

- b) Jesus provides His view on divorce in **Matthew 5:32**. How does it differ from or build upon what had been said in the past? *Note: Sexual immorality according to the Bible and the historic witness of the church is any sexual activity outside the marriage of one man and one woman.*
4. Now read **Matthew 19:3-6**. What is Jesus' response to the Pharisees' question about divorce and what does He rely on to support His view?
5. a) Continue reading **Matthew 19:7-9**. How does Jesus characterize Moses' instruction and what is Jesus' conclusion in regard to the consequences of divorce? How does Jesus elevate the dignity of women?
- b) How have you seen or experienced God's design for marriage being tainted by sin or hardness of heart? Will you pray for those husbands and wives who are struggling to stay united?
6. CHALLENGE: Paul talks about marriage and divorce in **1 Corinthians 7:10-13**. Find one nugget of truth in his words that reflects God's heart for those who live in His kingdom.
7. a) As you review the verses below, what do you learn about God's intention for marriage that helps you put Jesus' statements about divorce in context:
- **Genesis 2:24-25**

- **Ephesians 5:31-33**

- **1 Peter 3:1-2, 7**

b) God designed marriage to be a covenant agreement that makes the couple holy, picturing the relationship between God and His people (**Isaiah 54:6, 2 Corinthians 11:2**). When viewed as ending something God designed to be permanent, how does this strengthen or confirm the serious nature of divorce?

8. Divorce is a tough but important issue that requires thoughtful deliberation. In what circumstances might Jesus see divorce as justified in this day and age? Explain your answer and how you came to it.

9. JESUS SAID: STAY UNITED TO YOUR SPOUSE

Jesus' words are to be heeded by women as well as by men. The laws of our country have empowered a wife to divorce her spouse for any reason whatsoever. There is now equal opportunity for a wife to break the covenant agreement and separate what God has joined.

As you learn what marriage is really about, you may be convicted or feeling regret over your past in regard to the issue of divorce. Remember that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God; all are in need of God's forgiveness and mercy. "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." Turn toward Jesus. Repent, bring your regret, your sadness, even your shame to the One who bought your freedom and forgives you.

How have Jesus' words grown a deeper understanding into God's desire for unity in marriage?

MEMORY VERSE: “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery — but I am talking about Christ and the church.” **Ephesians 5:31**

NAME

PRAYER REQUEST