

Strengthening Your Marriage

Review Lesson #9 “Guarding Your Heart”

Proverbs 4:23,25-27 “Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Let your eyes look straight ahead... ponder the path of your feet... do not turn to the right or the left. Remove your foot from evil.”

Malachi 2:15 “So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth.”

Proverbs 2:9-12,16,17 “Then you will understand what is right and just and fair – every good path. For wisdom will enter your heart... discretion will protect you and understanding will guard you. Wisdom will save you from the ways of wicked men... it will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God.”

Proverbs 7:25 “Do not let your heart turn aside to her ways...”

Job 31:1,7,9,33 “I have made a covenant with my eyes not to look lustfully at a girl.” “If my heart has been led by my eyes...” “If my heart has been enticed by a woman...” “If I have concealed my sin as men do by hiding my guilt in my heart...”

Lesson #10: Biblical Guidelines On Divorce And Remarriage

- The percentage of divorce in Christian and non-Christian marriages is very similar. <http://www.divorcerate.org/> (highest: ages 20-24 = %36-38)(US – 1+ mil. yearly) (%50 first marriage/%67 second marriage/%74 third marriage end in divorce)
- The divorce rate if left unchecked in our present society will reach %50.
- Today’s culture trend is for a “no-fault”, quick and easy divorce
- The destructive consequences of divorce has a ripping effect.
- All parties involved suffer. There is never a peaceful settlement without affect.
- Unbiblical divorce doesn’t fix anything. Baggage enters the next marriage.

Biblical Vows:

Hosea 10:4 “They make many promises, take false oaths and make agreements; therefore lawsuits spring up, like poisonous weeds in a plowed field.”

Leviticus 5:4 “If a person thoughtlessly takes an oath to do anything – whether good or evil – in any matter one might carelessly swear about – even though he is unaware of it, in any case when he learns of it, he will be guilty.”

Proverbs 20:25 “It is a trap for a man to dedicate something rashly, and only later to consider his vows.”

Marriage Is Held In High Honor:

Proverbs 18:22 “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.” (19:14)

Proverbs 5:18 “May you rejoice in the wife of your youth...”

Hebrews 13:4 “Marriage should be honored by all and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”

- Marriage is an inseparable, permanent union. (super-glued)
“till death do us part...”

Matthew 19:5 “For a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate (divorce).”

Matthew 19:10 “The disciples said, ‘If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry’.” (fear of commitment)

- Marriage is a measure of spiritual maturity.

The state of one’s marriage is a visible measurement of godliness and spiritual leadership. (Eph. 5:22-33; 1 Tim. 3:2; Ti. 1:6)

What’s God’s View On Divorce?

- God hates divorce

Matthew 19:4,8 “Moses permitted you to divorce because your hearts were hard.” “It was not this way from the beginning...”

Malachi 2:14-16 “You ask why... it is because the Lord is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith (“dealt treacherously”) with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the Lord made them one? ... **I hate divorce**... and I hate a man’s covering himself with violence as well as with his garment, says the LORD Almighty.” (sin-splattered garment)

- It is breaking the marriage covenant
 - Proverbs 2:16,17 ‘It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, who has left the partner of her youth and ignored the covenant she made before God.’
 - Matthew 19:6 “What God has joined together, let no man separate.”
 - “one flesh”
 - Jeremiah 31:31,32

- Divorce is a reality and is acknowledged in Scripture – yet God never commands it nor approves of it. (Deut. 22:19,29; 24:1-4; Jer. 3:1,8; Is. 50:1; Lev. 21:7,14; 22:13; Num. 30:7; Ezra 10:3-5; Matt. 1:18,19; Matt. 14:3,4)
 - It is a consequence of human sin. (Fall – Gen. 3)
 - Ezra commanded Israel to purify themselves by commanding divorce to dissolve expressly forbidden unions (Deut. 7:1-5). (unique situation) (pagan women/immoral religious practices/grounds for divorce)
 - Deuteronomy 24:1-4 The certificate did not make divorce right, but gave the woman’s reputation protection from slander and provided her proof of freedom from her former husband and the right to remarry. The central issue why it was allowed was the hardness of the heart.
 - A reluctant permission had been turned into a “legal right”.

