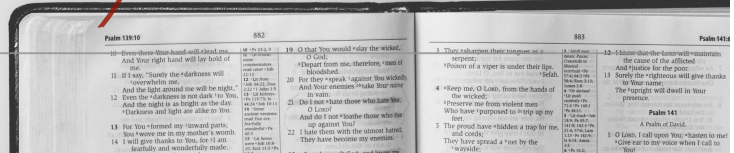


WORDS *of* TRUTH

Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage



Ladies Article

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Theme Articles

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A Stronger Chain

Lust rises up within us like the incense burned in the temple of old. It smokily increases in its control of our hearts and minds until they are filled with inordinate desires. When burning with this kind of passion, it is difficult for us to steer the ship of our souls on the correct course.

Love, on the other hand, is like a piece of steel. Once it is heated up and enough force applied, it can be shaped into anything. We command our love. We control where it is directed. According to God's will, love is the greatest force in the universe.

Our marriage relationships require diligent work and committed companions. If both parties are not folding their steel together, it becomes difficult for the marriage to persist. But when a man and woman love each other with force, choice, commitment, and contentment they create something so strong as to become nearly unbreakable.

—DD

Marital Bliss

David Dixon

There are no perfect marriages. But the institution of marriage is perfect for us. Just as no congregation of the Lord's Church is flawless, every marriage has its ups and downs. But the design of both institutions is perfect for the people within them. God gave humanity the marriage relationship to forge a bond between a man and a woman that was meant to model and predict the relationship between Jesus and his bride, the Church (Eph. 5:22-32). We are imperfect people living together within a perfectly designed relationship. Although we might not always agree as husband and wife, we can still have marital bliss.

Keeping God's commands for husbands and wives towards each other is the first step towards marital bliss. Husbands are commanded to love their wives (Eph. 5:25) and to honor them as the weaker vessel (1 Pet. 3:7). Wives have the instructions to submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22) and to be subject to them (1 Pet. 3:1). A husband loves and honors his wife when he thinks of her needs above his own, when he considers what she desires and seeks to fulfill it, and when he communicates his appreciation for her regularly. A wife submits and subjects to her husband when she obeys his commands, listens to his instructions, and contemplates his reasons for giving such. These are controversial considerations in today's world, but we can trust that fulfilling these commands from God is the only way to achieve marital bliss. When the husband leads and commands his household with love, patience, kindness, selflessness, and humility, then the wife will have every reason to submit to him, obey him, and be subject to his authority. When the wife yields to her husband with grace, patience, support, and encouragement, then the husband will find it much more pleasant to assert himself with godly confidence and dignity. Our world has diluted the concepts of masculinity and femininity to where the words no longer mean what they should mean. A husband who leads his household with Christ-like masculinity will without question be loved by his wife and children, and a wife who holds herself to the Biblical ideals of femininity will be supported, cherished, and championed by her adoring husband. Marital bliss is found in a marriage where each spouse is keeping God's commands towards the other both because it is God's command and because they want to. Be a spouse that your spouse wants to obey God's commands for.

A second ingredient in marital bliss is a strong commitment to our bond. When we got married we made vows to each other. For Christians, a vow should be unbreakable. Can you even consider what Jesus would have to do in order to sever the ties between himself and his Church? It is not possible. Jesus can never be guilty of anything that would break that bond. He has an eternal commitment to his Bride, and it will never be "put asunder." This is exactly the kind of commitment we are commanded to have as Christian husbands and wives. On our wedding day, we may have stars in our eyes, butterflies in our stomachs, and clouds around our feet, but the connection between the two being joined together should be as weak on that day as it will ever be in the remainder of their relationship. From day one in our marriages, our bond should only grow stronger. As time continues, even when those moments happen that you don't see eye to eye, or when a conversation with a coworker includes not so subtle innuendo, the thought of the investment of time, energy, memory, intimacy, and irreplaceable joy should give us reason to sweep those fleeting moments away with the confidence that what you have already built with your spouse is and always will be exponentially better than anything you could ever hope to build with someone else. This is the person with whom you have chosen to spend the rest of your life! Commit to that relationship in such a way that only death will part you! Marital bliss is when both parties have such a commitment to their bond. Nourish that bond, work on that bond, and strengthen that bond as often as possible. Hire a babysitter, cancel a meeting at work, turn off the cellphones for the weekend! You committed to this person. You became one flesh. "No man ever yet hated his own flesh," so love her like you love yourself.

