

**Marriage To The Glory Of God
(1 Corinthians 7:10-16 September 1, 2019)**

Marriage To The Glory Of God

— 1 Corinthians 7:10-16 —



Hollywood has done us many, many disservices.

One of them has been to paint for us a totally warped view of marriage.

We are fed the classic story of handsome, honorable, smart, charismatic boy – in a search to find '*the one*' – his beautiful, sweet, faithful girl who is a perfect match for him – his one true love.

And when they meet – it is indeed love at first sight – leading to a lifetime of happiness and joy.

Such saccharine stories might fit a Disney cartoon – but they are **not** reality.

Marriage **is** awesome. A good marriage is one of the great blessings of this life. But even the best of marriages are hard and take real work.

Marriage is not for wimps. You cannot put two sinners in a one flesh bond for life and not expect a few hiccoughs.

Marriage is a battle – a battle to love in the hard times, to forgive, to find ways to persevere when tough times come.

It is a place of sacrifice, devotion and resolution.

Unfortunately, too many in our society are not up for the fight. When the battle comes – the white flag of surrender is hoisted – I must have married the wrong one – and a quickie divorce later many are hoping to find '*the right one*' next time.

Tragically, this is also very true in the church.

Divorce in the church has exploded – and now almost mirrors the world.

In our passage this morning, Paul has a message for us – this must not be so:

Honour your marriage covenant especially in the tough times



Honour your marriage covenant especially in the tough times

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Brothers and sisters, when all is sweetness and bliss – honouring the vows you made on the day you wed is easy.

When times are tough. When the sailing is anything but smooth. That is when we need to remind ourselves that one way we can glorify God – one way we can declare our faith in this world – is by honouring our marriage covenant and choosing to stay married.

Like every ideal – this is not always possible – but marriage is one ideal worth fighting for.

Our passage on staying married is found in 1 Corinthians – a book where Paul deals with many issues.

His answer to every issue is to preach:

Cross-centred wisdom for flawed saints.

He continually points us back to the cross and the gospel.

Last time we began a new section in chapter 7, a section in which the church at Corinth asked Paul a slew of questions.

We saw that the first question they asked was basically this:

Hey Paul, since we are surrounded by rampant immorality – even in the church – we assume that the most spiritual path is to change our life by avoiding all sexual relations. Are we right?

We have a problem. Christians are sleeping with prostitutes; men are sleeping with their mother's in law.

We have a solution – ban all sex. No sex has to mean no immorality.

Paul was adamant in his answer – **no way!** That is **not** the answer!

Marriage, singleness, sex – God has a plan and a place for all of these. Banning sex was never His plan – and it most certainly won't end immorality.

Paul says:

To be godly you don't have to change and:

Be celibate

Be separate

Be different

Just serve God as you are

There was a problem – immorality.

Some in the church said – to be godly – we have to change things up.

If we are married – live as if we are single – be celibate or if that is too hard – separate.

Last time we saw Paul say that married people should not be celibate – not only *can* they be intimate – they *must* be – that is God's plan for dealing with immorality.

Now Paul continues his answer.

It seems some had argued – if you are married and struggling to deal with the immorality that surrounds us – and if you find staying together but being celibate too hard – then the solution is to separate – to divorce. If you are no longer married – you won't have the temptation to be intimate – and you won't fall into immorality.

This idea has to be one of the most foolish suggestions in world history.

It is like saying – if you are hungry – forget eating – just live on air.

Some in the church at Corinth had argued – if you are struggling with immorality – forget the one place God gave us to satisfy those desires – just live separate lives.

If there is no sex in your life – those desires won't bother you.

There is a big part of me that asks – did anyone actually believe this?

Surely this solution would just pour fuel on the fire not extinguish the fire.

So who could believe that?

Plenty.

I am not just talking about Catholic priests and nuns.

This epically foolish solution has popped up again and again throughout church history in all sorts of weird little sects.

Let me tell you about John Harvey Kellogg.

Kellogg was a leader in the Seventh Day Adventists.

In 1894 he was working as a doctor who was the superintendent of the Adventist owned Battle Creek Sanitarium.

He decided to develop a breakfast meal for his patients in line with his strict Adventist views – which involved a vegetarian diet devoid of alcohol, caffeine or meat.

But, Kellogg also had some strange ideas about sex that was found in a number of groups within Adventism. This group declared all sexual intimacy to be sin.

