

The Bible on Divorce and Remarriage

Australian Views on Divorce

What do people think of divorce? How are divorcees treated?

What is the general attitude towards remarriage in our society?

The Church and Divorce and Remarriage

How do you view divorcees?

Should there be any difference between the guilty and innocent party?

What questions do you have about divorce and remarriage?

The Bible on Divorce and Remarriage

Jesus exception: *porneia*: Matthew 19:3-9

The Pharisees question sets the context. What is the intent of their question?

On the question of divorce, Jesus begins his answer by reaffirming God's original intention for marriage. What is Jesus concerned to emphasise in his answer?

According to Jesus, why did Moses permit divorce? (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)

On the basis of Jesus' teaching in verse 9:

When is divorce and remarriage sin?

When is divorce and remarriage permitted?

Divorce and remarriage is *permitted* but not mandatory. In other words, even in the case of *porneia*, the innocent party is free to forgive and reconcile with their repentant spouse. Of course, where there is no repentance from the guilty party, reconciliation is unlikely.

Does Jesus' single exception rule out all other grounds for divorce? Why? Why not?

Paul's exception: desertion by an unbeliever: 1 Corinthians 7:10-17

How is Paul's audience different from Jesus' audience in Matthew 19?

Like Jesus, Paul addresses the Corinthians issue by emphasising marriage as a lifelong union. What is his instruction to Christian couples?

Is being married to a non-Christian reason enough for divorce?

When does Paul permit divorce? What is the reasoning behind this teaching?

Whilst Paul says that widows are free to remarry (and if they do so to marry a Chastain which is crucial advice for those who are free to choose their marriage partner, 1 Corinthians 7:39), nowhere does he explicitly say that Christians who are deserted by unbelieving spouses are free to remarry.

Can a Christian who divorced because of desertion remarry? Why/Why not?

More Bible on Divorce and Remarriage

Matthew 5:31-32

Jesus is speaking to his disciples.

The '...makes...' in 32c may be used in the same way as it is in 1 John 5:10, 'makes it appear as if'

Notice that the statement from Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is not given in full. The grounds given in Deut 24 are for sexual immorality. Therefore anyone seeking a divorce under Deut 24 would be saying that there had been sexual immorality, and so to seek divorce when there wasn't sexual immorality would still imply to the community that there had been sexual immorality.

The '...marries a divorced woman...' in 32d may be translated '...marries the divorced woman...', thereby saying that you are made out to be committing adultery if you marry someone who is divorced.

Mark 10:1-10

This is a similar passage to Matthew 19:3-9 except without the qualification 'except for sexual immorality'. Given his audience, the Pharisees, Jesus seems to be using the strongest possible language.

Additional Grounds for Divorce and Remarriage

We have seen two explicit grounds for divorce and remarriage:

Does this rule out all other grounds for divorce? Why/Why not?

What are some examples difficult cases that may come up?

How should we respond to these case by case?

Some Conclusions

1. God's intention and purpose for marriage is for it to be life long.
2. Do not get divorced.
3. Do not commit adultery. Love your husband/wife.
4. Divorce is a tragic, sometimes allowable circumstance because of sin in a fallen world.
5. Even then reconciliation should be sort whenever possible.
6. A divorced person may remarry if:
 - a. they were the innocent* party.
*Refer to the study above to see what may be meant by innocent.
 - b. they are the guilty party, subsequently become a Christian and are repentant#.
#Such scenarios would have to be looked at on a case by case basis.

Thinking it Through

Everyone:

In what ways do you need to change your attitudes towards those who are divorced or remarried?

What do you think is the best way for divorce to be prevented in our church?

If you become aware of any marriages in our church that are in need of serious help, what should you do?

Married people:

What can I do to prevent my marriage ending in divorce?