If you want marital bliss, the third key to unlocking it is to see heaven together. Truly, we won't be married in heaven (Mat. 22:30), but we can both have our eyes fixed on the prize in our marriages. We can encourage and edify one another in ways we cannot do in other relationships. Marital bliss is when the husband helps his wife get closer to heaven every day, and the wife moves her husband forward in his spiritual walk daily as well. Marital bliss is when both parties have such a selfless attitude towards the other that either would say, "Even if it meant I had to give up my spot, I want YOU to go to heaven." When each spouse has that attitude, neither of them will be unfaithful sexually or abusive physically because that behavior does not get the spouse any closer to heaven. If I truly care about the soul of my spouse I cannot abuse them or cheat on them. Pray together, study together, teach together. This is marital bliss.

There is nothing sweeter than to hear of two old people who have been married for decades dying hand in hand within minutes of each other. Surely they had their arguments, spats, and frustrations, but they endured. Marriage is the perfect union of a man and a woman — not a perfect man and a perfect woman, but a perfect union of two imperfect souls. In living obedient lives committed to each other and to God, those two imperfect souls can achieve marital bliss. "He who find a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord" (Pro. 18:22 ESV).

Maintaining a Healthy Marriage

Leah Faughn



We live in a time when there is so much interest in being healthy. There are diets and gyms galore attesting to that. While, admittedly, it is important to try to have a healthy body, it is even more important to have a healthy marriage. A healthy marriage is important for a myriad of reasons; the most important is that it is a picture of Christ and the church. In our marriages we are an image of Jesus and his blood-bought bride. This being true, any Christian, married or not, should want to see Christian marriages thrive. We should think on, prepare for, and implement those things which make marriages healthy. For that purpose, let's observe how enjoying a healthy diet of marriage advice, cutting out comparison, and exercising the core can maintain a healthy marriage.

First, in order to maintain a healthy marriage we should make sure we have a healthy diet — of marriage advice that is. We understand, in the physical sense, that if we want to be healthy, we should take advice from those who know what they're talking about. We should take the time to seek out those who have healthy bodies and see what their habits are. If we do that, we may find out the tub of ice cream every night and the daily fast food runs might not be the quickest path to health. In the same way, if we want a healthy Christian marriage, we should seek out those who actually have one. It's not wise to ask your girlfriends who have rocky marriages themselves for advice. Instead, we should observe the marriages around us that have stood the test of time and talk to those people. We should also beware of listening to marriage advice from those who do not know and who do not claim to love the One who instituted marriage. Marriage is a God-given gift and those who do not know him are not the ideal candidates for marriage advisors. During those hard times in our marriage is it much healthier to get counsel from our brothers and sisters in Christ who have good marriages themselves. They can guide you and put you on the path to a healthier marriage. After all, that is exactly what Paul had in mind in Titus 2 when he encouraged the older women to train the younger women specifically regarding marriage. When our marriage's health suffers, we should do our best to improve it by enjoying a healthy diet of advice.

Second, just as it is sometimes necessary to cut calories to obtain better physical health, it is sometimes necessary to cut out comparisons in our marriages. Theodore Roosevelt once said, "Comparison is the thief of joy." One surefire way to make your marriage sick is to look around at what others apparently have in their marriages and compare ours to that "greener grass." Usually when we compare, we are just observing from a distance. We oftentimes are not getting a complete picture. This is especially true in our day of social media. Anyone can make their life, or marriage, look good on social media, but we are not seeing the whole truth. Even without social media it is still easy to compare our marriages to Hollywood's version of marriage and romance. Even a fictional hero (often created by a woman) in a Christian fiction book is very often an unfair comparison to our real-life imperfect husband. Too much of that distorted picture of marriage can make us dissatisfied with our own. We should remind ourselves that no other marriage is like our own. Even when we make "real-life" comparisons, our marriage will not usually look like someone else's marriage. Our marriage is made from two unique individuals joining in a personal covenant with each other. It stands to reason, that it will not be comparable to any other marriage. Like calories, some comparisons are good and necessary as the case of our first point, but too much will steal your marital joy.

