

HARD QUESTIONS, HONEST ANSWERS: What The Bible Really Says About: Divorce & Remarriage. **(Matthew 19:1–9; 1 Corinthians 7:10–16)**

Good morning!

I greet you in the matchless name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

My name is Douglas Humphrey, and I have the joy of serving as the Lead Pastor here at Bridge Fellowship Church.

We're in **week two** of our *Hard Questions—Honest Answers* sermon series.

But before we dive in, I want to let you know about a helpful resource.

Each week, we know these topics raise honest, difficult questions—so we're giving you a chance to ask them.

Just write your question on the index card inside your bulletin, and drop it in the box at the back of the room or at Guest Connections.

I'll do my best to address some of them during the corresponding sermons, and we'll also tackle several of them at the **panel discussion** during the final week of the series.

We want this to be a space where truth is taught, grace is extended, and your questions are welcome.

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Speaking of questions: this morning, we're stepping into one of the most personal, painful, and often misunderstood topics in the church: **divorce and remarriage**.

For some of you, this subject hits close to home.

You've walked through it.

You're still healing from it.

Or maybe you're in a marriage that feels like it's on the verge of collapsing.

Others of you are happily married—but you still need this.

As a warning.

As a reminder.

Wherever you are, I want you to know up front—**this isn't a message of shame**.

It's not about pointing fingers.

It's about **opening God's Word** and letting Him speak—clearly, honestly, and lovingly—into us

So wherever this finds you—married, divorced, remarried, or still single—I invite you lean in.

So, if your'e ready to get started, grab your Bible & sermon notes. The first thing we need to do is establish both the origin and reasoning for divorce. For that, turn with me to ([Matt 19:1-9](#)). This is where we find that..

Divorce was permitted by God on the grounds of hard hearts. ([Matt 19:1-9](#))

The Pharisees came trying to trap Jesus with legal questions.
And He answers by reminding them of what marriage truly is—

A covenant joined by God, never meant to be broken.

Then in v8 Jesus says...

“Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because of the hardness of your hearts, but it was not like that from the beginning.”

Divorce was allowed—not because God approved of it,
but because hearts had grown hard.

Specifically, husbands toward their wives.

They were tossing women aside like property—
writing divorce papers over petty things—
burnt food, a bad mood, losing interest.

So God stepped in.
Not to encourage divorce,
but to protect women and mitigate the fallout.

He allowed it because sin made staying together
more harmful than separating.

And if you've walked that road, or you're walking it now—
hear me:

God sees you. He knows it hurts.

He's not turning His back on you.
But He wants you to understand—
divorce is always tied to sin.
Sometimes its one person. Sometimes its both.

But in a world full of hard hearts...
God permits divorce...

Not for convenience, but for protection.

So the natural question is;
when does a hard heart warrant divorce?

Divorce is permitted on the grounds of sexual immorality. v9

That's the first.... **Sexual immorality.**

Continuing on, in v. Jesus says...

“I tell you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another commits adultery.” v9

Jesus uses the term “sexual immorality” in reference to a deep, ongoing pattern of sexual betrayal.

This isn't just a moment of weakness.

This is **habitual, unrepentant**, covenant-breaking sin—whether physical, emotional, or digital.

This is more than a husband getting caught scrolling through “OnlyFans”—a website built to feed lust.

This is more than a wife getting a little too comfortable with her coworker, laughing a little too hard at his jokes and complimenting him.

Those are sins against your spouse that surely need to be addressed—but “*sexual immorality*” is deeper.

It's when someone chooses their desires over the marriage—over and over again.

And in that case—

Jesus says divorce is permitted.

So, divorce is allowed on the grounds of sexual immorality, that's no.1. For the 2nd reason flip with me to ([1 Cor 7:10-16](#)).