To deal with immorality – they advocated complete abstinence – even if you were married.

Kellogg himself was married but claims to have never consummated his marriage, to not sleep in the same room as his wife and never had any biological children.

He also reasoned that a bland near tasteless diet would help curb immoral thoughts and help men and women practice abstinence and purity.

Put all this together – vegetarianism – bland diet to curb immorality – and his answer was:

Kellogg's Corn Flakes.

I am a Weeties man – but for you Corn Flakes men it makes you look at your breakfast cereal a little differently doesn't it?

He detailed all of this in his book, *Plain Facts for Old and Young: Embracing the Natural History and Hygiene of Organic Life*. Sounds like a page turner.

While Corn Flakes may not have caused many immoral thoughts – as 125 years of history can attest – neither Corn Flakes nor abstinence has curbed too many immoral thoughts.

If only the solution to lust and immorality was as simple as a big bowl of Corn Flakes.

But, old John Kellogg made the same mistake some in the church of Corinth made – thinking that avoiding something would hose down the flames of desire. No!

The Corinthians took it a step further. If living together was still too much of a temptation – then separate – divorce.

If you aren't in the same house – then there is no lust – no immorality.

Yeah – right.

Paul is horrified at this and answers this very directly in verses 10-16.

This is a passage where Paul is crystal clear – **stay married – if possible**.

This passage is pretty basic in its outline.

Married to a believer – stay married 10-11

Married to an unbeliever – stay married 12-16



Married to a believer – stay married 10-11

Married to an unbeliever – stay married 12-16

This is one of those passages where Paul is not at all subtle – stay married.

You do not glorify God by ending your marriage but by preserving it.

Paul knows that while every marriage has its issues – many marriages are just plain awesome. A husband and wife who are deeply committed to each other – and the idea of leaving never crosses their mind.

But, he also knows that many marriages are anything but awesome. Nothing about them is smooth sailing. They often think – I wish I was single – or I wish I married someone else.

Paul says – regardless – if you said ‘I do’ – you are not single – you must not live as if you are single – and one of the ways you can serve God and the kingdom is through the radical commitment that chooses to love and honor your marriage covenant even when it is tough.

Changing your marital status is not some magic bullet for a happy life.

While the context here is – let’s glorify God by separating to help us stay celibate – I doubt too many here have had that thought.

But many, many will have asked themselves – since my marriage is such a mess – maybe God would be more glorified if I put this thing out of its misery and moved on.

Paul would say – your marriage is worth fighting for.

Now – let me be clear. Paul says marriage was designed to last for life – but it is not an absolute. We live in a fallen world and not every marriage lasts.

There **are** reasons to leave a marriage.

For example, if you are in an abusive marriage or a dangerous situation – yes – if it is dangerous separate and if things don’t change – divorce.

And at times the choice is taken out of your hands – your spouse leaves.

Paul knows these things – but that does not change his general advice – where possible – the plan should be – stay married.

Don’t give up just because things get rough.

I also want to point out that this passage is a well-known passage because it is often appealed to by some looking for biblical reasons to divorce and remarry.

Don’t get me wrong – in a tangential way – this passage does deal with divorce and even issues like the status of children – but Paul did not write it to address these questions.

Paul didn’t write it to teach reasons for divorce – he wrote it to encourage us to not divorce.

We begin with our first point:

Married to a believer – stay married 10-11

To see this turn with me to 1 Corinthians 7:10-11:

To the married I give this command—not I, but the Lord—a wife is not to leave her husband. But if she does leave, she must remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband—and a husband is not to divorce his wife.

In the context, some in Corinth felt the best way to honour God was to leave their spouse. Paul says – that could not be further from the truth.

Brothers and sisters – our hearts are so deceitful we can convince ourselves of anything.

Oh yes – that black does look white.

Oh yes – divorce will glorify God.

It seems clear that he is speaking about marriages where both are believers. We get this from the fact that in verse 12 he turns to address marriages where only one is a believer.

I think Paul would say – if you are a both believers – and you seek help from above – you should be able to make this thing work.

Now, when Paul says – not I, but the Lord – he means this teaching that marriage between two believers is meant to last – this comes from the teaching of the Lord Jesus.

For example in Matthew 19:6 Jesus said:

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

Marriage is meant to be for life.

And in Luke 16:18 Jesus said:

Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and everyone who marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery.