Finally, exercise the core. In physical exercise it is very important to exercise the core. Physically speaking, the core is the central part of our bodies. It is also very crucial to our overall physical health. Similarly, the health of our marriages is dependent on three central, or core, values: respect, submission, and love. These are very important topics that could be a series of lessons all by themselves. For our purpose, however, let's look at how these values and behaviors can help us maintain a healthy marriage. Respect is necessary for a healthy marriage. In Ephesians 5 wives are commanded to show respect to their husbands. Husbands need respect. Don't fall into the trap of only giving respect when he "earns" it. After all, our husbands are commanded to love us — and we don't have to earn that love from him. A husband who is not respected will not function at his best. Another core value of marriage is submission. In our feministic society, submission is frowned upon. For Christian wives it is a command. There is such confusion about what submission is and what it looks like, but in Ephesians 5, there is a clear plan of authority given. Submission isn't an admission of inferiority on the part of a wife, but a choice of surrendering her will to her husband's. A beautiful picture of this type of humility can be seen in Philippians 2 when Christ emptied himself of his equality with God to come to Earth as a servant. We see this humility and submission again in Gethsemane when He prays, "Not my will, but thine." Why would we as Christian women have such a problem with this when it is the truest picture of Christ we could paint? Another core value of marriage is, of course, love. In Titus 2, older Christian women are commanded to teach younger women to love their husbands. In the Greek language that specific kind of love mentioned here is "phileo." It was the Greeks' word for a friendship kind of love. Of course as wives, we should selflessly love or "agape" our husbands, but we should also strive to be a friend to our husbands or "phileo" them.. That takes some effort sometimes on the part of the wife. It can be easy to overlook him in this way when the busyness of life sets in, but doing so will be a great step toward a healthy marriage. These core values of marriage are the central strength of our marriages.

Just as with our physical bodies, there are some crucial things that bring health, and there are also important choices and habits that will bring about a healthy marriage. We should be careful to only listen to advice from those grounded in the faith. We should refrain from comparing our marriage to other marriages. Finally we should strive to strengthen the core values of respect, submission, and love in our marriage. Doing these things will set us on the path to a long, healthy marriage.

How Divorce Affected My Faith

Nathan Liddell

“For the Lord, the God of Israel, saith that He hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the Lord of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously.”

Malachi 2:16 KJV

Divorce hurts. If you know someone who is divorced, you know someone who is hurting. Pray for them. Extend sympathy to them. Give them space and privacy to grieve. Understand that they are dealing with a kind of pain that they have never felt before. They may feel shame or social embarrassment. They may be struggling with guilt or remorse as they wonder why they could not save their family. They are probably experiencing fear, sadness, loneliness, disappointment, self-doubt, and anger. And, tragically, they may be struggling to hold on to their faith in God.

After my divorce, I dealt with all of these issues. I was shocked. I was depressed. And, I was hurting. I had a hard time coming to terms with my new life. To oversimplify it, I did not adjust well. For some time, I was just very deeply angry. And, though this is difficult for me to say, I eventually became mad at God. I could not understand how God could let my family suffer so much. It did not make sense to me that an all-powerful and perfectly good God would have allowed me and my family to experience so much pain.

If you had asked me before my divorce, “What would it take for you to become angry at God? How badly would you have to hurt?” I might have said something like, “How could I ever be angry at God?!” Or, perhaps I would have said, “I don’t know what it would take to become angry at God, and I sure don’t want to find out.” But, if you were to ask me today, “How badly would you have to hurt to become angry at God?” I could give you the exact answer—as badly as I hurt in my divorce.