In verse 12, Paul says, “**I, not the Lord...**”

He's not saying it's optional—he's just acknowledging that Jesus didn't address this directly, but **the Spirit is still speaking through him.**

He's talking to believers who are married to unbelievers—what we would call **spiritually single marriages.**

And the command is clear:

If your unbelieving spouse is willing to stay—stay. Don't leave. Don't divorce them.

Just because they don't share your faith or go to church, it doesn't give you a reason to walk away.

And the reason why?

Because you might be the very means through whom God saves them.

That's what Paul's getting at in verse 14 when he says,

“**the unbelieving spouse is made holy by the believing spouse.**”

He's not saying they're automatically saved.

But they're living in a home where the gospel is alive.

Where grace isn't just preached—it's practiced.

Where truth isn't just spoken—it's seen.

Which might just lead to their salvation.

Some of you have lived that story.

Your spouse came to Christ—

not because you pressured them,

but because you prayed for them.

Because you stayed.

Because you were a living, breathing witness of the gospel right in front of them.

That's the power of a faithful, Christlike presence in the home.

Don't underestimate what God can do through your faithful obedience.

But what if they don't want to stay?

Verse 15 says:

“If the unbeliever leaves, let them leave. The brother or sister is not bound in such cases. God has called you to peace.”

That's key.

If they leave... If they abandon the marriage and reject the covenant—**you are released.**

God doesn't expect you to chase someone who's already checked out: emotionally, physically, or spiritually.

God hasn't called you to live in constant conflict, fear or confusion.

So, our second reason for Biblical divorce is... **Abandonment.**

So, there are two and only two biblical grounds for divorce:

1. **Sexual immorality**

2. **Abandonment**

And it's from these two reasons, that I want to give you 5 principles to guide how we think about divorce and remarriage.

Beginning with...

1. Marriage is meant to be for life. ([Malachi 2:14-15](#) & [Matthew 19:6](#))

God didn't create marriage to be temporary.

He didn't design it to be convenient, disposable, or easy to walk away from.

Marriage was—and still is—His idea.

And He meant for it to last a lifetime.

Malachi called it a *covenant*—not just a promise between two people, but a bond formed and witnessed by God Himself.

[Malachi 2:14](#)&15 says, “She was your marriage partner and your wife by covenant... 15 Didn't God make them one and give them a portion of spirit? What is the one seeking? Godly offspring. So watch yourselves carefully,, so that no one acts treacherously against the wife of his youth.

God is the one who made them one... he brought them together.

Jesus echoed the same thing in [Matthew 19:6](#)—

“What God has joined together, let no one separate.”

It's not just a legal contract.

It's a holy union—bound by God himself.

Yes God permits divorce - but that was never His desire.

From the very beginning, God's design was clear:

Come together. Stay together. Grow together. For life.

So if you're married—fight for your marriage.

You fight for everything else—

That promotion at work.

To have your me time.

Getting your kids into the best schools.

Pursuing your dreams.

Doing better than your parents.

Standing firm in your political views.

Being transparent about your love for Jesus.

So why not fight for your marriage?

Don't give up when it gets hard.

Don't assume things will automatically get better.

Don't settle for silence.

Don't go to bed angry.

Don't retreat emotionally.

Be quick to say “I'm sorry.” Own your dirt, and do so quickly.

Be humble enough to ask for help.

Pray. Pursue counseling.

Invite trusted voices to speak into your marriage.

But whatever you do—don't quit. Don't separate what God has joined together.

And to my singles

please hear me: **who you marry matters.**

Marriage is for life. And it's not easy.

There's no such thing as a perfect spouse, but there is such a thing as the right kind of person.

Because when adversity hits your marriage—and it will—you want someone who both knows how to fight *with you* and for you.

So don't just look for chemistry—look for character.

Look for someone who knows Jesus, walks with Jesus, and bears the fruit of the Spirit.

Ladies—be found by a man who's gonna love you like Christ loved the church.

Not just in words, but in how he lives—sacrificing, protecting, and choosing you over everything & everyone else.

A man who's not afraid to lead with love and stand by you no matter what.

