

Introduction

1. God established the home with the first man and woman in the garden ([Gen. 2:21-24](#))
2. The Pharisees, to test Jesus, brought a question to Him regarding divorce ([Mt. 19:3](#))
 - a. Jesus' answer set forth God's standard for marriage ([Mt. 19:4-6](#))
3. The Pharisees then asked about the Law of Moses ([Mt. 19:7](#))
 - a. Indeed, the Law of Moses permitted divorce ([Dt. 24:1-4](#))
 - b. Jesus noted the reason for this permission to the Pharisees, "because of the hardness of your hearts" ([Mt. 19:8a](#))
 - c. Jesus then went right back to the beginning ([Mt. 19:8b](#))
4. The one exception for divorce, as given by the New Testament, is fornication ([Mt. 19:9a](#); cf. [Mt. 5:32](#))
 - a. If a spouse divorces and marries another person without this exception, then adultery is committed ([Mt. 19:9b](#))
 - b. If a person marries the one that is divorced due to fornication, then they commit adultery ([Mt. 19:9c](#))
 - c. After the divorce, only the innocent person (the spouse who did not commit fornication) is permitted to remarry another eligible person

I. Some Definitions

1. Fornication (*porneia* G4202 por-ni'-ah) defined
 - a. "properly of illicit sexual intercourse in general" (Thayer 532)
2. Eunuch (*eunouchos* G2135 yoo-noo'-khos) defined
 - a. "an emasculated man" (Thayer 260)
 - b. Thus, the context of [Matthew 19](#) demands that fornication be unlawful (illicit) sexual intercourse (the physical act) for Jesus later refers to men who cannot procreate (cf. [Jn. 8:4](#) "caught in adultery, in the very act")
3. Adultery (*moichao* G3429 moy-khah'-o) defined
 - a. "to have unlawful intercourse with another's wife" (Thayer 417)
 - b. This is a restricted form of fornication that defiles the marriage bed ([Heb. 13:4](#))
 - c. Fornication and adultery are sins ([Gal. 5:19-21](#); [Mt. 15:16-20](#))
 - i. Fornicators will be in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone ([Rev. 21:8](#))
 - ii. Thankfully, fornication and adultery can be repented of and made right ([1 Cor. 6:9-11](#))

II. The So-Called, "Pauline Privilege"

1. Some have attempted to pit Paul against Jesus regarding divorce ([1 Cor. 7](#))
 - a. The Corinthians had written to Paul regarding marriage ([1 Cor. 7:1a](#)) to which Paul provided inspired instruction ([1 Cor. 7:40](#))
 - b. Regarding divorce, Paul affirmed the words of Jesus ([1 Cor. 7:10-11](#))
 - c. Paul then went on to handle a real scenario where a believer may be married to an unbeliever and the unbeliever decides to depart ([1 Cor. 7:12-16](#))
2. Definition of "under bondage" (*douloo* G1402 doo-lō'-o)
 - a. "to make a slave of, reduce to bondage" (Thayer 158)
 - b. "signifies "to make a slave of, to bring into bondage," (Vine 73)

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- c. “Passively to be bound (as a slave)” (BDAG 260)
 - d. Never is this term used to describe the marriage bond in the Bible
 - i. The Bible uses the term *deo* G1210 to describe the marriage bond ([Rm. 7:2](#); [1 Cor. 7:27, 39](#))
 - ii. The two alternatives in this situation have already been listed: remain unmarried or be reconciled ([1 Cor. 7:10-11](#))
 - e. The Christian is not enslaved (under bondage) such that he or she would have to give up his or her allegiance to Christ to cause the unbeliever to dwell with them
 - f. Nor should the believer attempt to hold the unbeliever against their will
 - g. To further prove this is not another exception for divorce, Paul asked two rhetorical questions ([1 Cor. 7:16](#))
3. When Jesus said, “except for fornication” in [Matthew 19:9](#), He provided the only lawful cause for divorce
- a. Jesus used the same term in [John 14:6](#) referring to a person coming to the Father ([Jn. 14:6](#))
 - i. If “except” means there are other ways, then Jesus is not the Way!
 - ii. Thus, Jesus is providing the only means by which to approach the Father, which is through Him
 - b. In [Matthew 19:9](#), “except” provides the only lawful cause for divorce, which is for fornication

III. God’s Position on Divorce and Marriage

1. God hates divorce ([Mal. 2:13-16](#))
 - a. No matter if it is a lawful or unlawful divorce, sin is present when divorce takes place
 - b. No wonder then that God hates divorce because He hates sin just as we should (cf. [Pr. 8:13](#))
 - c. God is looking for “godly offspring” i.e., godly children whereas fornication seeks selfish gratification ([Mal. 2:15](#); [Gal. 5:19](#) “works of the flesh”)
 - d. If one chooses to remain in an adulterous marriage, it will result in an eternal divorce from Christ ([Mt. 7:21-23](#), [25:46](#))
2. God loves marriage for He used the language of the home to describe the church ([Eph. 5:22-33](#))
 - a. The church is the blessed bride of Christ

Conclusion

1. God desires that the home be as He has designed it
 - a. Divorce is never the plan, but there is one and only one exception which Christ allows for it to take place and that is for fornication
 - b. Any other divorce is unlawful and results in adultery which condemns all involved to hell
2. Praise be to God that He allows us grace, mercy, and time to repent and come out of an unlawful marriage if we are in one
 - a. Such is not only possible, but it has also happened ([Ezr. 10](#))
3. God’s definition of marriage, based upon all the biblical evidence, is one eligible man and one eligible woman joined together by God for one lifetime with only one exception
4. Let us fear the LORD and allow His will free reign in our lives in all situations