

There are few areas where disciples will be more out of step with the world than in their understanding of

There are few areas where Christians have compromised more with the world than in their practice of



and



Some bad news
Nearly 1/2 marriages end in divorce

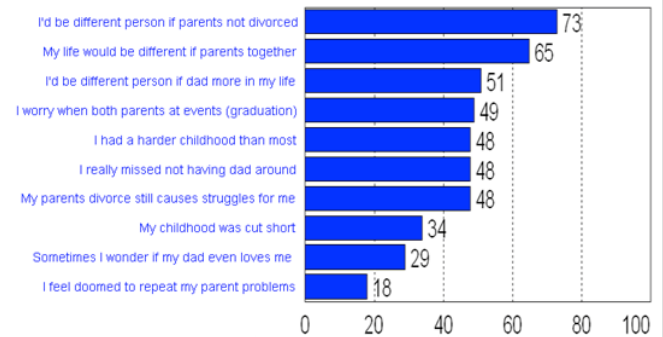


Percentage of New Marriages which end in divorce (2002)

Sweden	54.9%
Belarus	52.9
Finland	51.2
Luxembourg	47.4
Estonia	46.7
Australia	46
United States	45.8
Denmark	44.5
Turkey	6
Bosnia	6
Herzegovina	5
Macedonia	5
Sri Lanka	1.5
India	1.1

What the secular culture does not tell you about divorce.

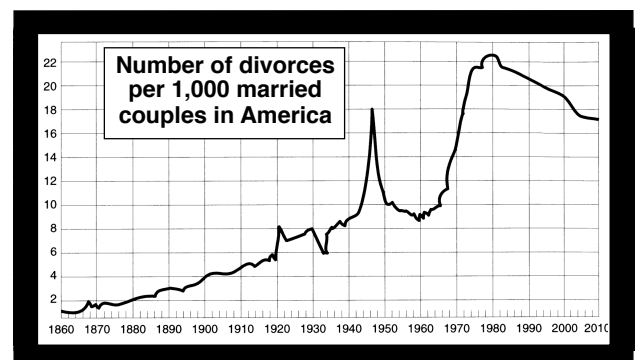
- ✓ Its negative impact on children.
- ✓ Its high cost to society.
- ✓ Its negative impact on public views of marriage.
- ✓ Its high emotional, financial, and social costs to those divorced.
- ✓ Its moral implications.



Divorce & Children

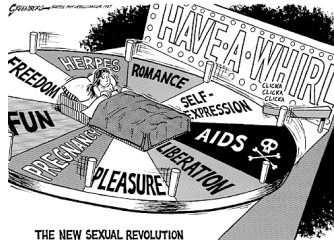
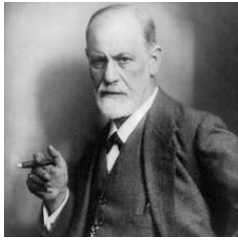
- ✓ The children of divorce are negatively impacted in almost every measurable way.
- ✓ 40% of children are raised without a father in the home.
- ✓ 50% will experience the divorce of their parents before they are 18 years old.
- ✓ 70% of long-term prison inmates grew up in broken homes.
- ✓ The death of a parent is less devastating to a child than a divorce.

Some deceptive good news
Divorces in the U.S. are decreasing.



The number of unmarried couples living together increased tenfold from 1960 to 2000.

During the same period the number of first marriages has declined and the age of those first married has increased.



The sexual revolution

A Secular view of marriage.

Cohabitation rather than marriage

Marriage is to make me happy.

If marriage doesn't work - get out.

- ✓ **"ME" centered** - Marriage primarily serves the personal fulfillment & happiness of both husband and wife.
- ✓ **Moral indifference** - Marriage and divorce are not moral issues.
- ✓ **Marginal importance** - Marriage is one of many lifestyle options.

What the Christian culture does not tell you about marriage.

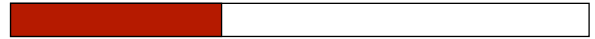
- ✓ Finding God's will does not mean finding one's "soul mate."
- ✓ Marriages will not fulfill your life.
- ✓ What you start with is not what you wind up with.
- ✓ Christian marriage does not come with a guarantee.

The really bad news
Being a Christian
does not make a dramatic difference.