Fellas—find a woman who knows how to build you up, not tear you down.

Someone who supports your purpose, speaks life into you, and knows how to nurture what God's doing in your life.

Not someone who just looks good on your arm, but someone who's good for your soul.

And if you're dating someone who's less than-hoping they'll improve with time.

Or you're ignoring the flashing yellow lights—like: anger, pride, lust, jealousy, or passivity—

Your'e risking a difficult marriage...One that probably won't make it.

Love might be blind, but marriage is like a makeup mirror.

It will expose everything.

And the character issues you overlooked because "you're so in love"? Your'e so infatuated.

They don't magically disappear—they become arguments, disappoints, sleepless nights, frustrations, shame, guilt, and sin itself.

So guard your heart.

And choose to honor God by only dating people who are Christian marriage potential.

B/c God intends marriage to last a lifetime, which can feel like hard time if you marry the wrong person... that's our 1st principle... no.2

2. God Doesn't Just Discourage Divorce—He warns against It

Jesus says in...

Mark 10:11-12 – “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

It's plain to see.

Divorcing without biblical grounds and jumping into another relationship?

Is adultery.

That's sin.

Doesn't matter if it's mutual.

Doesn't matter if it feels right.

Doesn't matter if everybody else is doing it.

If the divorce wasn't within God's boundaries, God calls it sin. Period.

You might be wondering—*why is God being so strict?*

Well... it's b/c He created marriage.

He gifted it to us.

He designed it to be one man and one woman, sharing one life, for a lifetime.

And through that union to show forth Christ love for his church how we are to relate to Him.

So when we treat marriage like it's just another relationship instead of a **covenant**, we don't just hurt each other—we dishonor God.

Unbiblical divorce is like saying to God:

“Thanks for the spouse You gave me... but I'm done now.

If You had given me someone better, maybe I'd still be married.”

That's not just ungrateful—it's **dishonoring**.

And God doesn't take that lightly.

Divorce isn't just the end of something. And remarriage isn't always the start of something good.

It's often the beginning of more pain.

More scars.

More broken pieces that ripple out to kids, families, and into future romantic relationships.

Here's the reality most people don't talk about:

- Around 50% of first marriages end in divorce.
- But second marriages? That number jumps to 60–70%.

Why? Because most people don't heal—they just move on to someone new.

They carry the same wounds into new relationships and expect new results.

But pain that's never dealt with becomes pain that gets repeated in the new relationship.

That's why you need to fight for your marriage while your'e still married... Loving the one God gave you above all else.

For all of these reasons plus others is why God strongly warns against divorce in the first place... that our 2nd principle... no. 3

3. God Permits Divorce Only for Sexual Immorality or Abandonment.

Let's start here: **God's heart is always for reconciliation, not separation.**

Even if your spouse doesn't follow Jesus, we saw in [1 Corinthians 7](#) — That if they're willing to stay and share life with you, you should stay in the marriage.

But if reconciliation is not possible, scripture allows for divorce in cases of: **Unrepentant sexual immorality** and **willful abandonment**.

Let's focus on abandonment—because it's often more complicated than it looks.

Sometimes, it's obvious.

They walk out.

They leave the home.

They cut off the relationship—and they're not coming back.

[1 Corinthians 7:15](#) says: "If the unbeliever leaves, let them leave. You are not bound in such cases."

That's clear. That's Scripture.

You are not in sin for letting them go.

But here's where it gets hard—

Sometimes abandonment doesn't look like walking out the front door.

Sometimes, they stay in the house but disappear in every other way.

When there's **unrepentant physical abuse...**

When there's **chronic emotional abuse**—no peace, no care, no love...

When there's a refusal to share life—no intimacy, no support, no unity...

That's not a marriage.

That's a hostage situation.

And make no mistake: **God never calls you to endure that.**

Now—this takes wisdom.

Because sometimes the heart is hard to read.

Are they genuinely trying and just struggling?

Or are they using you—taking advantage of your faith and commitment while refusing to repent?

