BIBLE CLASS

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

God’s design for marriage and the hope of grace

All Sin Is Forgiven in Christ and You Can Repent from Whatever Circumstance You Find Yourself In

The Power of the Gospel:

- Christ's sacrifice covers all sin—past mistakes, broken vows, and sinful relationships. When someone turns to Jesus, they are washed, sanctified, and justified (1 Corinthians 6:11).
- We are made holy in an instant by God's grace; believers are not held in a permanent second-class status because of their marital past.

Revisiting the Theology of Repentance:

- **The Legalistic Trap:** Some reason that if a remarriage began in sin (adultery), every subsequent intimate act remains ongoing adultery, requiring the couple to dissolve the second union to "truly repent".

Genesis 2:18–24 · Matthew 19:4–6 Our hearts and intentions matter in what we do. They are not irrelevant to the facts

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The Loving Way & Gospel Reality:

- A sin cannot fix another sin. Breaking up an existing family, abandoning vows to a current spouse, and destabilizing children is contrary to scripture (cf. Deuteronomy 24:1–4).
- Repentance does not mean returning to past rubble; it means confessing the wrong, receiving forgiveness, and walking in faithfulness from where you currently stand.
- We do not need to redefine scripture or pretend no sin occurred just to protect grace. The Gospel is powerful enough to forgive an unscriptural step, sanctify the current union, and command: "Go and sin no more".

Be Willing to Be OK with Ambiguity in Scripture

Humility Over Close Mindedness:

- Acknowledge that godly scholars and faithful Christians have wrestled with these specific texts for centuries.
- Distinguish between core gospel essentials (salvation by grace, repentance, forgiveness) and complex ethical case studies.

Loving Application over Theoretical Speculation:

- Real lives, children, and families are at stake.
- Where the Bible gives clear principles, teach them with conviction.
- Where the Bible leaves tension or silence, extend charity and pastoral grace—meeting people where they are and guiding them to follow Jesus faithfully from today forward.

What Marriage Is and the Importance of It

Divine Origin and Design:

- Marriage is not merely a social contract or civil arrangement; it is an institution established by God at creation (Genesis 2:18–24; Matthew 19:4–6).
- Jesus points past legalistic debates back to the beginning: "He who created them from the beginning made them male and female… and the two shall become one flesh".

A Sacred Covenant:

- Marriage constitutes a covenant between a man, a woman, and God. What God has joined together, humanity is commanded not to tear apart.
- **The Ideal:** God's design and standard is one man and one woman for one lifetime. This lifelong bond reflects God's steadfast faithfulness and provides stability for families and communities.
- Even though the covenant exists for all people, as Christians we are to obey the commands of this covenant

Genesis 2:18–24 · Matthew 19:4–6

What Are the Teachings on Divorce in Scripture?

Old Testament Context:

- Deuteronomy 24:1–4 regulated divorce due to human hardness of heart, providing legal protection (a certificate) for the discarded wife rather than endorsing divorce as God's ideal.
- First-century rabbinic debates: Shammai (divorce only for sexual unfaithfulness) vs. Hillel (divorce for "any cause").

Jesus' Teachings:

- Jesus directly confronted the "any cause" culture: Moses allowed divorce because of hard hearts, but from the beginning it was not so (Matthew 19:3–8).
- **Biblical Grounds:** Jesus provides one explicit exception—*porneia* (sexual immorality)—which fundamentally violates and ruptures the marriage covenant (Matthew 5:32; 19:9).

What Are the Teachings on Divorce in Scripture?

Paul's Teaching:

- 1 Corinthians 7:10–11: Spouses should not separate; if separation occurs, they should remain unmarried or be reconciled.

- 1 Corinthians 7:15: If an unbelieving spouse deserts a believer, the believer is "not bound" to maintain the union.

What Are the Teachings on Remarriage in Scripture?

Scriptural Scenarios:

- **Death of a Spouse:** The covenant is severed by physical death; the surviving spouse is free to remarry in the Lord (Romans 7:2–3; 1 Corinthians 7:39).
- **Divorce Due to Unfaithfulness (Porneia):** The covenant has been broken by sexual immorality; freedom to remarry exists because biblical grounds dissolved the bond (Matthew 19:9).

Unscriptural Divorce:

A purely legal/civil divorce without biblical grounds does not morally dissolve the initial obligation before God. Entering a remarriage in that condition is explicitly called adultery by Jesus (Luke 16:18; Matthew 19:9).

What Are the Teachings on Remarriage in Scripture?

The Reality of the New Union:

- While entering the second marriage unlawfully involved sin, the new marriage is still a legally and practically binding covenant.

- God meets believers in their present state: confess, receive forgiveness, honor the current spouse, and build a godly home.

How to Make Sense of What Is Clear in Scripture and What Is Not

What Is Clear:

- God's ideal is a lifelong union (Genesis 2; Matthew 19).
- Divorce causes deep relational and spiritual devastation.
- Casual, "any-cause" divorce is unscriptural.
- God's grace washes clean every past sin through genuine repentance.
- Tearing apart existing second marriages to "undo" the past is unbiblical and harmful.

What Is Unclear / Debated:

- The exact moment the original covenant bond dissolves when an unjust divorce occurs.
- Whether "commits adultery" (*moichatai*) refers to a single covenant-breaking event at remarriage or an ongoing status.

How to Make Sense of What Is Clear in Scripture and What Is Not

A Sound Way to Interpret:

- Interpret difficult, condensed sayings (like Luke 16:18) in light of the wider narrative of Scripture, the law of love, and the sufficiency of Jesus' saving grace.
- Avoid over complicating where Scripture is silent, and refuse to construct rigid legalisms that close the door on grace.

CLASS DISCUSSION

Following Jesus faithfully today

01 How can we honor marriage and show its importance to our world?

02 How can we help people that come from a difficult past with relationships?

03 What things can we do to remain faithful in our marriage?

Private reflection is welcome. Personal disclosure is optional.