In other words – if the marriage does not last they were not to marry someone else because the one flesh bond – the marriage bond was still there.

Scripture seems to teach that the marriage bond can only be broken by death. We find this to be the consistent Old Testament and New Testament pattern.

Later in this same chapter we come to verse 39 where Paul says:

A wife is bound as long as her husband is living. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to anyone she wants—only in the Lord.

So Paul is saying – this teaching is nothing new – I am only reiterating the teaching of Jesus. Stay married.

He begins by reminding the Corinthians – a wife is not to leave her husband.

That was totally unremarkable. Not only is a wife not to leave her husband – she couldn't.

Wives in those days had almost no rights – no wife could just leave her husband. He owned her – body and soul. Even if he was a tyrant she could not leave him and find Prince Charming.

She was his property to keep or dispose of.

Paul saying – a wife is not to leave her husband was just an accepted fact.

But – when Paul adds – **and a husband is not to divorce his wife** – well that teaching of Jesus' reiterated by Paul was just plain revolutionary.

Under Roman law – all a husband had to do to divorce his wife was to say – you are to leave. It was his right to get rid of a wife who did not please him.

Rabbi Hillel told the Jews – men if your wife burns your toast or you find some other woman more attractive – you can just divorce her.

Wow – setting a pretty low bar for divorce.

Talk about a man's world – no fault divorce.

She can't get my toast perfect and after four kids I notice a couple of wrinkles. The fact I have put on 35 kilos and lost most of my hair is beside the point.

Basically, a man wants out – he is out.

So for Paul to say – no – a man does not have the right to dispose of a wife he doesn't want – that marriage is permanent – for both wives *and* husbands – this was unheard of.

I think that is why in Matthew 19 when Jesus said this the disciples reaction was – wow – one shot and you are stuck for life – maybe it is better not to marry – what if you get your one shot wrong?

Jesus and Paul are clear – let no man separate what God joins.

Now if you read verses 10 and 11 – it seems very clear – no wiggle room.

Marriage is – till death do us part. While your spouse lives – you should remain together – or if you separate you remain unmarried – or you reconcile.

Not only does that seem to be the plain meaning of the text – it happens to be my personal view.

However, I know it is not the view of everyone.

Many godly, biblical, conservative men and women hold other positions.

In general they would say – in these verses Paul is giving the ideal – stay married – don't divorce.

But they would say – other passages – Matthew 5, Matthew 19 and verse 15 in this chapter – give exceptions that break the ideal.

I will briefly touch on this at the end.

But for now let me say this. Among conservative teachers who take the Bible seriously – no one I know of would say anything other than the ideal is – stay married – God hates divorce.

Fight for your marriage.

Divorce comes from the hardness of our hearts – our sin.

The Corinthians were suggesting divorce might be a way to honour God – and reduce immorality.

I have heard this same type of thing in many guises.

God wants me happy – I am in an unhappy marriage.

My children need a better example – I should divorce.

I married for all the wrong reasons – I should rectify that.

Paul would say – the general principle is – stay as you are – honour the vow you made – in hard times and easy – for better for worse – till death do us part.

The grass is not always greener elsewhere.

And by the grace of God – if you do commit to work through the issues – I have seen God give couples the strength to restore the joy and passion and love.

Ideally if both parties are Christians – with prayer and the strength of Christ – you can work through most rough patches.

But, Paul is realistic enough to know this is not always the way things work out. While the ideal is to stay as God called you – one or both Christians in a marriage might find they can't continue.

So Paul says – if they do have to separate so be it – but with this proviso – they should remain unmarried or else be reconciled.

I have counseled enough to know that many guys and even some women who separate – are already thinking of the next relationship. One they will get right. They won't make the same mistake again. They will marry someone who is right. They often already have someone in mind!

Paul says no! If marriage is so painful that you can't stay together – separate – but know you are to remain unmarried – only death ends the marriage bond. Your only other option is to reconcile.

If that was how we viewed things – far more effort would be made to save marriages.

Don't move on mentally, emotionally, physically to the next relationship. Pour your energies into this one.

I am very well aware that this is a tough teaching. But as Paul says – this principle comes from the Lord.

God hates divorce. Only death ends the marriage bond.

One question I am asked all the time is this – but why is it so important that I persevere even if my marriage is damaged?

We are fighting all the time.
We are both desperately unhappy.
The kids are a mess.

Surely it is wiser to just start again? How can our mess of a marriage glorify God?