That's where discernment comes in.

[1 Corinthians 7:13](#) says if they're **willing to LIVE with you**—stay.

But hear me:

Willing to live with you doesn't mean:

- Sleeping in your house while treating you like garbage.
- Tolerating your presence while giving you the cold shoulder.
- Using your loyalty as a shield to avoid responsibility.

True willingness looks like repentance.

Humility.

A desire to rebuild.

A desire to love again.

So here's the question:

Are they really willing to LIVE with you?

Or are they just staying long enough to wear you down—hoping you'll be the one to leave?

Because if it's the latter—

If they've abandoned you in every way *but* address—

You may have grounds for divorce.

Not because you gave up.

Not because you stopped loving.

But because **they already walked out—in every way that matters.**

God permits divorce in situations of abandonment and sexual immorality, that's the 3rd principle...
4th...

4. Divorce Is a Last Resort—Pursue It Reluctantly, If Ever.

If you're considering divorce right now—slow down.

Because while Scripture does give permission in certain cases...

It never encourages it.

It's not something to rush into.

It's something you approach slowly, carefully, painfully—and only as a last resort.

And you're probably wondering why...Why should I be reluctant? After all they hurt me.

Well, it's b/c that's how God treats you.

Read the Old Testament and you'll see it plain as day:

God's people turned their backs on Him.

They cheated on Him with idols.

They ignored Him. They wounded Him. Over and over again.

And what did He do?

He stayed.

He grieved.

He pursued them.

He waited for them to return.

Why?

Because He made a covenant.

And God doesn't take His covenants lightly.

And that's the same heart He calls you to bring into your marriage.

I want to talk to the person who is hurting right now:

Maybe you've been betrayed.

Maybe your trust is shattered.

Maybe you don't know how much more you can take.

God sees you. He knows the weight you're carrying.

And yes—you may have a just cause to divorce.

But even then, divorce should never be the easy choice.

It should be the *reluctant* one.

It should come with tears.

It should feel like death—because it's the breaking of something sacred.

So if you're walking that road, here's what I urge you to do:

1. Slow down.

Pain makes everything feel urgent. But divorce is too big a decision to rush through.

2. Check the posture of your heart.

Are you eager to forgive if there's true repentance? Or are you looking to end it no matter what?

3. Don't do this alone.

You need godly, wise, trusted voices.

People who love Jesus and will tell you the truth even if it hurts.

[Proverbs 11:14](#) says, "*There is safety in a abundance of counselors.*"

4. Be honest about why you're not asking for counsel.

Some avoid godly advice because they already know what God says—and they don't want to hear it again.

But that's the voice of pride, not the Holy Spirit.

5. Stay open to redemption.

Even when it feels impossible, if there's any chance of true repentance—stay open to it.

So if you have grounds to divorce—walk slowly.

Walk humbly.

And let God, not your feelings, lead the way.

Because what's on the line is more than the ending of relationship — it's your marriage covenant before God.

Divorce is the last resort—pursue it reluctantly, if ever...That's our 4th principle no.5

5. When divorce is Biblical, remarriage is permissible.

Unless your spouse has passed away—or your marriage ended for biblical reasons—God doesn't permit remarriage.

But maybe that's not your story.

Maybe you left for the wrong reasons.

Maybe you're already remarried.

And now you're wondering—*What do I do? Is there grace for me?*

Yes. There is.

But grace doesn't ignore sin—it meets it head on.

If you divorced without Biblical grounds and are already remarried—here's what you need to do:

1. Turn to God first.

Start here. Come to Him humbly and honestly.

Own the decisions you made.

Don't sugarcoat it. Don't justify it. Just say it—"Lord, I sinned."

And then—*receive His mercy.*

2. Don't Heal Alone—Invite Others into the Process.

Bring your pastor or other church leaders or Christian friends into the conversation.

You don't have to figure this out alone.

Let godly voices help you walk this road with you.

