

Matthew 5

“³¹ It was said, “Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce”; ³² but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.””

Assumption - A Jewish woman who is divorced from her husband would marry another or have no identity in the community.

Assertion - But upon doing so she commits adultery as does the man who marries her because her divorce was not recognized by God. She was never free to remarry.

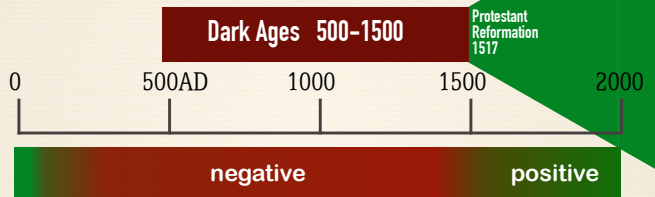
Advice - Lawful marriage is for life. If there is divorce (from man's viewpoint) it does not terminate the marriage from God's view, therefore remarriage is adulterous. Annulment is the only exception.

Romans 12

“¹ I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present **your bodies a living and holy sacrifice**, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the **renewing of your mind**, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”

- **Our bodies (sensual passions) must be submitted to our spiritual service if we are to follow Christ.**
- **Without a renewed mind, Christian ethical teaching can seem harsh and unworkable.**
- **It is hard for us to see the issue of divorce and remarriage in the same way the church has seen it for three fourths of its history.**
- **Most of us have little appreciation for how dramatically the Protestant Reformation and the Enlightenment have changed our culture, perceptions, and expectations.**

The Reformation of Western Civilization



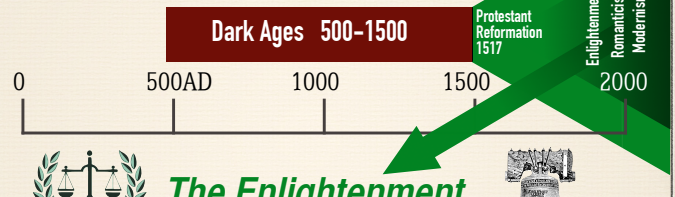
An over reaction to Pagan excesses:
sensual immorality, gluttony, irrationality.

Dualism The physical body was seen as the root of evil. **Asceticism** Suppression of sensual feelings was spiritual.

1 Cor.7:1 - "It is good for a man not to touch a woman."

All sensual pleasure is sinful. Celibacy is glorified. Sex was for procreation only. Romantic love is to be replaced with "mature" love

The Reformation of Western Civilization



Child Sacrifice

Then & Now



Canaanite debauchery

Abortion

Divorce

Princess Diana



“What must it be like for a little boy to read that Daddy never loved Mummy?”

Research comparing children of divorced parents to children with married parents shows:

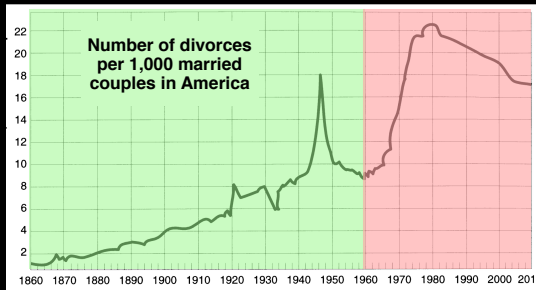
- 40% of all children will experience the break up of their biological parents.
- Children from divorced homes suffer **academically**. They experience high levels of behavioral problems. Their grades suffer, and they are less likely to graduate from high school.
- Kids whose parents divorce are substantially more likely to be incarcerated for committing a **crime** as a juvenile.
- Because the custodial parent's income drops substantially after a divorce, children in divorced homes are almost five times more likely to live in **poverty** than are children with married parents.
- Teens from divorced homes are much more likely to engage in **drug and alcohol** use, as well as **premarital sex** than are those from intact families.
- Children from divorced homes are more likely to **divorce** after marriage.
- Children from divorced homes experience **illness** more frequently and recover from sickness more slowly and are more likely to suffer child **abuse**.
- Children of divorced parents suffer more frequently from symptoms of **psychological distress**, and the emotional scars of divorce **last into adulthood**.

The high cost of divorce

- **Financial** - it is often a ticket to poverty.
 - The average divorce proceedings range from \$15,000 - \$30,000 but the settlements can be staggering.
 - Madonna & Guy Ritchie \$75 million.
 - Mel & Robyn Moore Gibson \$425 million.
 - Rupert & Anna Murdoch \$1.7 billion.
 - 28% of children from broken homes will live in poverty. (vs. 17%)
 - 27% of divorced women will live in poverty. (vs. 13%)
- **Psychological** - guilt and shame can be deep & persistent after a failed marriage.
- **Social** - the affect on children can be severe and lifelong. Nearly every area of one's social life will be affected (usually in a negative way).
- **Spiritual** - isolation, guilt, lack of confidence, etc.

