

Equipping The Saints

"...For the equipping of the saints for the work of service..." ~ Ephesians 4:12

January 10, 2016

1.28

Divorce ... For Any Reason? (By Jason Longstreth)

"Some Pharisees came to Jesus testing and asking, 'Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?'" (Matt. 19:3). I'm sure we have all read this question before. This verse (and the verses surrounding it) has been the center of many religious debates over the years. And what Jesus taught in this passage is just as applicable today as it was in the first century. The subject of marriage, divorce and re-marriage has been a hot topic for many years. I am amazed how many people do not seem to know anything about what the Lord taught concerning this subject. But I am even more astonished at those who should know it, but do not follow His commandments.

This is puzzling to me because, when it comes to Jesus' teaching on marriage, the basics are really quite simple. Consider Jesus' response to the earlier question. **"And he answered and said, 'Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason man shall leave his father and mother and be joined 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 no man separate'"** (Matt. 19:4-6).

Now, as I said before, this is very easy to understand. In fact, I believe anyone (and everyone) can understand it! Jesus was

simply teaching that a man and a woman should not get divorced. Period. And I want you to notice that this is where He placed the emphasis—don't get divorced. However, this is not where we often place the emphasis. Instead, we focus on the exception to the rule—we focus on Jesus' answer to the next question, "*When can we get divorced?*" We get into all the nit-picky little legalistic answers in an effort to defend our own actions. Let me ask you, is this what we should do? I don't think so. But we do.

Too often, I hear Christians focusing on divorce when they should be focusing on what Jesus said about marriage. It's true, Jesus did give one exception to the rule (when adultery has taken place), but shouldn't we place our focus on the rule instead of the exception? God hates divorce (Mal. 2:16). This has never changed. And although God may ALLOW divorce (in one case), that does not mean He WANTS it. Jesus said that what God intended "from the beginning" was for a man and a woman to be joined together for life. This is what we should all be striving to accomplish.

But I hear Christians say that it is okay to get divorced "*as long as I don't remarry.*" They say, "*I'll get divorced and just remain single.*" Is this what Jesus taught? Not at all! Although a person who has been divorced may need to remain single if they want to be right with God, this is not meant to be an 'acceptable alternative' to remaining married. If so, this would have been the answer to exactly what the Pharisees asked when they said, "**Is it lawful to get divorced for any reason?**" Jesus would have said, "*Sure, as long as you don't remarry.*" But He didn't. His answer was "*No.*" Remember Matthew 5:32, "**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.**" Notice what Jesus said

in the first part of this verse. **“Everyone who divorces his wife ... makes her commit adultery.”** In this case, the man commits a sin even though he did not remarry. The sin was in the divorce.

Now, you do not need to remind me of the exception. I know it is there. But, do you see where Jesus placed His emphasis? He did not come to teach us when we could divorce. He did not come to teach us an exception. Instead, he taught his followers to remain married. And if we would spend half as much time trying to save our marriages as some people spend trying to find a reason for a divorce, we would all have much stronger marriages. Let's focus on what the Lord focused on. For it was that way **“from the beginning.”**

9 Ways To Be Evangelistic Without Being The Teacher (By **Berry Kercheville**)

2. Can You Be A Co-Teacher? Even the most experienced teacher can benefit from another Christian participating with them in teaching a friend. A co-teacher is often better able to evaluate the progress of a Bible study with a non-Christian. He or she can be an observer who is able to detect when the teacher has not made his or her point clear. The co-teacher can ask for clarification or even suggest some helpful comments. When I first started teaching the lost, I was quite inexperienced and often struggled to find scriptures that best answered questions that were given to me. Knowing this, I had an experienced friend who would take notes as I taught and sit near enough so I can see what she was writing. When a question was asked, she would casually write the appropriate scriptures in her notebook reminding me of

passages that would help in my answer. On other occasions she might say, “Do you think this passage might help answer that question?” Her support and knowledge helped me grow as a teacher and gave me confidence to share the gospel when my knowledge was lacking. Even today, though I am confident of my ability to answer some of the toughest questions, having a co-teacher is comforting and confidence building. It is not uncommon for me to misunderstand the specific nature of a question or pursue an answer that is not exactly on point. My co-teacher is able to detect this and help me make adjustments in my explanations. A co-teacher may not yet have the confidence to be the primary teacher, but can be a wonderful aid to the person teaching. Even more critical is that the co-teacher aids in building a relationship with the person taught. One of our goals is to connect as many Christians as possible to those we teach. When these begin to see their error, and especially when they obey the gospel, they will have a smoother transition from their old life and former support group into new relationships in the local church.

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Notes:

AM Lesson:

Our Passover Lamb

PM Lesson:

Why Did God Choose Baptism?

“Go therefore and make disciples...” (Matthew 28:19-20)