

Marriage and Divorce

Read **Genesis 2:23-25** and **Mark 10:6-9**

1. Who created marriage? Us or God?
2. Based on both readings, what was the intention of marriage?
3. How will this shape our expectations of God's word when we enquire about marriage and divorce?

Read **Deuteronomy 22:13-21** and **24:1-4**

4. It doesn't take long in the Bible until we see intimate relations looking pretty distant from the original 'blueprint'. What do these instructions in Deuteronomy prevent?

Read **Jeremiah 2:1-5, 20-25, 3:1-10**

5. God's relationship with Israel is described in terms of a marriage, but things don't turn out so rosy.
 - a. How is God portrayed?
 - b. How is Israel portrayed?
6. What is the eventual outcome of this?
7. From what we have read so far, how important is faithfulness in marriage?

Read **Matt 19:1-12**

8. In verses 2-3, Jesus is asked a question about what makes a divorce acceptable.
 - a. Does Jesus answer the question?
 - b. How does his reply reframe the issue?

9. Do you think the Pharisee's question is one we might be tempted to ask?

10. In verse 9, Jesus seems to be both hard-line and provide an exception. What's his point?

Read **1 Cor 7:10-16**

The Corinthian church is struggling to know how to cope with married couples where one person has become a Christian. Do they stay together or separate?

11. What does Paul expect of the Christian? (The 'brother' or 'sister').
12. Given our understanding of biblical marriage, what do you think is meant by the Christian being 'not bound' in this case?

Read **Ephesians 5:28-33**

13. How would you describe Christ's character towards the church?
14. What does this say about God's faithfulness versus our own?

On the ground

Faithfulness is at the heart of the distinctives of marriage. What hope do we have then? Reflect on how God demonstrated his love for us.¹

Even the Bible agrees that divorce is all around us; sometimes it is unavoidable, and sometimes we divorce for the wrong reasons. Is this unforgivable?²

How then, are we to treat those who have suffered divorce (for any reason)?

¹ See Romans 5:8

² Check out this nice reminder: 1 John 2:1