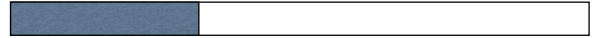
- Jews 30%



- Born-again Christians 27%



- Other Christians 24%



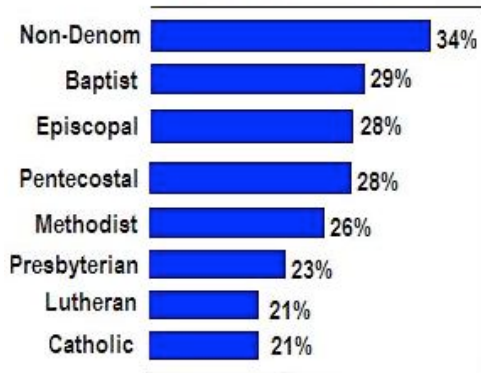
- Atheists, Agnostics 21%



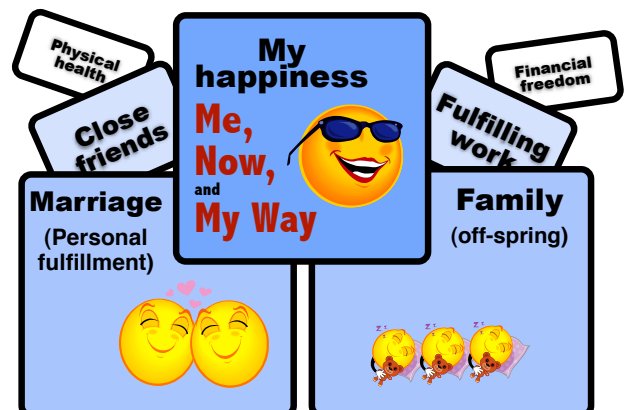
source: Barna Group

Divorce Rates by Denomination

Source: Barna Research



Explanation #1 "ME" centered Christianity



Explanation #2

**Christian's view of marriage is too low
and their expectations of marriage
are too high.**

Marriage is
designed for
my fulfillment

Finding God's will for the
right person will secure a
successful marriage.

Marriage is expected
to meet all my
emotional needs.

Christian marriages
come with a
guarantee.

Explanation #3

Marriage is not associated with ministry.

Genesis 2:24

"For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh."



Marriage requires
a "conversion"
from being **ministered to**
to having a **ministry**.

Mark 10

"¹ And rising up, He went from there to the region of Judea, and beyond the Jordan; and crowds gathered around Him again, and, according to His custom, He once more began to teach them. ² And some Pharisees came up to Him, testing Him, and began to question Him whether it was lawful for a man to divorce a wife. ³ And He answered and said to them, "What did Moses command you?" ⁴ And they said, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away." ⁵ But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. ⁶ But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. ⁷ For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh; consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.""

God's design in the creation story

Genesis 1:24

"For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh."

Observe: This is a part of the cultural mandate of creation making marriage a common and universal part of God's plan for man.

Observe: This text is the basis of all subsequent references to marriage and divorce.

Observe: Marriage is moving from being ministered to, to having a ministry.

Observe: There is nothing said about divorce.

Moses' Exception clause

Deuteronomy 24:1

"When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds **no favor** in his eyes because he has found **some indecency** in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out from his house,-"

Observe: This is Descriptive not Prescriptive.

Observe: The meaning of "some indecency" is unclear.

הלל - "for just about any reason" (no favor)

שמתא - "sexual offense" (some indecency)

Observe: Jesus' understanding of this text is revealed in Mark 10:1-12 & Matthew 19:8-10

"¹⁰ And in the house the disciples began questioning Him about this again. ¹¹ And He said to them, "**Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her; ¹² and if she herself divorces her husband and marries another man, she is committing adultery.**"

✓ Jesus' teaching seems unreasonable to the modern Western mind set. AND IT IS!

✓ This is one of the hardest teachings to understand and apply pastorally.

Matthew's Exception clause

Matthew 19:9

“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for **immorality**, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

- ✓ This is a broad word that refers to any unlawful marriage because of:
 - Breaking of betrothal vows
 - Incest
 - Marriage outside the faith
 - Promiscuity
- ✓ There is little consensus on how to apply this teaching.

Pastoral application



**Example
of Jesus being IN but not OF
the world.**

**Disciples see marriage
between a man and
woman as about more
than their temporal
happiness.**

Pastoral considerations for the evangelical Christian.

1. *Recognizing the importance of the family make a healthy marriage a very high priority.*
2. *Recognizing the high cost of divorce, make it a last resort after all efforts to preserve marriage.*
3. *Recognizing that we live in a broken world, be gracious, seek peace, control the damage.*