Scripture tells us that marriage is important. Important enough to persevere. Why?

1. Marriage pictures Christ's unfailing love for His church.

I am so thankful that God does not give up on us and divorce us. Our marriage is meant to be a living picture of this type of persevering love.

2. Marriage is a testimony to a watching world.

A happy marriage can be an incredible tool for evangelism. It shows a watching world the power of Christ to overcome our deficiencies.

3. Separation and divorce opens us to all sorts of temptations.

The Corinthians might have thought divorce would deal with immorality.

All I can say is my experience is when you are no longer married – desire can get out of control and lead to all sorts of sin.

4. You made a vow.

You promised to be in it for life – endeavor to stick to that.

Persevering when it is tough honours God.

We have only been videoing our baptisms for a couple of years.

There are a few I wish we had on tape.

Men and women whose marriages were a mess. Some had separated and even in the process of divorcing when they came to Christ.

God healed their hearts, kindled a new love – and made their marriage better than it had ever been.

No marriage is beyond the touch of God.

But what if only one in the marriage is a Christian?

Paul now addresses that situation.

Married to an unbeliever – stay married 12-16

Verses 12-13:

But I (not the Lord) say to the rest: If any brother has an unbelieving wife and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. Also, if any woman has an unbelieving husband and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce her husband.

Paul says – but I (not the Lord) say to the rest.

Jesus did not specifically address the situation where a Christian was married to an unbeliever.

So this advice is not from the lips of Jesus – it comes through Paul inspired by the Spirit of God.

The situation Paul is addressing – is that most likely when the gospel reached Corinth – many couples were already married – but only one came to Christ, leaving a spiritually mixed marriage.

But the principles also apply to those who end up in a spiritually mixed marriage by any other means.

There are some who marry thinking they are marrying a Christian – only to find – they really weren't.

Make sure you marry someone godly – not someone who is just cute.

And as well, there are some Christians who disobey and marry outside the Lord. In verse 39 Paul tells widows they can remarry – but only in the Lord – only to a husband who is in the Lord – a Christian.

We are to marry Christians. But, here is another of the difficult pastoral situations I deal with. A young Christian meets a nice atheist, Catholic, Mormon, Buddhist.

They are cute and funny and they click.

They meet at work or university or a party.

They think – none of the guys or girls at church are like this.

They tell themselves – it is only a friendship – surely I can have non-Christian friends!

But hormones soon make it much more.

Then they begin to rationalise – friendship yes – but I will only date them if they come to Christ first.

Then it is – I think dating is OK because I will only marry them if they come to Christ first.

Then it is – I know of several couples where the spouse came to Christ after marriage – and they are so nice, so close to the kingdom – this has to be the will of God – marry me!

I have seen it too many times. Once they are in love – that is the end. The counsel of friends, parents, pastors falls on deaf ears.

They want to marry – so they are going to marry.

You don't know her like I do. We are different. He will come to Christ. This is of God.

However it comes about – a mixed marriage is a tough situation.

No Christian finds it easy.

You cannot share your deepest loves and passions. You have different worldviews, parenting philosophies, priorities.

He says – I want you home on Sundays.

She says – I don't want you going to homegroup.

And you begin to realise – this is not how it should be.

Many begin to think – I am unequally yoked. I am linked to Baal. They are polluting me. It should not be this way.

And you tell yourself – surely Jesus wouldn't want me to stay married to a non-believer?

You know what? Yes He does.

Paul says – even in this situation you must not divorce.

This is pretty clear language.

God is serious about the marriage bond.

How serious? Even Christian/non-Christian marriages – where you cannot live out the full picture of marriage – should stay together.

Even though it is far from ideal – if your unbelieving husband or wife will stay in the marriage – don't divorce them.

Don't do something to push them away.

But that raises the question of why this marriage would be acceptable before God?

Verse 14:

For the unbelieving husband is made holy by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy by the husband.

This is a stunning verse.

It seems likely that some had raised this issue with Paul.

In Jewish thought – if something clean touches something unclean – the clean becomes unclean.

If a Jew touched a Gentile, a dead body, unclean food – it polluted them – they became unclean.

Non-Christians were often seen as unclean – and with reason.

