

INTERNATIONAL HOUSE OF PRAYER ATLANTA
CRITICAL CONVERSATIONS, PT. 3
AUGUST 27, 2017 – BILLY HUMPHREY

I. What is God's design for marriage?

A. God created the marital relationship. It is not a man-made institution, it is divinely designed and ordained, and thus it is God defined.

Gen 2:24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

B. God designated that in marriage one man and one woman would leave their own parents and families and be joined with one another in a lifelong pledge of love and faithfulness.

C. Marriage is a covenant agreement that God intended to last for the lifetime of the individuals who enter into it (Mal 2:14, 1 Cor 7:39).

D. The marriage covenant is unique to this age, because in the resurrection no individuals will be given in marriage (Luke 20:34-35).

E. God's plan and design for marriage was born out of God's desire to bless and benefit humanity (Gen 2:18).

II. What is God's intention for marriage?

A. God's intention behind creating the marital relationship was firstly to offer humanity a vivid experiential picture of His own nature and desire for love and relationship with humanity. It is a testimony of the relationship that God will share with believers for eternity.

Eph 5:31-32 "FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." 32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

B. The marriage relationship is critical, not principally because of how our marriages affect our lives and happiness, but principally because of how our marriages enhance or mar the declaration of the nature & beauty of God.

C. Marriage is designed to declare the beauty & worth of Jesus through an experiential taste of His love, perseverance, and suffering on our behalf. Ultimately through marriage we are drawn into greater revelation of the knowledge Jesus, His joys & His sufferings.

D. Marriage is finally a means to know Jesus more by becoming more like Him through laying down our lives and being conformed to His image.

III. What does the Bible say about God's mentality about divorce?

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1 Cor 7:10-11 Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. 11 But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife.

A. The Lord's command to believers is do not divorce your spouse. If either spouse departs from the other they are to remain unmarried or be reconciled to one another (7:10-11).

Malachi 2:16 "For the LORD God of Israel says That He hates divorce, For it covers one's garment with violence," Says the LORD of hosts. Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously."

B. God hates the sin of divorce, the sins that cause divorce, as well as the outcomes of divorce.

C. The specific issue that Malachi was addressing was men leaving their older wives for younger ones. The Lord called this "dealing treacherously" with the "wife of your youth."

Matthew 19:3-9 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?" 4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE,' 5 and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH' ? 6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." 7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" 8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

D. The thrust of Jesus' teachings on marriage and divorce were directly addressing a common sinful practice of Jewish men of that day. It had become common for men to issue a certificate of divorce to their wives for "any reason" that they wanted. In Matthew 5:31-32 & Matthew 19:18-19 Jesus instructed them that this practice was never God's will, nor was it ever Moses' teaching.

E. He clarified that the practice resulted in sin for all parties involved because God does not honor divorce for "any reason", but only for the reasons of sexual immorality.

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F. Jesus stated whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery, and whoever marries her who has been divorced commits adultery (Mat 5:32).

1. The reason being, that culturally, women would not be able to support themselves or their family without being remarried.
2. They would immediately need to be remarried in order to live. If the grounds for divorce had not been met, in God's eyes they would be committing adultery in their new marriage.

G. The main point Jesus was making was that the responsibility of the sin would fall upon the man who initiated the divorce in the first place.

IV. What are the clear Biblical grounds for divorce?

A. Jesus' teaching

Mat 19:9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery...

1. Jesus was clear that one sin was grounds for divorce: sexual immorality. The Greek word translated "sexual immorality", *porneia*, refers to adultery, fornication, and other physical acts of sexual immorality.
2. If someone gets divorced and remarried, unless there has been sexual immorality, they commit adultery (Mat 19:9).
3. It's clear that Jesus wasn't giving an exhaustive teaching on marriage & remarriage because he didn't address death or different nuances that Paul had to address with the Corinthian church. Rather, He was speaking to the prevailing sin of divorce that many were practicing at the time.

B. Paul's teaching

1 Corinthians 7:12-13 But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.

1. Paul encountered a new situation in Corinth that came about as a result of the conversion of many unbelievers to Christianity. Some homes were mixed with one believing spouse and the other remaining unconverted.

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2. In some cases the unbeliever would desert the believing spouse. In those cases Paul clarified that the believer was not bound to remain married to them.

3. Additionally Paul taught that a married person is bound to their spouse as long as the spouse is alive. Death of a spouse ends the previous covenant and the remaining spouse is free to remarry. (1 Cor 7:39-40)

V. Are there any other grounds for divorce?

A. It has become commonplace in today's society for people to divorce on the grounds of "irreconcilable differences" or "falling out of love". Conditions like these are illegitimate because they in no way satisfy the biblical grounds for divorce.

B. At the same time there are a number of possible situations that are not specifically addressed in scripture that could cause individuals to seek separation or even consider divorce.

C. Felonious activity, physical abuse, or drug addiction, are all examples of difficulties that are not addressed in scripture but at the very least should be grounds for separation. It's my estimation that the Lord doesn't require a person to remain in an environment that physically endangers them or their children.

D. These types of extreme situations require special attention on a case-by-case basis. Through prayerful counsel and seeking the Lord, special consideration needs to be given as to what a godly resolution may be.

VI. What about Gay Marriage?

A. As we have already stated, marriage is designed by God to speak of His own desires and nature.

B. He specifically designed marriage to be between one man and one woman in a lifelong covenant.

C. Though human governments may recognize additional unions involving people of the same sex, there is no allowance for this in the Bible.

D. Gay marriages are therefore by definition not biblical and are unsanctioned according to the Kingdom of God.