

Matthew 19  
Part 1 (1-12)  
Teaching on divorce and remarriage

- I. Jesus sets forth clear teaching on divorce (1-12).
- A. Jesus leaves the region of Galilee (1, 2).
1. He now leaves Galilee not to return until after the resurrection (cf. 28:16; Jn 21:1).
  2. The sayings He “finished” were the words at the end of chapter 18.
  3. We know that the “Coasts” of Judea means the area on the other side of Jordan.
    - a. Many believe He is traveling to Jerusalem now and chooses to go around Samaria.  
Note: If this is true then He may have gone around Samaria to be with the common people who were traveling to Jerusalem for a feast.
    - b. It is alleged that the Jews had no dealings with the Samaritans (cf. Jn 4:9) Why? (cf 2 Kgs 17:24).  
Note: If this were *really* true, what were the disciples doing while Jesus spoke to the woman at the well? (cf Jn 4:8)
    - c. Jesus continued to heal the sick, but it is now mentioned more as a side note.
- B. The Pharisees are still trying to trick Jesus with questions (3-6).
1. The question was worded in such a way as to make enemies of some of the Jews (cf. Deut 24:1; Matt 5:31, 32).
    - a. Jesus’ previous teaching had changed the sin of adultery from action to thought (cf. 5:28).
    - b. They were hoping to set up a variance between Jesus and the teachings of Moses.
  2. “Every cause” meant any cause the husband deemed proper.
  3. Jesus answers the question by going all the way back to the beginning (cf. Gen 1:27, 28).
    - a. Jesus turns them to the scriptures “Have ye not read”. This is our example in teaching today (cf. 12:3; 21:42).
    - b. This shows them (and us) that marriage has always been a fundamental part of society. It predated the Jewish law.
  4. He also shows the close relationship between the man and wife (Gen 2:21, 24).
    - a. The marriage relationship transcends the parental relationship (cf. Ps 45:10; Eph 5:31).
    - b. In becoming one, the man and woman are as one flesh, or one body (cf. Eph 5:28).  
Question: At what point is a person separated from their body? Whatever the answer is to being separated from the body is the same as what is to separate man from his spouse.
      - c. The point is this; man’s laws will not constitute proper separation of two joined together (cf. Rom 7:2; 1 Cor 7:10-14; Heb 13:4).
- C. They press further hoping to place His teaching against that of Moses (7-9).
1. Jesus had merely restated His teaching when He was on the Mount (Matt 5).

- a. They were trying to charge Him with teaching something other than what Moses taught (cf. Deut 24:1-4).
  - b. The “writing of divorcement” was a paper the husband wrote stating they were divorced and she was free from her obligation to him as a wife.
  - c. The idea of “put her away” is separation of union between the two (cf. 1:19).
2. Jesus admits this was done, but tells the reason behind it.
    - a. Notice Jesus’ correction in their language. Moses didn’t “command” it but merely “suffered” it to be so.
    - b. “Suffer” means to allow or permit (cf. 3:15).
      - (1) This was given to protect the women of that day.
      - (2) Divorce was granted as a concession of a greater possible evil.
    - c. This was not the way it was from the beginning (cf. Gen 2:24).
      - (1) Jesus’ teaching shows that the truth of this issue went beyond the Law of Moses.
      - (2) God has always intended one man and one wife for life.
  3. Jesus emphasizes a law greater than what was allowed by Moses (cf. 5:32; 1Cor 7:10-12).
    - a. Jesus sets forth the one and only reason divorce will be accepted by God, (*pornea*).  
 Note: This goes beyond our common definition of adultery (cf. Mk 7:21; Gal 5:19).
    - b. This verse plainly shows that any other reason for divorce constitutes adultery.
  4. People today don’t understand the seriousness of this sin.
    - a. Some have tried to get around this by saying that it is a “covenant relationship”.
      - (1) This makes no sense, contextually speaking.
        - (a) At what point did God make male and female?
        - (b) Verse five doesn’t state “a Christian” or “a Jew”, simply “a man”.
        - (c) Can only a Jew or a Christian commit adultery?
    - b. Others have said it is “adultery” the first night only.
      - (1) Yes, the first night and every night thereafter!
      - (2) The word “commit” is in the present tense. It means, “keeps on committing”.
      - (3) This means every person in this type of relationship is sinning and keeps on sinning as long as they are in that relationship.
      - (4) Repentance means to change. If there has been no change then there has been no repentance, i.e., a car thief can’t keep the stolen car if he repents!
- D. The disciples get further clarification of Jesus’ teaching (10-12).
1. The disciples (falsely) concluded that if there was only one reason for divorce it would be better to not marry (cf. Gen 2:18; Prov 18:22; 1 Cor 7:2).
    - a. The disciples spoke from the understanding of their life long teaching on divorce.

- b. Of course, if marriage were avoided then illicit sexual activity could increase or even become the rule.
- 2. In the context, this is referring to what the disciples had just said in the preceding verse about avoiding marriage (cf. 1 Cor 7:7, 17, 35).
  - a. There would be circumstances where it would be an advantage to be unmarried in the service to God, e.g., persecution, imprisonment, travel, allotted time to dedicate, etc.
  - b. Most men could not put themselves in this position (1 Cor 7:2, 9, 33).
- 3. Jesus then gives them a list of those who could receive this saying.
  - a. Jesus is speaking of celibacy and not about divorce.
  - b. Often Eunuchs became key figures in governments (cf. Esth 2:15; Acts 8:27).
    - c. Of the three classes of eunuchs mentioned the first two were literal in nature.
      - (1) “From their mother’s womb” meant a physical defect.
      - (2) “Made eunuchs of men” were emasculated males who would serve (cf. Isa 39:7; Dan 1:7).
    - d. The third eunuch mentioned is in the figurative sense.
      - (1) Some examples of those who were celibate for the kingdom’s sake: Jesus, Paul, (possibly Barnabas 1 Cor 9:5, 6).
      - (2) It is often a perilous situation due to the weakness of most men.
- 4. Jesus is showing the sanctity of marriage in the eyes of God.