



# Sermon on the Mount

## Matthew 5:31-32 (Part 3)

*The Tragedy of Divorce*

### 1. One more passage: 1 Cor. 7:10-16

- **1 Cor. 7:10-16** applies the teaching of Jesus to the marriage problems of the Corinthians: problems between \_\_\_\_\_ and the problems of a \_\_\_\_\_ marriage (the marriage between a believer and an unbeliever).
  - The teaching of Paul finds its \_\_\_\_\_ in the teaching of Jesus (vs. 10) – Jesus made this point while He was in the flesh (allusion to Matt. 5:31-32, Matt. 19:1-12, Mark 1-12, and Lk. 16:18).
  - The believing wife is \_\_\_\_\_ not to “leave” or “depart from” her believing husband (the husband is commanded the same in vs. 11) – the original word used is \_\_\_\_\_ than the normal word for divorce, but it IS synonymous ... implying that the desertion by a spouse \_\_\_\_\_ an eventual or actual dissolution of the marriage covenant through divorce.
  - In keeping with the teaching of Jesus, the wife/husband who “departs from” (divorces) her/his spouse must remain \_\_\_\_\_ ... the implication (though not stated) is that this is what the Lord taught: both would be considered \_\_\_\_\_ if they remarried.
  - Paul clearly states that the believing partner must not take any \_\_\_\_\_ in leaving the unbelieving spouse.
  - *“The marriage relation, when sanctified by the Christian faith of even \_\_\_\_\_ spouse, has certain soteric implications; God \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ the marriage institution as a channel for the conveyance of sanctifying grace.”* (Murray, Divorce, pg. 65)

- “But” (vs. 15) stands in \_\_\_\_\_ to the somewhat positive nature of vv. 10-14 – the \_\_\_\_\_ is not compelled by the Spirit of God to follow the commands of Jesus.
  - a. In the case of two believing spouses, the injunction of vv. 10-11 is to remain \_\_\_\_\_ or else be reconciled.
  - b. In the case of a deserting unbeliever, there is \_\_\_\_\_ injunction to remain unmarried or even to pursue reconciliation.
  - c. There is no “bondage” or \_\_\_\_\_ to perform marital duties by the believing spouse IF the unbelieving spouse deserts the relationship.
  - d. The word “\_\_\_\_\_” is the same word in vs. 39 – by contrast, if one is “not bound”, then they are \_\_\_\_\_ to perform marital duties and thus at \_\_\_\_\_ to dissolve the marriage relationship.

## 2. Practical & Pastoral Applications

- Marriage was meant by God to be a \_\_\_\_\_ commitment between one woman and one man
  - Gen. 2:2:24 (quoted by Jesus in Matt. 19:5 & Mark 10:6-8) provides the strict \_\_\_\_\_ of marriage - one man and one woman brought together by the \_\_\_\_\_ work of God whereby they \_\_\_\_\_ enter a mutual covenant.
  - The marriage covenant was intended by God to be a life-long commitment, but because of the effects of \_\_\_\_\_ on human relationships, God permitted the \_\_\_\_\_ use of divorce.
- Divorce may be \_\_\_\_\_ by a believer for ONLY one sanctioned reason: adultery on the part of the other spouse.
  - \_\_\_\_\_ was the only permitted exception given by Jesus to God’s intention for marriage: a believer \_\_\_\_\_ initiate divorce when their spouse has engaged in verifiable adulterous behavior. (see Matt. 5:32 & Matt. 19:9)
  - There’s no commandment that \_\_\_\_\_ a believer to divorce their spouse after he/she has committed adultery.
  - “Although Jesus allowed divorce for adultery, He did not re-

*quire it. Just the reverse: Insisting that divorce disrupts God’s plan for marriage, He opened the door to \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ in an unfaithful marriage ... Reconciliation was Jesus’ way of solving marriage troubles.”* (Packer, Tenney & White, Nelson’s Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible, pg. 440)

- A believer who has divorced or been divorced because of adultery on the part of the other spouse is free to \_\_\_\_\_ without condemnation.
- Divorce for the abandonment of the marriage covenant by an unbelieving spouse \_\_\_\_\_ initiated by the unbelieving spouse, NOT the believing spouse.
  - Paul did not \_\_\_\_\_ the believing spouse to initiate divorce when an unbelieving spouse forsakes the marriage covenant (1 Cor. 7:15) – he did, however, \_\_\_\_\_ the believer from the “bondage” of the marriage relationship should the unbeliever desire release through divorce.
  - *“It is precisely here that the \_\_\_\_\_ of the marriage bond is attested; the very cleavage between faith and unbelief constitutes no ground for separation or dissolution.”* (Murray, Divorce, pg. 67)
  - This “freedom” from the marriage relationship clears the believing spouse from the accusation of \_\_\_\_\_ since the marriage covenant has been dissolved; he/she is \_\_\_\_\_ to remarry without condemnation.
- Divorce MUST NOT be the first option used by a believer to solve marital issues.
  - Based on the weight of Scripture, a believer’s \_\_\_\_\_ response to marital conflict should be \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and restoration.
  - Paul says that even in the case of a mixed marriage, \_\_\_\_\_ should be pursued as long as it’s a viable option (1 Cor. 7:13-14).

## 3. Special Considerations in Application

- Any behavior on the part of a believer’s spouse that rises to the level of \_\_\_\_\_ (must be a consistent

pattern of sinful behavior toward another without repentance)  
\_\_\_\_\_ be grounds for the believing spouse to initiate separation and/or divorce.

- 1 Cor. 7:10-11 seems to recognize that \_\_\_\_\_ and/or divorce between believing spouses will unfortunately take place; even Murray notes in his book, *Divorce: "Paul recognizes ... that even Christians act \_\_\_\_\_ and notwithstanding the wrong of \_\_\_\_\_ or dismissal the parties to marriage may violate right and perpetrate wrong. It is for that evil contingency that the parenthesis provides ...* (pg. 61-62)
- It's imperative that the local church leadership be asked to provide biblical counsel in such situations; in the event that a professing believer refuses (after several admonitions) to \_\_\_\_\_ of a continual pattern of sin toward the other spouse or \_\_\_\_\_ to obey the clear teaching of Scripture, the local church family is obligated to take the final step of church discipline by classifying the unrepentant spouse as an \_\_\_\_\_ (Matt. 18:15-18).
- In the event of church discipline on a spouse, the believing spouse is \_\_\_\_\_ free to dissolve the marriage relationship or to remarry.
- No spouse (believing or unbelieving) is \_\_\_\_\_ by the Scripture to maintain every aspect of the marriage covenant should one or both of them engage in activities that are a \_\_\_\_\_ to the physical well-being/life of the other spouse; separation and/or divorce or the pursuit of reconciliation is in order (See 1 Cor. 7:10-11 or cp. by way of illustration Lk. 21:10-24).
- Divorced people who are believers should not be viewed as " \_\_\_\_\_ Christians" whether or not their divorce was based on biblical or selfish grounds.

4. **Divorce prior to salvation** for unbiblical reasons does not \_\_\_\_\_ the offending spouses of culpability or responsibility/consequence because the marriage covenant was universally instituted at Creation; praise the Lord that God forgives us \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ sin through faith in Jesus Christ (See Rom. 6:10 & 1 Jn. 1:7-9)!

5. **God \_\_\_\_\_ divorce because it's the act of a \_\_\_\_\_ !**  
(Jer. 3:1-10 & Mal. 2:13-16)