Divorce in the U.S.A.

America continues to have the highest divorce rate of any industrialized nation - 45%.

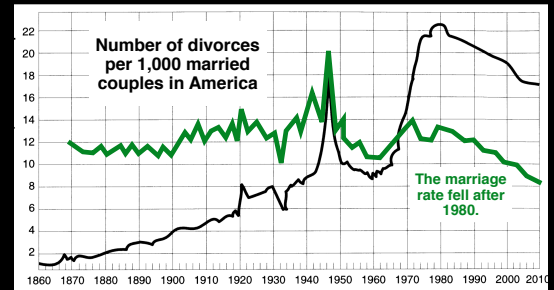


1. Restricted divorce until 1850 (based on adultery, desertion, physical abuse only)

2. Tolerated divorce 1850-1960 (based also on mental cruelty)

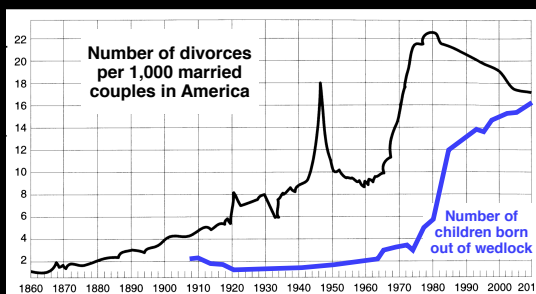
3. Unrestricted divorce 1960-present (based also on irreconcilable differences)

Divorce in the U.S.A.



The decline in divorces is explained in part by the decline in marriages.

Divorce in the U.S.A.



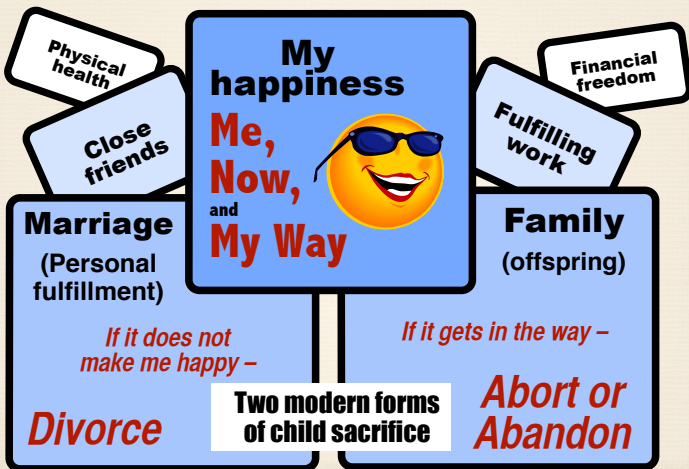
The decline in marriage is explained in part by the increase of the acceptance of bearing children outside marriage.

Divorce in the U.S.A.



The decline in marriage is explained in part by the increase in cohabiting couples.

Explanation #1 *Our culture has become more "ME" centered.*



Christians and divorce trends



Conservatives may have higher rates of divorce because they have more unrealistic expectations of marriage and because they tend to apply gender roles in abusive ways.

General population	33%
Non-denominational	34%
Jews	30%
Baptist	29%
Episcopal	28%
Pentecostal	28%
Methodist	26%
Mormons	24%
Presbyterian	23%
Catholic	21%
Lutheran	21%
Atheists, Agnostics	21%

Percentage of New Marriages which end in divorce (2002)

Explanation #2

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

Four common myths

Marriage is designed for my fulfillment

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

Marriage is expected to meet my emotional needs.

Christian marriages come with a guarantee.



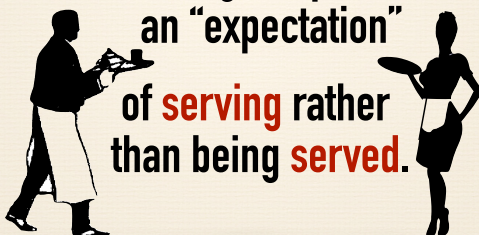
Explanation #3

Failure to view marriage as ministry.

