

✍ For a while now we have been looking at issues of marriage and singleness, and today we are going to cover the divorce issue. God gave marriage as a gift to humanity; it was intended to be the closest relationship a person can experience in this life with another person. Sadly, like all other things that God has created, sin has marred that original intent. Many marriages fall far short of what God intends them to be as evidenced by the high divorce rate that we have. Malachi 2:16, He hates divorce because, one, it is a violation of His perfect plan. Two, because He loves us and hates what hurts us and three because it breaks a covenant and God is a covenant keeper and hates lies.

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### 1. For those same reasons Paul says what he says in 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7.

- ✓ Divorce was at similar levels in those days as it is today. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:10-11, 12, both are from the Lord because they are in inspired text, but one is what Paul heard directly from Jesus' teachings. Paul is referencing partly what Jesus said in Matthew 19:4-9. The Jews allowed a man to divorce his wife for any reason which left her destitute and without support. This also raises another question, why does God permit what He hates? The fact is that God permits a lot of things that He hates. God hates sin, but He allows us the ability to make sinful choices. "God is not willing that any should perish but all to come to repentance," but many will perish, will they not? The mistake of the Pharisees was thinking that God commands something which He has only permitted because of our sinfulness, 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:7-8. Statistics show that you are better off if you can stick it out. The supposed benefits of divorce have been oversold. The fact is that anything outside of God's order is never good, but sometimes it is the lesser of two evils.

### 2. Paul acknowledges that divorce happens.

- ✓ Sometimes a marriage is impossible to bear up with. Abuse would be an automatic out, get out! It's interesting that of the sins and things that God is against that He never offers an alternative option in case you disregard His instructions. But He does say "Do not divorce, but if you do..." He does tolerate a violation to His own rule! Because some marriages are too unwholesome and degrading, such as substance abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, etc. Let's hear it again in plain English, do not get divorced!! But if you do for any reason other than infidelity, remain single. People don't follow this rule very well. It's far better to seek all means of reconciliation, pray for a miracle to bring you back together.
- ✓ 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:12-13, if your spouse is an unbeliever, do not divorce for that reason. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:14, your home and marriage still fall under the blessing of God because one is a believer. 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:15, your spouse is an unbeliever and wants to leave, let them go, unlike the marriage of two believers, we are not to try to keep that together at almost all costs. They cannot tolerate your faith and want to leave, let them.
- ✓ This is not an endorsement for marrying an unbeliever; it is simply what to do if one spouse becomes a believer after marriage. "Not Bound" is referring to the fact that the believer is free to be remarried in this unique case where the unbeliever chooses to leave. This leaves us 3 ways a marriage can be broken that allows for remarriage: The death of a spouse, infidelity, the unbelieving spouse leaves.
- ✓ 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 7:17 so, you are unhappy in your marriage, why is that? He's not helping with the kids. She spends too much money. He doesn't pay enough attention to you. You don't love him like you used to. You think you may be happier with someone else. She's put on a few pounds. He's lost a lot of hair. You just want to be free. These are not reasons for divorce, but they are reasons for you to get on your face before God and ask Him to resurrect your marriage.

**Someone has said, "Marriage is like a garden, neglect it and it becomes a jungle. Water, cultivate, care for it, pull up the weeds. Work on it like you would anything else that you care about, and it will blossom for you. If the problems are too big, call in a gardener, a pastor or trusted friend or Christian counselor for help."**

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