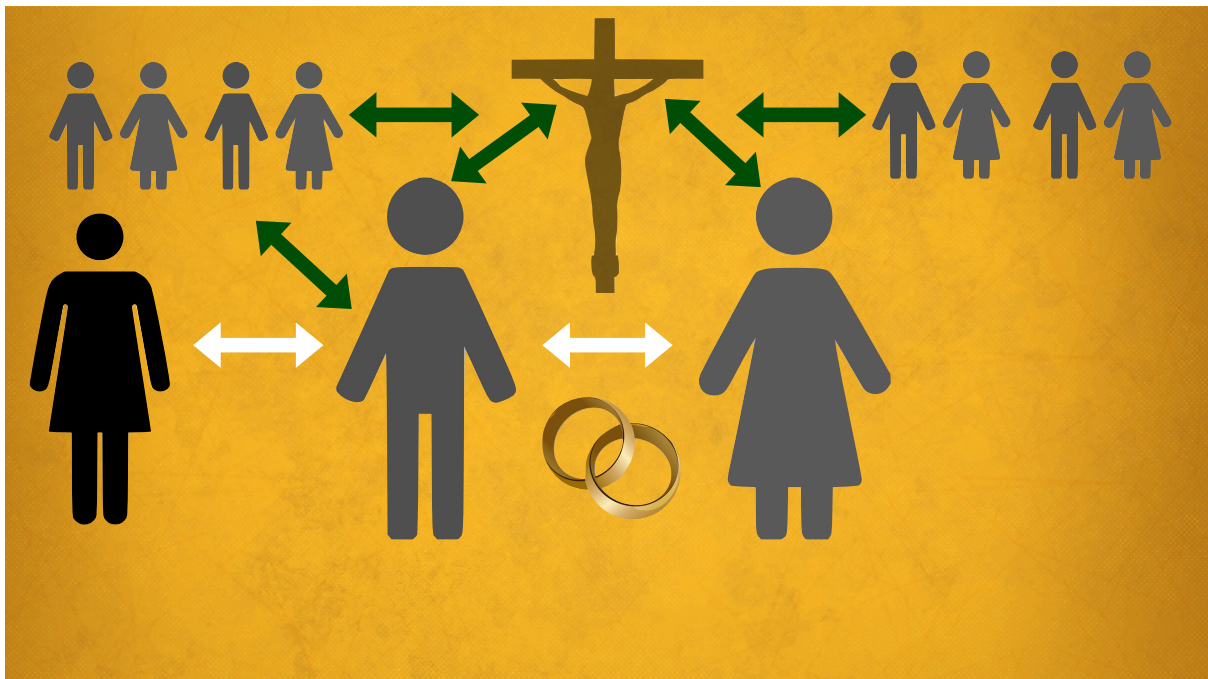
I told you about Demosthenes who summed up the prevailing worldview of Corinth.

We keep mistresses for pleasure, concubines for daily concubinage, but wives in order to produce children legitimately and to have a trustworthy guardian of our domestic property.

In the first century Roman world the idea of sexual exclusivity in marriage was foreign. Husbands and wives were free to engage in sex with anyone – opposite sex or same sex. Slaves, prostitutes or courtesans.

Why might that be a huge issue? Remember what Paul said back in chapter 6 verses 14 and 15:

Don't you know that your bodies are a part of Christ's body? So should I take a part of Christ's body and make it part of a prostitute? Absolutely not! Don't you know that anyone joined to a prostitute is one body with her? For Scripture says, **The two will become one flesh.**



If a man joins himself to a prostitute – he in essence joins his wife and the church to the prostitute.

So after chapter 6 you might expect Paul to say – if a Christian is married to an unclean spouse – an unbeliever – someone who may join themselves to others in immorality and so affect the believer and the church – better to divorce them. Cut off the uncleanness.

But he doesn't – he says – **stay married.**

Why? Because by the grace of God – marriage cleanses that bond.

The uncleanness does not taint the believer.

In fact, instead of the impure polluting the pure – the pure cleanses the impure.

The unbelieving spouse is made holy by their marriage to a Christian.

Please note. This is **not** holy in the sense of salvation. The unbeliever still needs to accept Christ to be saved. This is holy in one very narrow sense. This unequal marriage union is made holy – it is not polluted – it is acceptable before God.

Paul is clear – you can't justify ending the marriage by saying it is impure and not acceptable in God's eyes.

This shows how seriously God takes the marriage covenant – and the purifying effect of the gospel.

Yes the ideal is two pure, committed Christians being joined.

