Everyone who divorces his wife and marries someone else commits adultery, and the one who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

Matthew 16:4 (NET1)

- 4 A wicked and **adulterous** generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah.” Then he left them and went away.

Some Thoughts On These Scriptures

- Divorce was permitted because of hard hearts
 - People hurting each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually
- God's purpose is for two people to learn how to be one (This can be difficult – more on that later)
- Jesus said let no one separate what God has joined.
 - And yet if separation occurs against the will of God, it is separated none the less.

Some Thoughts On These Scriptures

- Jesus spoke of adultery in the same way the prophets did.
- Jesus says that divorce + remarriage = adultery.
 - Adultery is the breaking of one and forging a different covenant bond.
 - There is hope for reconciliation right up to the point of forging the new bond.

Some Thoughts On These Scriptures

- Both partners in the new covenant relationship are participants in the breaking/forging different covenant bonds. Therefore both are complicit in adultery.

**Paul The Apostle Had Some
Thoughts To Add**

To the Unmarried...

- **1 Corinthians 7:8-9 (NET1)**

⁸ To the unmarried and widows I say that it is best for them to remain as I am.

⁹ But if they do not have self-control, let them get married. For it is better to marry than to burn with sexual desire.

To the Married...

- **1 Corinthians 7:10-11 (NET1)**

¹⁰ To the married I give this command — not I, but the Lord — a wife should not divorce a husband

¹¹ (but if she does, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband), and a husband should not divorce his wife.

To the Rest...

- **1 Corinthians 7:12-16 (NET1)**

¹² To the rest I say — I, not the Lord — if a brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is happy to live with him, he should not divorce her.

¹³ And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is happy to live with her, she should not divorce him.

- ¹⁴ For the unbelieving husband is sanctified because of the wife, and the unbelieving wife because of her husband. Otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy.

- ¹⁵ But if the unbeliever wants a divorce, let it take place. In these circumstances the brother or sister is not bound. God has called you in peace.
- ¹⁶ For how do you know, wife, whether you will bring your husband to salvation? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will bring your wife to salvation?

Some Thoughts On These Scriptures

- If you are divorced, remain single or be reconciled.
- Even after divorce, working toward reconciliation is the desired action.
- If you burn with sexual desire, marriage is better than immorality.
- Believers should never initiate breaking the covenant bond.
- If a non-believer wants to leave, let them go in peace.

The End?

- We might be tempted to say – “The scriptures have spoken, ‘nuff said.”
- But a little more analysis may be in order

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- The universe was created to show God's glory and to help us understand and become ready to share an eternal existence with God.
- Why do I think that? Because we are the creatures He made in His image. We have a questioning nature, and a desire for relationship with each other and God.

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- The relationships we forge here are practice/training for an eternity of relationship building in heaven.
- Our relationships here also help us to better understand God's relationship with us.
- With different personality types, love languages, gender thought processes, it is clear we are all different.

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- We fundamentally think differently.
- Our feelings are different.
- This makes living with each other interesting, exhilarating, but often difficult.

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- Then you add on to that that sometimes we just mess up
 - Some of us drink to much
 - Some of us look at girl pictures or boy pictures too much
 - Some of us self medicate
 - Some of us spend money we don't have
 - Some of us ignore our families for addiction to work

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- With all of that going on, it's a wonder that God loves us at all.
- But He does.
- He loves us so much that He took our place on the cross.
- Certainly not because we were good enough and deserved it, but because He was good enough.

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- Marriage is where God lets us practice loving unconditionally in a relationship – like He has done for us.
- It is one of the key places in our lives where we practice putting another person first - just like Jesus put us first over His feelings when He went to the cross for our sin.

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- Our relationship with Jesus can cause Him joy, or sadness, or grief.
- We can be easy for Him to love or hard for Him to love.
- But He will never give up on loving us. He will not dismiss us or throw us away when we don't please Him.

