

The Gospel of Matthew

“Kingdom Righteousness”

Matthew 5:31-32

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“And it was said, ‘WHOEVER DIVORCES HIS WIFE, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DISMISSAL’;

But I say to you, that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

Divorce & Adultery

Overview:

- the emphasis is on the husband and his guilt in the situation
- this is not an exhaustive statement on the subject of divorce

Divorce & Adultery

1. What does Deuteronomy 24:1-4 teach?

- it does not command or explicitly sanction divorce, but regulates the effects of it
- it gives an implicit allowance for divorce based on “some indecency” in the wife

Divorce & Adultery

2. What did the scribes and Pharisees teach?

- a man could divorce his wife for any cause by giving her a certificate of divorce (*Hillel*)
- a man must divorce his wife for her sexual unfaithfulness (*Shammai*)

Divorce & Adultery

3. What did Jesus teach?

- A. No fault (“any cause”) divorces are wrong and lead to adultery
 - legal divorce certificates do not dissolve the marriage covenant before God
 - Jesus implicitly affirms the permanence and sanctity of marriage

Divorce & Adultery

3. What did Jesus teach?

B. Remarriage after an illegitimate divorce is adultery

- the wife's remarriage is considered adultery
- the husband's guilt is greater for causing her to suffer adultery

Divorce & Adultery

3. What did Jesus teach?

C. Sexual immorality is a permissible cause for divorce, but not a mandatory one

- sexual immorality does violate the one-flesh, covenant relationship of marriage
- forgiveness and reconciliation are possible; this is Jesus' first priority