But the marriage covenant is so crucial that God allows the holiness He gives to the believer to purify the marriage bond.

This marriage is not illegitimate – it is holy.

Don't use this as an excuse to end the marriage.

And that extends to children.

It seems that some had argued – better to divorce than have children – because any children born to a mixed marriage are unholy.

Paul refuted this.

The end of verse 14:

Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is they are holy.

Let me make an aside here.

Some paedobaptists – infant Baptists – interpret holy here as meaning these children are part of the holy covenant community so therefore should receive baptism.

Unfortunately this rips this verse completely out of context. Paul has no thought of any church covenant community here – only the covenant of marriage – nor is there any thought of baptism here. Nor is this any form of saving holiness.

He has no thought of holiness in terms other than the marriage and the children that come from the marriage being acceptable.

To apply any other view of holiness – especially in terms of salvation – would mean that the unbelieving spouse is a part of the holy church covenant and should be baptized. No evangelical should countenance that.

Quite clearly Paul is using holy here in a way that does not refer to holiness in terms of salvation – it does not speak in terms of making the child part of the church community – but holy in terms of this is a legitimate child born to a legitimate marriage.

Paul is arguing for the validity of a mixed marriage and the validity of children born to such marriages. They are not unclean or illegitimate in any way.

I would maintain very strongly that to read more into this is exegetically improper.

An unbelieving spouse and the legitimacy of any children from such a marriage are not grounds for divorce.

The marriage covenant is too important to break on these grounds.

However, because a marriage is acceptable does not mean that separation never occurs.

Verse 15:

But if the unbeliever leaves, let him leave. A brother or a sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to live in peace.

Non-Christians don't have the same view of a marriage covenant we do.

An unbeliever may choose to leave. They may hate the fact that you have come to Christ and won't join them in their worldliness.

You can't stop them. The word bound here is – from *doulos* – slave. You are not enslaved.

Importantly, it is **not** the same word as in verse 39 – where Paul says the marriage union binds us till death.

You can't keep a hostile unbeliever bound to a relationship they want to leave – so let them go in peace.

Verse 16:

Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife.

Literally – this verse reads:

For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

This can be understood two ways.

Just let the unbeliever go – don't feel you are obligated to try and stop them leaving so you can evangelise them because you don't know if they will be saved.

Or – the way the CSB takes it – if they have to go – OK – but don't let them leave too easily because God might use your witness as the means of their salvation.

I think that fits the context best.

Look, Paul clearly has a high view of marriage.

Marriage – even a marriage under stress – is worth the effort.

Yes there are tough moments – but one way to glorify God is to persevere through the tough times.

That is Paul's message. But, that message is in a specific context and I need to give a little balance.

It is not always possible or even wise to preserve a marriage. This is not a – save a marriage at all costs message.

I also need to point out that the theology of divorce and especially remarriage – is an absolute minefield.

While every view understands that there are times a marriage will end in divorce – there are many views as to the circumstances that allow a Christian to biblically remarry. But the main ones are these:

Remarriage is permissible:

Only after the death of a spouse

After immorality

After immorality, desertion or abuse

In all or most circumstances



Only after the death of a spouse

This is the view I personally hold – but I realise many would disagree with me.

In this view, only death ends the marriage bond – so any remarriage apart from death leads to adultery.

Many would ask – but what about Matthew 5 and 19 where Jesus seems to give an exception?

I am in the camp that says – Matthew wrote for Jews and His exception relates to something very Jewish – the betrothal period.

That is why the parallel passages in Mark and Luke don't mention it.

But this is only one view. Another is:

After immorality

In this view – immorality, *pornea*, forms other one flesh unions and so ends the marriage bond allowing for remarriage.

This is not a widely held position.

Another view is:

After immorality, desertion or abuse

This view says the marriage bond is not only ended by immorality – but *also* by desertion and abuse.

They point to verse 15 in this morning's passage and say that if you are not bound to the marriage – you must be free to remarry.

This is probably the most commonly held view by conservative churches today.

Finally, some say you can remarry:

In all or most circumstances

God is a God of grace who understands our weaknesses and allows us second chances.

While many liberal churches have held to this – a number of more evangelical ones are close to this in practice.

Look – this is an incredibly difficult area and one where we need more grace than dogmatism.

I think many of us in good marriages have not shown enough compassion and understanding to those who are struggling in their marriage.

