

Small Group Discussion Guide

Mark 10:1-12

“Divorce and Remarriage, Part 1”

Based on Sunday's
Sermon 8/23/26

Background

Divorce has lost all its negative stigma and has become a widely accepted, extremely popular option in society. As the church is shaped by the culture, it has also become increasingly accepted and common there. Still, views regarding divorce run the gamut among Christians from allowing it for any reason, to forbidding it for any reason. But those who tolerate it are becoming the majority.

The church's view of divorce, however, must not be based on the shifting sands of societal norms but on the bedrock of biblical truth. The most important question is not what anyone says about divorce but what God thinks of it. In His own words God declared the bottom line: “‘I hate divorce,’ says the Lord, the God of Israel” (Mal. 2:16).

Israel's attitude toward God was demeaning, unrighteous, and hard-hearted. Despite their outward show of religion, their hearts were full of sin and disobedience. Malachi's prophecy, written after the return from exile, indicted the people for their sins and called them to repentance.¹

The Pharisees asked Jesus what appears to be a straightforward question. On the surface, they asked His opinion on whether it was lawful—that is, morally permissible—for a man to divorce his wife. The literal meaning of the word translated “divorce” is “send away,” although the process was more formal than this makes it sound. In Judea and Galilee, Jews getting married were typically joined by legal agreement, and their divorce required a legal document to address the terms of their original contract. Regardless, the Pharisees didn't really care what Jesus thought about divorce; they chose this topic to determine which method of Scripture interpretation He would employ.²

Discussion Questions

Getting Started

1. Share something in your life that feels more like a covenant (deep commitment) and something that feels more like a contract (transactional).

Observation

2. Where is Jesus traveling in verse 1, and why is that detail significant for what follows?

¹ John MacArthur, *Mark 9–16*, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago, IL: Moody Publishers, 2015), 52.

² Charles R. Swindoll, *Mark*, Swindoll's Living Insights New Testament Commentary (Tyndale House Publishers, 2018), 262.

3. What question do the Pharisees ask Jesus, and what is their motive according to the text?
4. What specific command does Jesus quote from Genesis?
5. How do the disciples react afterward, and what does Jesus clarify privately?

Interpretation

6. What is the significance of Jesus going back to creation as opposed to going back to Moses?
(See Genesis 1 and 2)
7. How does Jesus' statement "What God has joined together, let not man separate" elevate marriage beyond a human contract?
8. In verses 11–12, Jesus speaks of adultery in the context of divorce and remarriage. What does this teach about the seriousness of covenant-breaking?

Application

9. Where do you see "hardness of heart" affecting relationships, and what does repentance look like in those situations?
10. If you're not married, what does this passage teach you about God's character, His design, and how you relate to others?

Prayer List: