

Divorce

Malachi 2:10-16

Introduction: This will conclude our series on “Things God Hates.” This is, of course, a controversial subject. This is due to several factors. There is the high rate of divorce in this country. 1 out of every 2 marriages ends in divorce. 3 out of every 4 second marriages ends in divorce. The Barna Group says that 35% of “born again Christians” have experienced a divorce.

Among the questions asked by the Barna Group dealt with the subject this way: “when a couple gets divorced without one of them having committed adultery, they are committing a sin.” 15% strongly agreed. Now, tell me—why is the rate so high? I offer these statistics to show the prevalence of the problem and some of the attitude toward it.

Another factor contributing to the controversial nature of this subject is explained by the late brother H. E. Phillips,

“The marriage, divorce and remarriage issue will probably never be resolved for all. It is not because the Word of God is not clear on the matter, nor does the real issue hang upon the definition of some words used in the Bible. The issue is difficult to resolve because of human involvement and situations with emotional overtones that cry out for some favorable answer from the Word of God to justify that human element. Many doctrines reign from that same “background” (The Smith - Lovelady Debate. Brooks, KY: Searching the Scriptures. 1976. P. i).

Brother Phillips had it right. Our emotions often color our attitude and, subsequently, our application, defense, and reaction. The closer the friend is, the nearer the relative, the more emotion plays a part. I have a close relative who is divorced and remarried without scriptural authority. My best man in our wedding is divorced and remarried twice without scriptural authority. Martha has those close to her divorced and/or remarried without scriptural authority. It plagues many families and it is hard not to let emotions enter the picture and get the upper hand. Nevertheless, as disciples of Christ we must follow Jesus and His teaching and not let our emotions lead us astray.

I. God Hates Divorce.

- A. Notice context begins in *Malachi 2:10*.
- B. Verse 11 tells us that they were marrying “*the daughter of a foreign God.*”
 - 1. Forbidden in the Law (*Ex. 34:12-17; Deut. 7:1-5*).
 - 2. Nevertheless, they did it anyway (*Ezra 9:1-2; Neh. 13:23-28*).
 - 3. Thus Israel and their worship would be profaned before God.
- C. Yet, there is another problem mentioned—treachery with “*the wife of your youth*” (*Mal. 2:14-15*).
 - 1. Apparently the Jews were compounding the problem by divorcing their wives in order to marry the idolaters.
 - 2. Notice first half of *verse 15*.
 - a. “*But did He not make them one, Having a remnant of the Spirit? And why one? He seeks godly offspring.*”

- b. Walter Kaiser says God made Adam and Eve one flesh. Instead of many wives, only one. This is in order to have godly offspring.
 - c. Limitations were placed that were conducive to godliness.
- D. God hates divorce.
 - 1. It does not say He hates remarriage.
 - a. The treachery involved divorcing.
 - b. Sin is always involved.
 - 2. Is divorce a sin?
 - a. It says He hates divorce, but does not say specifically that divorce is a sin.
 - b. Is instrumental music in worship a sin? It doesn't say that specifically.
 - c. Is the Lord's supper on Tuesday night a sin? It doesn't say that specifically.
 - d. Is a woman preaching to men a sin? It doesn't say that specifically.
 - 3. I think you know the answer.

II. What Jesus Said About Divorce.

- A. *Matthew 5:31-32; 19:3-9.*
 - 1. Apparently the scribes and Pharisees taught that divorce was permissible for any reason as long as a certificate of divorcement was granted (*cf. Deut. 24:1-4*).
 - 2. Jesus taught that divorce led to adultery, unless fornication was the cause of divorce.
 - 3. *Matthew 5:32* says that the divorced mate who remarries commits adultery. This has been caused by the one who did the divorcing.
- B. Notice the question in *Matthew 19:3*.
 - 1. *"Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"*
 - 2. It is not asking about remarriage.
 - 3. It is asking about *"putting away"* (NKJV has "divorce").
 - 4. This was answer in *Matthew 19:6*.
 - 5. *"What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder."*
 - a. Man is not to do this.
 - b. Are we supposed to allow what Jesus said not to do?
- C. All of this was said before Jesus said anything about remarriage in *Matthew 19:9*.
 - 1. Remarriage only allowed when fornication is the cause of divorce.
 - 2. Any other grounds for divorce and/or remarriage is not lawful.

Conclusion: I recognize that the consensus of brethren everywhere may be the opposite of what has been taught tonight. I admit it adversely affects what I might desire for my family members and dear friends. But this is what God's word says and I can do no other.