Yes – I have a view on this – I have preached on it a number of times – you can read them on our Web site – but honestly reading them this week I think a few of my sermons have not had the right balance.

Too dogmatic and not enough grace.

Maybe this one still doesn't have the grace.

The Elders here know that while marriage is worth fighting for – there are limits.

We also know that having the same view on divorce is not something every one of us will come to the same conclusion on – and that's OK.

But we all need to be Bereans – and study this so that whatever view we hold we do so with a clear conscience.

However, regardless of what view regarding divorce and remarriage you hold – this passage is clear – marriage is worth fighting for.

Because your marriage does not go the way Disney said it should – don't give in too easily.

God designed it to last for life and even in difficult times – marriage to an unbeliever, struggles – Paul's general advice is – persevere – stay married.

I have seen marriages in tatters be healed and become strong.

I have seen people come to Christ because they saw a miracle – a shattered relationship become healed.

If you come from a home where your parent's marriage was a mess – don't assume yours will be like that. Don't give up on marriage.

But what if you are sitting here today in a different situation?

What if your marriage is unbearable? Lies, betrayal, fighting, pain. What if you have nothing left to keep pressing on? The idea of keeping on trying is just too painful?

While I am convinced that God can heal marriages – any marriage – I know we all have our limits.

Unless you are acting unbiblically – we would never condemn you or turn from anyone who reaches that limit and cannot continue. Far from it – we want to be there for you.

What if you are already separated or divorced?

If you are – you have been through something incredibly painful and we want you to know we are here to support you.

Divorce is no unforgiveable sin – far from it – I think those in marriage pain need every ounce of help we can muster.

What if you are divorced and planning on remarrying or already remarried?

Again, while that might not be our theology – we would never push our view in this area on anyone – or condemn anyone who comes to a different conclusion.

If you are divorced and remarried – we welcome you and want you to know you are very much a part of our family here.

And if you are visiting – and turned up on a Sunday where we just happen to be hitting one of the hardest passages in the Bible – sorry – and I hope the thing you heard was not about the failings of men and women – but the unfailing love of Christ.

Marriage is meant to picture Jesus coming and laying down His life for His bride and never letting us go until He has finished making us complete and perfect.

And while our marriages may fail – our marriage to Jesus can never fail.

And on Father's Day – that is truly something worth celebrating.

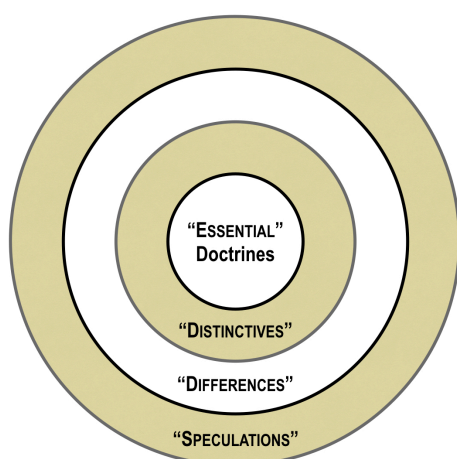
Marriage To The Glory Of God **(1 Corinthians 7:10-16 September 1, 2019)**

Main Point: Honour your marriage covenant especially in the tough times

Please note: The issue of divorce and remarriage can be a sensitive and emotional one for many and must be handled with care and grace.

General Questions:

1. What did God design marriage to be a picture of and how does it picture it?
2. Why is marriage the only human relationship that was designed to be permanent and for life? Why did God design a relationship to be permanent that often goes so bad?
3. When marriage is designed to be a place of joy, why is marriage often so hard?
4. What are the reasons for choosing to persevere in marriage in the tough times?
5. How can we know if it is time to separate and not persevere?
6. What are the particular issues those married to a non-believer might face?
7. Where do you think the issue of divorce and remarriage should rank in terms of importance? Why?



8. How should we handle discussions with those in the church who hold different positions on the issue of divorce and remarriage?
9. Why do you think God did not give us more crystal clear teaching on divorce and remarriage than we have? What should this teach us about how strongly to hold our position?

Application Questions:

1. What advice would you give a single person about what to look for in a potential spouse?
2. How would you counsel someone struggling in their marriage? How can we show love and compassion for those in a difficult marriage?
3. How can we show love and compassion for those whose marriage has ended?
4. How would you counsel someone whose marriage has ended and they feel guilty or unworthy?
5. How can we show love and support for the children of those whose marriage is in trouble or ended?