3. Own Your Part in the Pain.

Acknowledge the role you played in what went wrong.

That doesn't mean reopening old wounds, putting yourself in harms way, or chasing reconciliation—it means pursuing peace.

One of the best ways you can do that is by reaching out to your x — not in person, but through letter or email.

Be honest. Be humble. Own your part.

Ask for forgiveness where needed—not to fix the past, but so that both of you move forward.

It's not about getting back together.

It's about righting a wrong—thus making room for both of you to heal.

4. Tell the truth to your current spouse—all of it.

This will be hard. But so necessary.

Tell them the truth: "When we started, I was outside God's will — in God's eyes I was still married"

And then assure them: "But now, I want to walk with integrity and honor you."

Give them time to process it.

Agree to move forward together in **God's grace.**

You can't change the past—but you can choose obedience now.

And God blesses that.

But.. What happens when your divorce wasn't biblical—and you're considering remarriage?

This is where it gets uncomfortable.

Because unless you've made every effort to reconcile with your former spouse—and they've made it abundantly clear that reconciliation is off the table—then you are *not* free to remarry.

And I'm sorry—dating someone else while claiming to seek reconciliation doesn't count.

If you're serious about honoring God, you have to stop.

Put your new relationship on hold.

Humble yourself. Reach out to your former spouse.

Own your sin. Seek peace and possibly reconciliation.

If you put in real effort and give it time — yet they refuse you, and the Holy Spirit releases you—*then* you can move forward in freedom.

Conclusion...

Coming full circle: Divorce and remarriage was never God's original plan—it became necessary because of the hardness of our hearts.

For some of you, this message hit close to home.

You've lived through the pain.

You're trying to pick up the pieces.

Others of you are still married—but barely hanging on.

And some of you are happily married—but needed this as a **warning**, and a **reminder**.

No matter where you stand.

God is calling all of us to **honor His design**.

Not just with our words, but with our lives.

And the good news?

It's not too late to walk in obedience.

Not too late to repent.

Not too late to do it God's way.

So don't harden your heart.

Don't brush this off.

Whatever your next step is—**take it**.

Because God hasn't given up on you—and His grace is still enough.

Speaking of grace... **next week, we're stepping into one of the most sensitive and controversial types of relationships in our culture today: same-sex marriage.**

We're not going to tiptoe around it, and we're not going to shout about it either.

We're going to open God's Word and see what *He* has to say—about it.

So whether you're struggling personally, know someone who is, or just want to be equipped to speak the truth in love—**you need to be here. And please don't forget to submit your questions.**

I'd like for us to take a moment to reflect on what we just read and heard. What did you hear God saying to you the loudest?

Write it down so you can work on it.

Take a moment.

Silence.....

Communion

As we reflect there's no better place to turn than the cross.

B/c it's at the cross where grace meets our failure.

Where sin is forgiven.

Where new life begins.

Where thanks is given.

And that's what communion is all about.

So if you're a follower of Jesus—if you've trusted Him as your Lord and Savior—this is your moment to remember what he did for you.

To examine your heart.

To confess where you've fallen short.

And to thank Him for His mercy that never runs out.

And if you're a none believer, we ask that you not participate in communion this is for believers only.

Let's prepare our hearts for communion...

Servers come...Tony & Sonia

Prayer....

Heavenly father, we get to bow our heads to you now because Jesus bowed his head to you and gave up his Spirit. We bow in submission, in respect, in awe, and in adoration for Jesus and the work he did on the cross on our behalf.

Fill us afresh with your Holy Spirit and forgive us of our sins, so that our worship in this moment glorifies you. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Serve the church... Wayne and Sonia

as you receive your elements please hold on to them...

Take communion reading ([1Cor11:23-26](#))

Prayer:.. May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit continually be with us all ([2 Cor 13:14](#)) Amen!

... let's stand and lift our renewed voice to God in singing thanks givings.

Worship

Closing

CC, VBS-volunteers, LGLHP

