



## **What God Has Joined**

**Matthew 5:32; 19:4-10; 1 Corinthians 7:10-15**

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Beginning with God's design for marriage as a unique one-flesh bond, we will say what the Bible says about divorce and remarriage.

1. God designed marriage for one man and one woman to be a complementary relationship for companionship, for intimacy, for procreation, for serving one another, and for glorifying God as a living witness to Jesus Christ and His church. This unique one-flesh bond between one man and one woman is entered into as covenant (Genesis 1-2; Matthew 19:4-6; Ephesians 5:22-33).

You must know God's design for marriage before you can understand divorce.

2. The divorce controversy: "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?"

Divorce was permitted in Deuteronomy 24:1 as a concession to man's sin.

God's design is that marriage be a unique one-flesh bond entered for life by covenant.

3. Is divorce ever permitted?

Jesus allowed (not commanded) divorce for sexual sin (*porneia*) because it violates the marriage covenant (Matthew 5:32 and 19:9).

There also seems to be an allowance for divorce when a believing spouse is deserted by an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:10-15).

Difficult questions also arise over the possibility of functional abandonment, including where abuse is present in the marriage.

4. Can someone remarry who has been through a divorce that is allowed in Scripture?

A. The example of how the Mosaic Law freed the innocent spouse.

B. The teaching of Jesus in Matthew 5 and 19, along with the precedent of the first-century culture.

C. The language of "not enslaved" in 1 Corinthians 7:15.

We must uphold the sanctity of marriage and plead with couples to rely on God's grace. When there is divorce we should apply biblical wisdom.

If you've been divorced and remarried, God is not calling you to divorce again to fix what you've done in the past.

We are sinners and covenant breakers by nature. We desperately need our Savior's help and grace to honor Him and love others.

### **Questions to Consider**

1. Consider all that we've read in the Bible throughout this series on marriage. What verses would you use to describe God's design for marriage and its purposes?
2. Read Matthew 19:4-10. How did Jesus respond to the Pharisees' easy-divorce view?
3. Is the sexual immorality exception on divorce related only to adultery? Are there ways in which you are struggling for sexual purity? How are you seeking God's help in putting these things to death?
4. Read 2 Corinthians 6:14. How does this apply to a believer entering a covenant with an unbeliever?
5. Consider the idea of functional abandonment of the marital covenant. What are some guardrails we should maintain when there is not a clear and obvious desertion of the marriage by one spouse?
6. For what reasons have the Elders of GBC concluded that there are occasions when a believer who has been divorced may remarry?
7. Consider your counsel to a believing friend who is in a difficult marriage. What might you show them from Scripture? What if there is sexual sin? Abuse? Abandonment?

For Further Reading:

*Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage: Critical Questions and Answers* (2017) by Jim Newheiser