

Scenarios

After 10 years of giving herself away to better her husband and raise their four children, *she just can't take it anymore*. She hears the two year old in the back room crying in need of a diaper change. She hears the 7 year old fighting with the 5 year old, both screaming hateful words at each other. And the sixth month old is crying in his crib for food and attention. All the while her husband is downstairs watching the game on TV. So, she quietly walks past them all into her car and drives away. A half-an-hour later she calls her husband who finally just realized she had left and she tells him, "I'm leaving. It's over. I'm never coming back."

1) What happened? Should she be able to leave the marriage and her family – why or why not? What, if anything, could possibly fix the situation?

The couple had only been married for 3 years and one day, he's gone. She knew there had been some trouble, but never guessed that he would just up and go. All the letter said was, "*This is all a mistake. We just weren't meant to be.*" We have nothing in common. Complete opposites. I want out. Have a good life."

2) What happened? Should he be able to leave his marriage for those reasons? Why or why not? What, if anything, could possibly fix the situation?

After 25 years of marriage, there had been so much hurt and lack of communication between the two that one day he decided to tell his wife, "I'm leaving. It's just not working. You have no respect for me and *I just don't love you anymore*. I hope you understand." And as she reached out to him to reconsider and as they uncovered exactly why they hurt so much, she found that he was *having an affair* and that he was also addicted to *internet pornography* and had been for years.

3) What happened? Should he be able to leave his marriage for those reasons? Why or why not? What, if anything, could possibly fix the situation?

After 60 years of marriage, grandma is finally confronted by their granddaughter about her marriage with grandpa and what has been evident to all for years upon years - the fact that they just don't love each other anymore. But her grandma simply said, "Well, it would be silly to leave now. *Anyway, God wouldn't allow it. Divorce is a sin.*" So, as long as he keeps to himself and doesn't trouble me, I'm more than happy to live in the same house. More tea, Dear?" Her granddaughter says, "Sure," but thinks, "*Marriage is a joke. Who would ever want that?*"

4) What happened? Should a marriage ever end up like this? Why or why not? What, if anything, could possibly fix the situation?

Summary Truths: Half of all marriages end in divorce. The average marriage lasts 7.5 years. Those already divorced are two-three times more likely to divorce than those who are married and haven't yet. But thankfully, Jesus, the risen Lord, has the answer and the healing to address all the broken marriages above and more.

Laying the Foundation for an Unbreakable Marriage...

A) Marriage IS Established by God Alone

1. The Lord instituted marriage. What point is Jesus making concerning marriage in Matthew 19?

Genesis 2:22-24 “Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man.’ For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.”

Matthew 19:3-6 “Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?” “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

2. What are the elements of a God-pleasing marriage?
 - a. 1 man and 1 wife
 - b. Committed, devoted – notice that there’s nothing about emotional attachment...
 - c. Life-long
 - d. w/out mother and father = breaking the parent child tie both ways
 - e. publicly announced before God – (government is notified today, honors 4th Command.)

Relevant Issue: According to the Bible’s teaching, does God then recognize same sex marriage? At the same time, should those who follow Christ be terribly concerned about establishing laws on this issue? (See 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Matthew 19:8-9)

B) Marriage IS Designed by God to Fulfill Three Purposes

1. Companionship

Genesis 2:18 “The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

2. Children

Genesis 1:28 “God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground.

- a. Christians are to reflect God’s attitude that children are a blessing.

Psalms 127:3-5 “Sons are a heritage from the Lord, children a reward from him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them.” (A quiver typically held 10-12 arrows.)

b. God has not given us rules concerning birth control. Therefore the discussion of birth control lies in the area of adiaphora (areas where God has not commanded or forbidden.) although God has not set down rules, he wants couples to keep in mind the following points.

1. Their decision is to reflect his attitude towards children (blessings).
2. Their decision is to reflect trust in him.

Matthew 6:31-33 *So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*

3. Childbearing is a blessing, not a right.
4. If married couples decide to practice birth control, they need to do that intelligently. Some forms of birth control are inherently sinful because they destroy a fertilized egg which according to the Bible is human life (Psalm 51:5).

3. Chastity / Sexual Contentment

1 Corinthians 7:2-5, 8-9 *"But since there is so much immorality, each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty (euphemism for sexual union) to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife. Do not deprive each other except by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. ... Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion."*

- a. Sex is one of the blessings God bestows on marriage.

Hebrews 13:4 *Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.*

- b. God has declared all other sexual activity - beyond a husband and wife, as sinful.

1 Corinthians 6:9-11 *Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that has been some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*

- c. Even lustful thoughts God declares as sinful.

Matthew 5:28 *But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*

Romans 1:26-27 *Because of this, god gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion.*

d. Even coarse joking God declares as sinful.

Ephesians 5:3-4 *But among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or greed, because these are improper for God's holy people. Nor should there be obscenity, foolish talk or coarse joking, which are out of place, but rather thanksgiving.*

Application: How do people know when they're ready to get married? Is there such a thing as a soul mate for each person on earth? What does it take to make a marriage last a lifetime?

Answers...

- A desire for the three purposes of marriage above
- An expression of unconditional love... (3 Types of Love)
 - a) Defining Eros (Genesis 29:17-18)
 - b) Defining Phileo (Proverbs 5:18)
 - c) Defining Agapo (Romans 5:8)

Application: How trustworthy is the human heart and feelings when deciding on important matters like these?

“The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?”
(Jeremiah 17:9)

“There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end it leads to death.” (Proverbs 16:25)

C. The Key to a Happy Marriage (God not only defines marriage but he gives the best example of one...)

Ephesians 5:23-28, 33 *For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now **as the church submits to Christ**, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her** to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself... However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.*

1. What **role** does the Lord have for wives? (Note that there are no conditions.)

2. Who is the **wife's role model**?
3. What **role** does the Lord have for husbands? (Note that there are no conditions here either.)
4. Who is the **husband's role model**?

Application: Is it possible to have true love, if you don't know Jesus Christ? (1 John 4:7-12)

D. The LORD never intended divorce. In every divorce sin is present.

1. A Scriptural reason for divorce: The Sin of Adultery

Matthew 19:9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.

2. A second Scriptural reason for divorce: The Sin of Malicious desertion

1 Corinthians 7:15 But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

a. The desertion does not have to be a physical leaving. It's a desertion of the marriage.

b. The desertion is of such a nature that it marks the person an unbeliever.

** The Lord mentions no other reasons for divorce and even in these cases sin is involved. There is no such thing as a divorce where at least one person is not guilty of sin and needs to repent. Anyone who pursues a divorce outside of the two Scriptural reasons above – which a spouse is guilty of – should consider what God's Word says and should speak with a pastor for guidance.*

E. Conclusion

Although sin has introduced many problems into marriage, it remains one of the greatest blessings from the Lord. Because of sin's influence, couples need to work on their marriages. They especially need to make and keep Christ the center of their marriage to have the most blessed marriage possible.

*Ecclesiastes 4:12 Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of **three strands** is not quickly broken.*