Because of the pain I felt in my divorce, I eventually began to question my belief in God. Could a good God really exist? You see, I could not believe that God could be God if He was not good. So, I began to wonder whether He existed at all. In my anger and doubt, I began to think about all the people in the world who were suffering or had suffered or would suffer. Would a good God really let this happen? I was grappling with a very serious problem. I did not know it by its name at the time, but now I know that I was struggling with the problem of evil.

The problem of evil is the most difficult challenge to faith in God. This is the problem that Satan used in Job’s life to try to defeat his faith. Satan believed that if he could just cause Job enough pain, Job would abandon his faith. He said, “But put forth Your hand now and touch all that he has; he will surely curse You to Your face” (Job 1:11). Satan has used the problem of evil to destroy the faith of many. Bart Ehrman, a believer-turned-atheist, says that it was the problem of evil that

caused him to lose his faith. In his book, *God’s Problem*, he writes,

If there is an all-powerful and loving God in this world, why is there so much excruciating pain and unspeakable suffering? The problem of suffering has haunted me for a very long time. It was what made me begin to think about religion when I was young, and it was what led me to question my faith when I was older. Ultimately, it was the reason I lost my faith.

I am thankful to God, the very God I was mad at, that this is not my story. With God’s help, I was able to overcome the problem of evil. God suffered long with me and helped me find the answer I needed. This is what I learned: it is not impossible for a good God to exist and for evil, pain, and suffering to exist. By this, it is meant that there is no contradiction between the following statements:

1. An all-loving, all-powerful God exists.
2. Suffering exists.

How is it possible that both of these statements could be true? The answer is that free creatures (like you and me) may choose to misuse their free will to do evil. In His love, God created us with free will. But, because we misuse our free will, suffering like that caused by divorce comes into our lives. Once I understood this truth, I began to heal emotionally, and my faith began to recover. By God’s grace, my faith is stronger today than it was before my divorce.

John Keats wrote, “Aye on the shores of darkness there is light, And precipices show untrodden green, There is a budding morrow in midnight, There is a triple sight in blindness keen” (*To Homer*). On the dark shores of divorce, God gave me light. In the midnight of suffering, God gave me hope for a brighter day. As God led me through the pain of my divorce, I began to be able to see God’s presence and goodness in my life again. I saw God’s love in my family and friends who patiently supported me. I saw God’s compassion in a church family that surrounded me and comforted me. I saw God’s grace and mercy in the smile that finally returned to my daughter’s face. I saw God’s wisdom in the sweet Christian woman He eventually brought into my life.

How did divorce affect my faith? It almost destroyed it. But, God is good (Psa. 100:5). “He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds” (Psa. 147:3). God used the worst pain I have ever felt to make my faith stronger (cf. Rom. 8:28; 2 Cor. 12:7-10). If you are struggling with the pain of divorce, I trust and pray that He will do the same thing for you.

The Biblical View of Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage

Adam Faughn

“Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”

Ephesians 5:31-33 ESV

God loves marriage. While those who are single are not “lesser than” in the kingdom, that does not diminish that God loves the institution of marriage. He created it from the outset of humanity and, as with all things, what He has revealed is the final word on how to deal with marriage.

There are some facets of marriage He has not revealed. For example, there is no passage of Scripture that teaches how a people group or a nation should “legally” deal with marriage, so traditions like marriage certificates that are filed in a courthouse are perfectly acceptable, but other countries may choose to handle things differently. Also how a wedding ceremony is to be conducted is not outlined in Scripture. While nothing needs to be done that is against other principles of Scripture (lewdness or drunkenness, for example), the “order” of the ceremony or the traditions done in various cultures are a beautiful tapestry of humanity that are in order under God’s watchful eye.

However, there are many other parts of marriage in which God has specifically revealed His will. For example, the love a husband is to have for his wife is to be a mirror of the love that Jesus showed for His church, and is to include a willingness to fully sacrifice for her (see Ephesians 5:25). Since this is commanded by God, it is not optional. It is not “traditional.” It is a God-given directive that He demands our best effort to obey. The same holds true for a wife showing respect to her husband (Eph. 5:33). While not always easy, it is God’s directive; thus, it is not to be tampered with or undermined in any way.