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- **God hates divorce. Why?**
- I believe it is rooted in who God is and who He is trying to transform us into.
- Divorce is the very antithesis of that:
 - Giving up on someone
 - Throwing someone away because our hearts have hardened to them
 - Hurting someone closely tied to us instead of loving them

Jesus Said:

- Everyone will know by this that you are my disciples — if you have love for one another.”
(John 13:35 (NET1))

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- Divorce does not model God's Kingdom.
- Divorce does not model Christ's love.
- Divorce let's the world doubt Jesus and let's the world conclude that there is nothing different between believers and non-believers.

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- Are there times when cutting ties are appropriate?
- Yes.
 - Sexual infidelity
 - An unbeliever walks away
 - Matters of safety

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- Even so, as followers of Jesus, we are called to keep the door of reconciliation open and forgive whenever possible.
- **This is hard.**
- Sometimes harder than our frail humanity can manage.

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- We are going to be living intimately with each other **forever**. Think of this life as practice.
- Divorce is the act of failing a relationship test.
- If this has happened, have you sinned?
- Yes.

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- Is it forgivable?
- Yes.
- **Your shepherds here have committed to forgive and fully accept anyone who confesses and repents of sin.**

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- So what does repentance look like when a divorce has happened where there was no infidelity or abandonment by an unbeliever?
- Repentance means remaining single or being reconciled.

More On The Difficulty And Importance of Two Becoming One

- So what does repentance look like after breaking one sacred covenant relationship and forming a different covenant bond?
- Repentance means treating your current relationship with the respect and permanence that you should have treated the first one.
- It means putting what Jesus wants ahead of what we want by trying to do what He said – no matter how hard that might be.

Gaming the system

- I am sometimes tempted to cynically question motives. But I have determined to not be the judge.
- Fooling your brothers and leaders in Christ is relatively easy.
- Sometimes we can even fool ourselves for a while.
- But God knows who we are and what we are trying to do.
- Scripture says this...

Romans 6:1-4 (NET1)

- ¹ What shall we say then? Are we to remain in sin so that grace may increase?
² Absolutely not! How can we who died to sin still live in it?

- 3 Or do you not know that as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?
- 4 Therefore we have been buried with him through baptism into death, in order that just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too may live a new life.

Some Thoughts On This Scripture

- Did we come to Christ because we wanted to leave a life of sin and follow Jesus in our new life no matter what the cost?
- The right answer is yes.
- Or do we want to do what we want to do and want God to be OK with that?
- Paul says to that thought: **Absolutely not!**
God forbid!

Galatians 6:7-8 (NET1)

- 7 Do not be deceived. God will not be made a fool. For a person will reap what he sows,
8 because the person who sows to his own flesh will reap corruption from the flesh, but the one who sows to the Spirit will reap eternal life from the Spirit.

Some Thoughts On This Scripture

- God knows our deepest motivations. He knows if it is about us or about Him.
- We can fool ourselves and others with justifications like:
 - My spouse doesn't understand me.
 - My wife spends all her time on the children and does not make time for me
 - I am entitled to my own happiness.

- God wants me to be happy and has given me permission to have other people in my life.
- My spouse deprives me and doesn't meet my needs.
- I have finally found someone who makes me feel important and understands me.

Some Thoughts On This Scripture

- I love my children and I can still be a part of their lives.
- Divorce isn't really going to have an adverse affect on my children – they will understand when they get older and bounce right back
- Notice how all of these justifications are about me and what I want and have nothing to do with what God has said that He wants or how He feels about it.

2 Corinthians 5:10 (NET1)

- ¹⁰ For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be paid back according to what he has done while in the body, whether good or evil.

Some Thoughts On This Scripture

- We are all going to have a one on one conversation with Jesus.
- He is going to tell us what He thinks about what we have done.
- Jesus is the only one who's opinion matters when it comes to divorce and remarriage. He has made Himself clear in scripture.

A Final Scripture

Hebrews 13:4 (NET1)

- Marriage must be honored among all and the marriage bed kept undefiled, for God will judge sexually immoral people and adulterers.

Some Final Thoughts

- Because of all the reasons discussed, it is critical that we make our relationship with our spouse our highest priority behind the one of following Jesus.
- When done right, the oneness of two people in marriage can be the closest experience to heaven that we will have on earth.