

## Jesus' Teaching on Divorce & Remarriage – Pt. 3

Matthew 5:31–32

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**MAIN IDEA:** In Jesus' third illustration in the Sermon on the Mount, He continues to apply the 7th commandment against adultery, particularly concerning the issues of divorce and remarriage. In fact, in Matthew 5:31–32, Jesus explains that *without biblical grounds* divorce and remarriage violate the 7th commandment against adultery. So as Jesus' disciples, we must be fully committed to our marriage covenant. We consider several observations about this passage...

### SERMON OUTLINE:

- I. The Corruption of the OT Teaching on Divorce
- II. Jesus' Exposition of the OT Teaching on Divorce & Remarriage (32)
  - A. The Divine Design of Biblical Marriage (Mt. 19:4-6)
  - B. The Deadly Sin of Unbiblical Divorce & Remarriage (32)
  - C. The Definitive Grounds for Biblical Divorce & Remarriage (Mt. 5:32; 19:9; 1 Cor. 7:15)
    1. Sexual Sin by a spouse (Mt. 5:32; 19:9)
      - Based on the OT
        - (1) The exception in Dt. 24:1 for sexual sin
        - (2) The biblical examples of divorce for adultery
          - (a) Ezra (Ezra 10:10-11)
          - (b) Joseph (Mt. 1:19)
          - (c) God Himself (Jer. 3:6-8)
      - Taught in the NT (Mt. 5:32; 19:9)
    2. Abandonment by an Unbeliever (1 Cor. 7:12-15)
      - One spouse is a believer, and the other is an unbeliever.
      - The unbeliever abandons the marriage.
        - (1) By physically abandoning the spouse and leaving home
        - (2) By expressing or demonstrating a resolve to abandon the marriage
- III. The Practical Implications of Jesus' Teaching on Divorce & Remarriage
  - A. Never Married
    1. If you have the gift of singleness (1 Cor. 7:6-7), embrace and champion God's design for marriage and His plan for most to marry.
    2. If you hope to marry, commit now to marriage for life.
  - B. Married with no divorce in your background
    1. Resolve to enjoy God's gift of marriage, to love your spouse, and to obey Christ by keeping your marriage covenant for life.
  - C. Divorced with biblical grounds

1. Confess your sins that may have contributed to the problems in your marriage.
  2. Don't allow false guilt for the divorce & remarriage if they were for biblical grounds.
  3. If you haven't yet remarried, pursue marriage carefully and with the counsel of the elders.
- D. Divorced without biblical grounds
1. If you didn't initiate the divorce...
    - You are not guilty before God for the divorce.
    - If your sins contributed to problems in the marriage, seek the forgiveness of God and your former spouse.
  2. If you initiated the divorce...
    - Acknowledge your divorce (& remarriage) was a sin against God and His design and seek His forgiveness.
  3. If neither of you has remarried...
    - Pray for and pursue reconciliation if possible (1 Cor. 7:10-11).
    - When your former spouse dies, remarries, or becomes sexually involved, you are biblically free to remarry.
  4. If you have remarried...
    - Acknowledge your sin in the adultery with the remarriage.
    - Express repentance toward God and seek His forgiveness.
    - Wisely seek forgiveness from your former spouse.

### ***The Primary Views about Divorce & Remarriage***

1. No Divorce and no remarriage for any reason
2. Divorce but no remarriage
3. Divorce & remarriage for adultery or abandonment by an unbeliever
4. Divorce & remarriage for numerous other reasons

### ***Answering the Arguments for No Divorce/No Remarriage***

1. "Neither Mark nor Luke includes the exception clause."
2. "The exception applies only to betrothal, not marriage."
3. "Porneia only refers to unlawful marriages with close relatives forbidden in Lev. 18."
4. "1 Cor. 7:10-11 forbids remarriage."
5. "1 Cor. 7:15 does not allow a believer to divorce but to refrain from a normal marriage relationship."
6. "Several early church fathers taught that remarriage while the former spouse is still living is adultery."

### ***Westminster & 2nd London Baptist Confessions***

"Nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can in no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the person concerned in it not left to their own will, and discretion, in their own case." (WCF 24.6)

“It is lawful for the innocent party to sue [for] divorce and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.” (WCF 24.5)

### ***The Meaning of Porneia***

- XXX – prostitution (Jer. 2:20; Micah 1:7), premarital sex (Dt. 22:21), and sexual unfaithfulness in marriage (Hos. 2:2)
- The 1st century AD – an umbrella term for all sexual activity God’s law prohibits (Lev. 18:1-30; cf. 20:10-21; Dt. 22:13-30)
- Leading NT Greek lexicon – “unlawful sexual intercourse.” [BDAG]

### **APPLICATION QUESTIONS:**

1. Under the heading “The Practical Implications of Jesus’ Teaching on Divorce & Remarriage,” review and discuss points 1 and 2 for *Never Married*. Why is it crucial for those who have never married to champion God’s design for marriage? How can singleness be used for the glory of God (1 Cor. 7:6–7)?
2. Under the heading “The Practical Implications of Jesus’ Teaching on Divorce & Remarriage,” review and discuss all three points. Why is confession key? Why must you avoid false guilt?
3. How has this particular study in Matthew strengthened your view of marriage? How has the passage helped you grow in your knowledge and understanding of confession of sin? The grace of God in the gospel? Discuss.