Since the Lord created and governs marriage, part of that governing is that He gets to say how marriages may end. It is an emotional subject to consider, but the Lord has clearly revealed a teaching on this matter. As such, we have no right to change what He has stated.

In Matthew 19, Pharisees came to Jesus. Matthew specifically states that the question they put before Him was intended as a test (verse 3). Many scholars have pointed out that there were at least two schools of thought on the subject of the question, so it would seem that these Pharisees were going to find out which group Jesus would say was correct. This may also be the reason they asked the question as they did, since it basically reflects the teaching of one school of thought, that of a rabbi named Hillel: “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” Of note, the word translated “cause” (or “reason,” KJV) means just that, but it has behind it the idea of even an accusation, so they could mean *any* cause, even if it might be unfounded!

Both schools of thought drew their teaching from Deuteronomy 24:1. The ESV begins that verse in this way: “When a

man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her...” The text then goes on to give the process of writing a certificate of her divorce. The school of Hillel latched onto the phrase “she finds no favor in his eyes,” and stated that divorce could be for any reason whatsoever. The school of Shammai, however, focused on the phrase “some indecency” and noted that it must mean adultery.

With that background, Jesus would state that divorce comes about--whatever the purpose--because of the hardness of heart. It was never God’s intention (Mat. 19:8). Interestingly, the certificate that was allowed under the Law of Moses made divorce more difficult than it had been before, when a simple declaration could be given and a marriage was terminated, at least in the eyes of people.

Then, instead of endorsing either the school of thought of Hillel or Shammai, Jesus made a universal principle that was clear, concise, and marriage-affirming. “And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.” In Mark’s rendering of the same account, we have these words:

Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. (Mark 10:11-12)

So, what is the standard of God for this subject? It is exactly what the text states. If I choose to divorce for any reason other than sexual unfaithfulness (i.e., adultery) and marry again, I am living in adultery and I cause the one I have married to also commit adultery. Nothing in the remainder of the New Testament abridges, updates, or annuls that teaching. It is God’s standard for humanity. And, since He governs marriage, it is the way He demands it.

Brother Wayne Jackson summarizes the teaching in this way:

Whoever divorces his or her companion, unless such is for the cause of fornication (sexual union with another person [cf. 5:32]), and “marries” another person (according to civil law), is committing adultery (i.e., living in an adulterous relationship). The law applies to male and female alike (Mark. 10:12). Moreover, whoever “marries” the divorced person is likewise in an adulterous relationship. (*A New Testament Commentary*, pages 43-44)

That is the Biblical standard, but there is something else to consider in this context. The tragedy is not that this passage is difficult to understand. It is quite straightforward. The tragedy is that we rarely take the time to realize that this was not Jesus’s initial answer to the question presented to him. Yes, this is the teaching on what is now commonly called “MDR” (marriage, divorce, remarriage), but it was not His initial teaching on marriage, even in this same context.

(continued on page 7)



GROWING UP IN SODOM

Allen Webster

[Editor's note: *This article appeared in the May 12, 1995, edition of Words of Truth. It has been edited for space.*]

Mr. and Mrs. Lot must have had a tough time rearing their children on Jordan's well-watered plains. What kind of school system did Sodom have (cf. Gen. 13:13; 19:4)? What sort of little boys and girls did Lot's children have for playmates? Could they let them go home with friends for an overnight stay?

