

Mark 10:1-12 - Joins Together

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Introduction - The Pharisees come to trap Jesus: “Under what circumstances can a man divorce his wife?” Rather than focusing on divorce, Jesus corrects a wrong heart posture toward marriage, showing God joins together husband and wife for a lifetime. Christians should hold marriage in honor and uphold God’s design for the union to be lifelong.

v1-9 - The Design of Marriage - The Pharisees have no intent to be personally changed. Jesus directs them to the law, and they reference Deut 24:1-4. The “certificate of divorce” proved the wife was not adulterous. The OT law regulated divorce, but divorce wasn’t God’s idea, it was man’s. Jesus explains some of the law was written because of mankind’s own hardness of heart. There were different interpretations of “no favor in his eyes:” a strict view allowed divorce only for sexual immorality and more lenient ones allowed divorce if a wife burned food or was not as attractive as other women.¹

Jesus ignores traditions about divorce and goes back to Scriptures about marriage. He quotes Gen 1:27 and Gen 2:24. God made them male and female, a man should leave father and mother, be joined to his wife, and the two become one flesh. If man upheld the design of marriage, there would be no need for divorce. Marriage is: 1) *A Union* - male and female are different, but complementary. Equal in value and worth but different in role, similar to the persons of the Trinity. *Syzeugnymi* - “to yoke together... join together.”² Christians should marry other believers (2Co 6:14-18, 1Co 7:39). 2) *Exclusive* - A marriage is a covenant before God to forsake all others (Ex 20:14, Pro 2:16-17, Titus 1:6). 3) *Permanent* - God states in Mal 2:13-16, “For I hate divorce.” We are morally obligated to not just stay married, but to make our marriages the best they can be. Marriage is on earth only, till death do us part (Mar 12:25).

The concessions for divorce are given in Matt 5:27-32, 19:1-12: “except sexual immorality” (*porneia*) and in 1Co 7:15: the unbelieving spouse leaves the believing spouse (see also 1 Pet 3:1-2). “Note that incompatibility, not loving each other anymore, brutality, and misery are not grounds for divorce, though they may be proper grounds for a separation and consequent celibacy within marriage.”³ A separation may indicate a serious problem that needs rectification for fellowship (Matt 18:15-17). Criminal activity should be handled by law enforcement (Rom 13:4). Remarriage is permitted (1Co 7:10-11). “You are either bound under a marriage vow or you are not. If you are bound, you can’t marry another. If you are not bound, you are free to marry in the Lord.”³

v10-12 - The Heart Attitude - Jesus says a man is guilty of adultery for divorcing his wife for no reason. He recognizes equal rights between husband and wife in marriage. The scribes taught only men could initiate divorce and had a right to remarry.⁴ Roman law did not permit a woman to initiate divorce.⁴ Jesus shows that adultery isn’t merely the act of having relations outside of marriage, but any heart intentions to do so, especially by using the mechanism of divorce and remarriage to cover it up (Matt 5:28).

So, what? Now, what? How do we fulfill God’s design for marriage? *Single* - Be content in singleness and use your time to serve God and grow close to Him. Become the person you want to see in your future spouse and who God calls you to be. *Engaged or dating* - Marriage is meant to be permanent. Enter into the marriage covenant with prayer and reflection. Do premarital counseling with a mature Christian couple. *Married* - Whether married before or not, commit to making this marriage one that lasts a lifetime. Submit to each other - die to yourself, and serve one another with joy (Eph 5, 1 Pet 3:1-7, 1 Co 7, Titus 1:5-9, 2:1-8). Be the hero of your marriage. Consider attending a marriage retreat. Allow us to come alongside you and help you restore your marriage to what God intended it to be. *Everyone* - Be champions of God’s design for marriage and family in the public square. Encourage and support married couples. Be sensitive and help victimized spouses attain safety. Stay married to the Lamb and away from the world (James 4:4).

Resources:

- <https://chapelchelmsford.com/about-us/our-beliefs> - See *Recognition of Marriage and Biblical Sexuality*.
- Wayne A. Mack’s books - *Strengthening Your Marriage*, *Preparing for Marriage God’s Way*
- Home Improvement Ministry - Marriage retreats and premarital/engagement conferences <https://himweb.org/>
- Focus on the Family - <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/>

¹ https://www.sefaria.org/Mishnah_Gittin.9.10?lang=bi

² *Strong’s Definitions*.

³ *Study Guide on Mark 10*. David Guzik.

⁴ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: New Testament*. Walvoord and Zuck. Pg. 148,149.