

Message #27

I Corinthians 7:10-11

Part II

Paul had been written a series of questions and asked to address certain subjects. Two of the subjects were marriage and divorce.

Category #1 - The instruction of God found in the O.T..

(Fact #1) - God created marriage. Gen. 1:26-28; 2:23-24; Mark 10:6-9

(Fact #2) - God permitted divorce. Deut. 24:1-4

(Fact #3) - God commanded divorce. Ezra 10:3, 10-12, 18-19, 44

(Fact #4) - God is a divorced God. Jer. 3:1, 6-8

(Fact #5) - God hates a certain type of divorce. Mal. 2:16 (11-16)

Category #2 - The instruction of God found in the N.T..

In the N.T., the two primary sources of information concerning this subject are Jesus Christ and Paul. When it comes to Christ's teaching on this subject, there are two critical passages:

1) Matt. 5:31-32 and 2) Matt. 19:3-12.

(Fact #1) - Divorce is not the ideal. Matt. 5:31.

Jesus Christ does not promote divorce nor does it please Him. As with every passage, the context is very important. The context of Matt. 5:31 is that of Phariseeism (Matt. 5:20).

The Pharisees would not admit they were sinners in need of a Savior and had convinced themselves that they were totally righteous. Christ, in this section, is presenting a series of things that can and will make one guilty in the sight of God. These were things some of the Pharisees were known for and one was divorce. The Pharisees thought nothing of divorcing their mate. Christ wanted them to know that if they did divorce their mates, the sin of adultery had been promoted.

(Fact #2) - Divorce is permissible. Matt. 5:32a; 19:9

According to Jesus Christ, divorce is a permissible and legitimate possibility in cases of sexual immorality.

The word translated "unchastity" (5:32) and "immorality" (19:9) is the same Greek word. This particular word is used in two passages written by Paul, in which we have a context that can help us determine the meaning of the word. In I Corinthians 6:13-18, the word is used in the context of physically committing sexual immorality. In I Thessalonians 4:3-7 the word is used in the context of physically committing sexual immorality.

Based upon these observations, it is accurate to assume that divorce does not constitute adultery when one of the partners has physically involved himself in sexual immorality with another person other than his/her mate.

(Fact #3) - Divorce and remarriage may constitute adultery. 5:32b; 19:9; Luke 16:18

Certainly Jesus Christ nor Paul is going to promote an action that may lead to something God classifies as adultery.

(Fact #4) - Marriage is created and ordained by God. Matt. 19:3-6; Mark 10:6-9

Jesus Christ places a high priority on marriage. There is a sanctity to marriage in the O.T. and the N.T.. Jesus Christ wanted us to realize that God created marriage and He still does join people together. Marriage is a very sacred institution created, established and ordained by God.

(Fact #5) - Marriage ends in divorce because of a hard heart. Matt. 19:8

When a divorce occurs, someone has a heart that is hardened against God, His Word and His will. As one writer says, someone is in a “spiritual crisis.” When a marriage ends in a divorce, you can be absolutely certain someone is totally out of step with God. Someone has a hard heart and is not living right or loving right.

(Fact #6) - Remarriage after divorce is necessary for some. Matt. 19:10-12

Certainly knowing these things we should do everything possible to protect our present marriage relationship. We should nurture it, cultivate it and take care of it. We should realize that Jesus Christ views our marriage in a very serious way and so should we.

Now Paul’s point is basically that in I Cor. 7:10-11:

CHRISTIAN COUPLES WHO ARE PRESENTLY MARRIED HAVE BEEN INSTRUCTED BY GOD NOT TO GET A DIVORCE AND SHOULD THERE EVER BE A SEPARATION, THERE SHOULD BE A RECONCILIATION TO THE CHRISTIAN SPOUSE RATHER THAN A REMARRIAGE TO ANOTHER.

POINT #1 – God’s ideal is that married believers obey God’s instructions. **7:10a**

In other words, Paul is saying God wants His married couples to obey His Word and stay married. He does not want them separating or divorcing.

POINT #2 – God’s ideal is that married believers NOT divorce. **7:10b, 11b**

The words “leave” and “send away” are words that refer to separation and divorce.

It is not right in the sight of God for a believing wife to leave her believing husband and it is not right in the sight of God for a believing husband to send away his believing wife.

Harry Bultema writes that unless the person is an infidel or pagan, divorce “is entirely opposed to God’s will.”

Dr. Richard Lenski writes: “Marriage between Christians is to be permanent, and neither spouse is to dissolve it.”

Dr. John MacArthur writes: “Some probably wanted to leave their mates because they saw someone more desirable, or simply because they felt unfulfilled with them. Whatever the reasons, however, they were not to divorce. Such action is forbidden.”

Charles Hodge writes: “Nothing but adultery or willful desertion is a legitimate ground of divorce.”

Clearly the principle can be seen that it is wrong, in the sight of God, for two believers to think in terms of divorce.

POINT #3 – God’s ideal if there is a divorce is that each remain single. **7:11a**

If there is a separation and divorce between two believers, God’s will is that they remain single and NOT remarry. Why? Because unless the separation is due to sexual immorality, a remarriage constitutes adultery and God will not and cannot bless one who has purposely disobeyed His Word and will and has chosen to commit adultery.

POINT #4 – God’s ideal if they do divorce is that they be reconciled. **7:11b**

God cares a great deal about our marriages.

God wants Christian couples to stay together.

Having a God-honoring marriage has NEVER been easy.

Obedying God’s Word has NEVER been easy, but those who purpose to do so will be blessed both in this life and the next.