- * False tradition (Rabbi Hillel) (Matthew 19:3 “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?”)
 - “uncleanness” (indecent) applied to burning a meal, too much salt on dinner, going without a veil, talking to men in the marketplace, being infertile, taking her hair down in public, speaking ill of the mother-in-law, or not being pretty enough... and she could be sent away (for whatever reason). (“just do the necessary paperwork...?”)
 - originally meant “impropriety” “indecent exposure” “improper, shameful, or indecent behavior which was unbecoming to a wife and embarrassing to her husband..” (Deut. 23:13,14) (acts that stopped just short of actual adultery)(sexual looseness or lewdness).
 - see Pharisee’s perversion of the Law in Matthew 5:21,22,27,28
 - Greek and Roman perversions (low view of women = to slaves) “porneia” (fornication)(women only for house cleaning and bearing legitimate children)(Jerome recorded a woman who had been married 23 times- legalized prostitution)
 - Every time a man turned his wife loose to remarry, he forced her into adultery, which made him also guilty of adultery. A woman became “defiled” or “disqualified” by the consummation of a new union where there was not valid grounds for the divorce that ended the first marriage. Divorce leads to adultery, because remarriage is inevitable.

- Jewish Old Testament Law
 - A man who falsely accused publically (slandered) his wife of promiscuity before marriage could never divorce her (Deut. 22:13-19).
 - Adultery was punishable by death (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:20-24; Jn. 8:7).
 - Fornicators must marry and could never divorce (Deut. 22:28,29; Ex. 22:16,17). (Lev. 19:20 punishment/scourging)
 - Lust was sin, but was not punishable by death (Matt. 5:28).
 - Coveting another person's spouse is forbidden (Ex. 20:17).
- It is like any sin and is forgivable by Christ's atonement. (1 Jn. 1:7.9; 2 Cor. 5:17) "before Christ" and "after Christ"
- There are differing views on the disqualification of an elder (1 Tim. 3:1-7) "husband of one wife" or "a one woman man" "above reproach"

Exception Clauses:

(If you get a divorce without proper grounds you will add adultery to the sin of divorce.)

1. Adultery ("porneia" - "illicit sexual intercourse")

Matthew 5:31,32 "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce,' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, **except for marital unfaithfulness**, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery." (Jer. 3:6-8)

Matthew 19:3-9 "Some Pharisees came to (Jesus) to test him. They asked, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?'" "Haven't you read that at the beginning the Creator made them male and female.... So they are no longer two but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate." "Why then did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" "Jesus replied, 'Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were heart. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, **except for marital unfaithfulness**, and marries another woman commits adultery.'" (Deut. 24:1-4)

2. Desertion

1 Corinthians 7:15,16 "**If the unbeliever leaves, let him do so.** A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances. How do you know wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?"

God's Greatest Desire Is Reconciliation Between Husband And Wife:

1 Cor. 7:10,11 "To the married I give this command... A wife must not separate (divorce) from her husband, but if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. The husband must not divorce his wife."

Romans 12:18 "If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone."

Romans 14:19 "Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification."

Hebrews 12:14 "Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy..."

Matthew 5:9 "Blessed are the peacemakers..."

1 Corinthians 6:1-8 Church leadership are to settle disputes between believers.
Hosea and Gomer (Hosea; Is. 50:1)

Remarriage:

1. Death frees the living, believing, partner to remarry

1 Corinthians 7:39 "A woman is bound to her husband as long as he lives, but if her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, but he must belong to the Lord."

Romans 7:2,3 "By the law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. If she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man."

1 Timothy 5:14 "I (Paul) counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity to slander."

Ruth 1:4-13; 2:11; 4:10,13

2. A believer should only marry another believer

Deuteronomy 7:3,4; 1 Corinthians 7:39; 2 Corinthians 6:14

3. If two believers divorce (without adultery or desertion), they must remain unmarried or be reconciled together.

1 Cor. 7:10,11 "To the married I give this command... A wife must not separate (divorce) from her husband, but if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And the husband must not divorce his wife."

4. If someone divorces and remarries for reasons other than because of adultery or desertion, they are committing adultery. (Matt. 5:31,32; 19:9)

- Moses in Deuteronomy 24:1-4 commanded the defiled partner not to return to their first spouse which would be adultery. (because of unbiblical grounds) There was a command not to remarry the defiled person. (Jer. 3:1,8)

5. A person who has no right to get divorced has no Biblical right to remarry.