Parents today must feel something like they did. Leon O'Bryant gives a list of what happens in a young person's world "in just one day!" Each day in the US:

- 2795 teens get pregnant
- 372 teens miscarry
- 1106 teens get abortions
- 1295 teens give birth
- 6890 babies are born at a low birth weight
- 67 babies die before 1 month
- 105 babies die before their first birthday
- 27 die from poverty
- 10 kids are killed by guns
- 30 are wounded by guns
- 6 teens commit suicide
- 135,000 bring a gun to class
- 7742 teens become sexually active
- 623 teens contract a venereal disease
- 211 are arrested for drugs
- 437 children are arrested for drunk driving
- 1512 drop out of school
- 1849 children are abused or neglected
- 3288 run away from home
- 1629 children are in adult jails
- 2556 babies are born to single parents
- 2989 children see their parents divorce

What can God-fearing parents do "to rear good children in a bad world?"

1) PARENTS MUST "ACT." To beat Sodom one must be a "hands on" parent. Passive parents who let the TV babysit and a daycare provide "quality time" will never turn out children who overcome the devil. Notice carefully Paul's wording: "...fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Involvement means knowing what is taught in school. In some places, homosexuality is taught as an

"alternative lifestyle" (as early as third grade). When is the last time you read your child's textbook or looked at his/her notes?

2) PARENTS MUST "REACT." When something comes across the TV screen that portrays false values, children need to know that is not believed or practiced in a Christian home (cf. Phi. 4:8).

When a PTA/PTO meeting is held, go and express the Christian viewpoint about sex education and values clarification in school. This is no time to be shy. Your tax dollars are just as valuable as the next fellow's. The Gospel needs defending as much in a classroom as in the pulpit (Phi. 1:17; Jude 3).

3) PARENTS MUST "COUNTERACT." A child's soul is a void that will be filled with something. Jesus taught this in a parable about unclean spirits coming back to a man who had not made an effort to fill his soul with truth and righteousness (Mat. 12:42-45). If God's values are taught in Bible classes, home devotionals, and by godly example, then false values will not find room to grow (Deu. 6:6-7).

Children need to be vaccinated before being sent to the infectious surroundings at school — and we are not talking about measles and polio! They need to be vaccinated against spiritual and moral error. Strong emphasis on teaching and living the truth will protect them against these wicked influences.

Parents need to counteract the wicked environment with a great deal of prayer. Children can never stand tall without parents who stand on their knees. Hannah prayed for Samuel (1 Sam. 1:17) and he turned out to be a great servant of the Lord.

Sadly, Lot and his wife failed to overcome the wicked influence of Sodom in the lives of their children. When fire rained from the clouds that day, their sons, sons-in-law, perhaps daughters-in-law, and maybe even some daughters burned to their deaths (Gen. 19:12-24). The two daughters who escaped showed Sodom's influence by getting their father drunk and committing incest with him on two consecutive nights (Gen. 19:31-38).

The Lord will help parents who turn to Him, trust His grace, obey His Gospel, and live faithfully to His commands (Heb. 5:7-8; 13:5). Abraham brought up Isaac at the same time Lot lived at Sodom. And he turned out fine. The difference? Abraham was a man of faith who commanded his family after him (Gen. 18:19). Let's raise up a generation that knows right from wrong and is willing to practice the truth.

When asked the question meant to test Him in verse 3, Jesus did not “jump to verse 9!” Instead, Jesus gave the way that marriages can avoid ever having to answer this question in the first place. I dare say, if we would spend more time in Matthew 19:4-6, we would not have to spend so much time trying to explain--or, sadly in too many cases, explain away--Matthew 19:9.

The question was posed to test Jesus: “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” The initial answer Jesus gave may seem like a non-answer, but it was meant to reveal the hardness of heart that He would speak about in a few moments. Notice His answer is not “yes” or “no.” Instead, He stated, “Have you not read that He Who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” (Mat. 19:4-6)

May I paraphrase? Jesus’s initial answer was basically, *If you will go back to God’s initial plan for marriage and work on that with all your heart, you wouldn’t need to ask this question in the first place!*

Now, it must be said that this is true of both spouses. My heart hurts for those who are the victims of a divorce. I have some who are very near and dear to my heart, and I hurt for them, especially when I know they have tried to live by Biblical principles in their home and their spouse simply did not. They are often left with more questions than answers and with more hurts than may ever heal in this lifetime. If that is you, please know that my heart aches for you. It is no wonder why God hates divorce! (see Malachi 2:16, KJV) It is awful and painful!

