
divorce

... and remarriage

Your Pastor's heart...

Divorce is not the unforgivable sin. God hates divorce... because He loves people! He knows divorce destroys relationships and families (especially children). Further, God loves divorcees. Without Biblical cause, divorce is not an option for Christian couples. Keep this principle in mind: if we're going to err in relationship with people, let's err on the side of "grace".

Three values the Bible teaches about marriage:

1. Marriage is God ordained (Genesis 2:18):
 - to produce the character of Christ in the husband and wife (a "refining" process)
 - so a man and a woman can fulfill God's will in complementary roles
 - to reflect to the world the relationship of Christ and His church
 - for one-flesh intimacy
 - to produce children and a godly heritage
2. God intended marriage to be a lifelong monogamous union between a man and a woman
3. Marriage involves a commitment to a "covenant" (a sacred, holy, and binding relationship - between God, and the husband and the wife)

Six things the Bible teaches about divorce:

1. God hates divorce (Malachi 2:14-16, Matthew 19:6)
2. The Law restricted divorce, and Moses permitted it only because of the hardness of people's hearts (Matthew 19:7-8)
3. Jesus forbade divorce as contrary to God's will (Mark 10:6-9, Matthew 19:5-6)
4. Paul forbids a Christian couple to get a divorce (1 Corinthians 7:10-11)
5. Paul instructs a Christian spouse to not initiate a divorce because their partner is an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:12-16)
6. Jesus permitted (not commanded) a Christian to initiate divorce when their spouse was committing unrepentant habitual sexual immorality (Matthew 5:32, 19:9). The Bible forbids ALL sexual intimacy outside of the heterosexual monogamous lifelong union of one man and one woman in the sacred bonds of marriage ("living together" is sinful behavior, and two single adults having consensual sex is also sinful behavior)

Two Biblical circumstances (“exceptional clauses”) for divorce...

...repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation always being the order of the day among genuine Christ-followers...

1. MARITAL UNFAITHFULNESS (adultery)

“Jesus replied, ‘Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not his way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.’”
(Matthew 19:8-9, p. 696)

2. ABANDONMENT (of a believer by an unbeliever)

“To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord); If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace. How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?”
(1 Corinthians 7:12-16, p. 809)

Three Biblical circumstances for remarriage:

1. When one of the spouses has been guilty of habitual sexual immorality
2. When an unbelieving spouse permanently abandons a believing partner
3. When one of the spouses dies

Dear friends... open wide your hearts to the truth and grace of God’s Word. Keep your marriage vows. Give yourself 100% to your mate. Stop looking for a way out, and trust God to help you find a way through. Live as obedient Christ-followers who are fully devoted to Him. If you are divorced and remarried for reasons other than those taught in Scripture: stay married to your current spouse with committed love. Make peace with God, through Jesus Christ. Receive His amazing grace, and live a life of full devotion to Him.