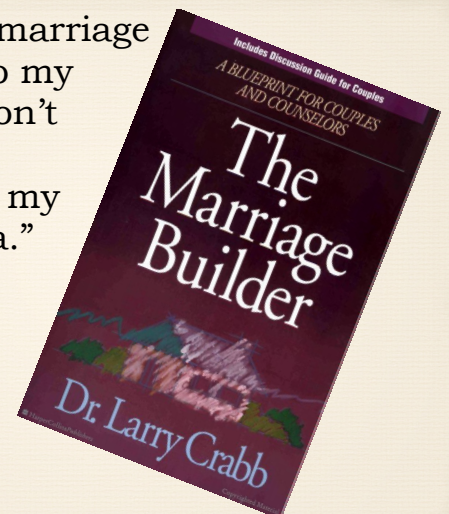
Ephesians 5:21

"and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ."

Marriage requires an "expectation" of **serving** rather than being **served**.



"In a healthy marriage I MINISTER to my mate, and I don't MANIPULATE them to fulfill my selfish agenda."

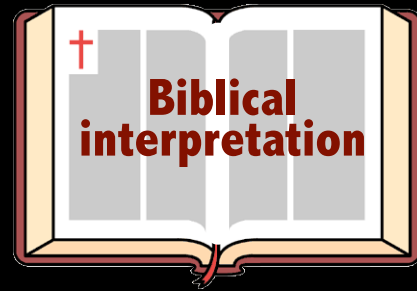


When we work as hard at understanding our mate as we do at being understood by them, we understand more than each other. We understand love.

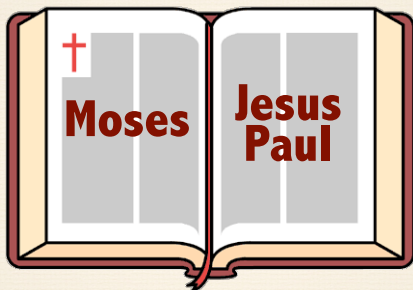
“When the satisfaction, security, and development of another person is as important to you as your own satisfaction, security, and development,
love exists.”

Harry Stack Sullivan
(therapist)

What does the Bible say about divorce and remarriage?



Genesis 2:24
Deuteronomy 24:1-4



Matthew 5:31-32, 19:3-9
1 Corinthians 7:10-15, 27-28

Genesis 2:24

“18 Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” . . . 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.”

Universal - This is a part of the cultural mandate of creation making marriage a common and universal part of God’s plan for man.

Purpose - Bear the image of God (Gen.1:27), Procreation (Gen.1:28), Personal fulfillment (Gen.2:18).

Family - Marriage is moving from one family to start another.

Gender - “suitable helper” was of the opposite sex.

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,-”

Permissive - This is Descriptive not Prescriptive.

Unclear - The meaning of “some indecency” is unclear.

HILLEL - “for just about any reason”

SHAMMAI - “sexual offense”

Matthew 19:8-10 - Jesus’ clarifies this text

Matthew 19

“3 And some Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause at all?” 4 And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning *made them male and female*, 5 and said, ‘*For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh*?’ 6 Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

“7 They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command to *give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?*” 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.” 10 The disciples said to Him, “If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry.””

Matthew 19

“8 He said to them, ‘Because of your hardness of heart, Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 ‘And I say to you. whoever **divorces** his wife, except for **immorality**, and marries another commits adultery.’ 10 The disciple said to Him, ‘If the relationship of the man with his wife is like this, it is better not to marry’.”

- **Jesus looks to *Gen.2:24* not *Deut.24:1-4* for God’s plan.**
- **Jesus is addressing the *covenant community*.**
- **Jesus respects the principle of “*damage control*.”**
- **“divorces” is the word used in *Matt.1:19* of Joseph’s plan for Mary (for *breaking betrothal vows*).**
- **The meaning of “immorality” (*porneia*)**
 - ✓ It is **not the normal word for adultery.**
 - ✓ It is used **only in Matthew’s account.**
 - ✓ It is implied of **Jesus’ birth** in *Jn.8:41*.
 - ✓ It is **distinct** from “adultery” in *Matt.15:19*.

10 top reasons marriages don’t last

1. **Immaturity** - children (teens) getting married.
2. **Commitment** - failure to bring self sacrifice to marriage.
3. **Expectations** - demanding personal fulfillment.
4. **Rational** - marrying for the wrong reason.
5. **Differences** - unshared values & cultures.
6. **Legislation** - no fault divorce laws.
7. **Parents** - coming from a broken home.
8. **Poverty** - changing economic roles.
9. **Fathers** - absentee fathers put daughters at risk.
10. **Cohabitation** - living together before marriage.

Marriage is a life long covenant that is unbreakable.

But what about unlawful marriages?

But what about multiple marriages?

But what about damage control?

But what about grace?

For Christians
Everything is O.K. in the end.
If it’s not O.K. it’s not the end.