But I fear that we are living in times not dissimilar from those in which Jesus was asked this question. Far too many are trying to jump to Matthew 19:9 and twist, find loopholes in, and even outright change or ignore what Jesus so clearly stated. We dare not question the sincerity of one who is struggling with the emotional toll of facing a difficult marriage and who may be wondering what the Bible states about this hard subject. But we also dare not try to avoid teaching someone what Jesus stated and the rest of the New Testament affirms.

In conclusion, allow me to briefly answer three related questions that I hope help us deal with very sensitive moments that, tragically, are all too real in many people’s lives.

1. What about abuse? If a spouse (or their child) is being abused--whether it is physical, emotional, or sexual--they have a right to get out of the house and find safety. They have a right to seek legal help and counsel to protect their health and well-being. They may choose to legally separate if the offending spouse is not penitent and the danger is still very real. We should not counsel someone to stay in a home that is literally unsafe based upon Matthew 19. Divorce needs to be a last resort and abuse alone does not allow one to be remarried, but leaving the frightening and dangerous situation is certainly allowable.
2. Can’t adultery be forgiven? There are some who teach that, if one is guilty of violating Matthew 19:9, they can be forgiven. Certainly forgiveness is possible, but there must be works that accompany the repentance. The force of the language in Matthew 19:9 and Mark 10:12 make it clear that the one who is married to another is continually committing adultery. If they remain married to this new spouse, they continue to commit that sin. This again emphasizes the need for more effort to not just “make a marriage work,” but to live by the principles and commands of God so this does not become an issue.
3. Can I be divorced and go to heaven? Yes! While divorce is certainly not God’s ideal, it is not, if I may word it this way, “the unpardonable sin.” Even if you are the offender, true repentance and a life of faithfulness to God--including either celibacy or reconciliation with your spouse--can lead to God graciously welcoming you into heaven.

Frankly, I wish this subject were one that never had to be considered. God created a glorious institution in the gift of marriage. Sadly, sin mars everything it comes in contact with, and that includes marriages. May God help us to follow His plan for our marriages and to wisely counsel those who are straying from His plan so that we may know the beauty and glory of what He has given to us.

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We hope and pray that you will use our website for personal growth in the faith of Jesus Christ. On our website you will find many resources including bulletins, sermon audios, Bible correspondence courses, Searching for Truth materials, and House to House/Heart to Heart materials. You can also sign up to receive our bulletin by email or submit questions you would like to have answered. On the website you will also find back issues of *Words of Truth*. Please visit regularly and use the resources available to you!

ASK A BIBLE QUESTION

QUESTION: How does Jesus "aid those who are tempted," according to Hebrews 2:18?

ANSWER: In coming to this world, Jesus was "made like His brethren" and became like a man "in all things" (Heb. 2:17, cf. Phi. 2:7-8; John 1:14). He was equipped for the role of a merciful and faithful high priest "in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people" (Heb. 2:17). The High Priest offered gifts and sacrifices for sin (Heb. 5:1). He suffered and endured temptation, yet He never sinned (Heb. 4:15). Jesus personally experienced the power of sin when Satan confronted him. He experienced hunger when Satan tempted Him in the wilderness (Mat. 4:1-11), thirst when He asked the woman at Jacob's well for water (John 4:1-30, 39-42), weariness when He slept while the storm raged on the Sea of Galilee (Mark 4:35-41), and sorrow when He wept at the grave of Lazarus (John 11:35). Such suffering made Him compassionate (Heb. 5:2). Because of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross, God's love flows freely to the redeemed, and Jesus stands ready to help. Those tempted may experience the active support of Jesus. They can expect nothing short of perfect understanding from Him because He suffered when tempted. Therefore those who come to Him can expect to receive mercy and grace in time of need (Heb. 4:16). He said to the sinful woman in the house of Simon the Pharisee, "Your sins are forgiven...Go in peace" (Luke 7:48, 50); thus, He is our sympathetic High Priest.

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