

**DIVORCE-PROOF YOUR MARRIAGE  
KINGDOM LIVING SERIES  
A STUDY OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT**

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**TEXT: Matthew 5:31**“And it was said, ‘Whoever Sends His Wife Away, Let Him Give Her A Certificate Of Divorce’; <sup>32</sup> but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.”

INTRO: I just read in *Charisma* news about someone who was a senior pastor of a mega church and bestselling author and is now filing for divorce. Another friend of mine, who I have known for 35 years and is also a grandfather of six, is also filing for a divorce. Having said that, for every pastor who is filing for divorce, you have wonderful leaders like Ed Silvoso and Bill Johnson, who have been married longer than our 40 years and whose marriage is flourishing.

When I talk about “divorce-proofing your marriage,” even the mere mention of the word “divorce” causes some of you pain, bringing up memories and shame. The purpose of today's message is not to condemn you of your past mistakes. “There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” The purpose is to strengthen existing marriages and to equip the singles who have a desire to get married to have a successful marriage when they do.

We are at the section of the Sermon on the Mount where Jesus teaches how we are to relate to one another — how we are to love one another. These truths will help you in all relationships. But at the heart of His teaching, He teaches about divorce and remarriage. And from this section of the Sermon on the Mount, there are truths to help us to divorce-proof our marriage.

## **I. HAVE A BIBLICAL CONVICTION CONCERNING THE MARRIAGE COVENANT**

### **A. DEFINITION OF MARRIAGE**

**1. Marriage is a legal, lifelong covenant commitment of love between one man and one wife.**



**2. Matthew 19:3** And *some* Pharisees came to Him, testing Him, and saying, “Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any cause at all?” <sup>4</sup> And He answered and said, “Have you not read, that He who created *them* from the beginning Made Them Male And Female, <sup>5</sup> and said, ‘For This Cause A Man Shall Leave His Father And Mother, And Shall Cleave To His Wife; And The Two Shall Become One Flesh’? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”

3. Jesus says: Whom God has joined together, let no man or woman separate.

4. However, He does teach that there is a biblical basis for divorce, which is sexual immorality (*porneia*); in this context it means adultery, even though there is a different word for adultery used in this context (*moichao*).

**5. Malachi 2:16** “For I hate divorce,” says the Lord, the God of Israel...

6. I was counseling a pastor friend who felt that he had made a mistake marrying his current wife. He explained that he never loved her but got her pregnant and felt responsible to marry her. But after 20 years of marriage and having three children, he now felt that he needed to “undo” the mistake of marrying her in the first place. My answer to him was that once you marry, God has brought you together. And whom God brought together, no one is to separate. You are to honor your covenant commitment and grow in covenant love for each other.

## II. DEAL WITH ANY ANGER PROBLEM

**A. Matthew 5:21** “You have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You Shall Not Commit Murder’ and ‘Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.’

<sup>22</sup> But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever shall say to his brother, ‘Raca,’ shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever shall say, ‘You fool,’ shall be guilty *enough to go into the fiery hell.*”

1. Proverbs 15:18 A hot-tempered man stirs up strife, But the slow to anger calms a dispute.

2. Proverbs 16:32 He who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, And he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city.

**B.** Anger can be manifested in verbal abuse and physical abuse.

1. E.g., my uncle and aunt.

2. A couple that divorced after 20 years of marriage because they had a “yelling culture.”

3. Proverbs 18:21 Life and death are in the power of the tongue...

4. Ephesians 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such *a word* as is good for edification according to the need *of the moment*, so that it will give grace to those who hear.

5. Mark Twain: “I can go a whole month on a good compliment.”

### III. GET RECONCILED QUICKLY

A. Matthew 5:23 “If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, <sup>24</sup> leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.”

B. Ephesians 4:26 ...Don’t let the sun go down on your anger.

### C. FOLLOW THE EIGHT A’S

1. ASK GOD TO HELP YOU GET RIGHT WITH YOUR SPOUSE.

2. ATTACK THE PROBLEM, NOT YOUR SPOUSE.

3. ASK YOUR SPOUSE HOW HE/SHE FEELS SINNED AGAINST. First try to understand before you are understood. Stephen Covey, in his book *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, teaches the principle, “Seek first to understand and then to be understood.” Listen responsibly by waiting patiently while the other speaks, concentrating on what he/she says, clarifying the comments through appropriate questions, reflecting the feelings and concerns with paraphrased responses, and agreeing with the other person whenever possible.

4. AVOID *IF, BUT AND MAYBE* (e.g., *If I have hurt you...*); ADMIT SPECIFICALLY WHAT YOU DID WRONG.

5. ASK FOR FORGIVENESS FIRST TO GOD AND THEN TO YOUR SPOUSE. “I was wrong. Would you please forgive me?”

6. ACTIVELY CHANGE YOUR ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR BY ASKING FOR GOD’S GRACE AND SUBMITTING AFRESH TO THE LORDSHIP OF JESUS.

7. ANSWER TO OTHERS. MAKE YOURSELF ACCOUNTABLE, SET GOALS, MEDITATE ON AND MEMORIZE SCRIPTURE, ETC.

8. ARRANGE FOR COUNSELING IF THE PROBLEM PERSISTS.

### IV. DEAL RADICALLY WITH THE SPIRIT OF LUST

A. Matthew 5:27 “You have heard that it was said, ‘You Shall Not Commit Adultery’; <sup>28</sup> but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. <sup>29</sup> And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out, and throw it from you; for it is better for

you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. <sup>30</sup> And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell.”

1. Internet pornography is an epidemic in our society.
2. Get counseling, deliverance — do whatever it takes to be set free and walk in holiness.

#### **B. PERSONALIZED LIST OF ANTICIPATED CONSEQUENCES OF IMMORALITY, BY RANDY ALCORN**

1. Grieving my Lord Jesus; displeasing the One whose opinion matters most.
2. Dragging into the mud Christ's sacred reputation.
3. Following in the footsteps of men I know of, whose immorality forfeited their ministry and caused me to shudder.
4. Suffering of innocent people around me who would get hit by my shrapnel.
5. Untold hurt and loss of trust to Sue, my best friend and loyal wife.
6. Hurt to, and loss of credibility with, my beloved children: Gabriel, Monica, Grace, Steve, Joy, Kuoching, Mary and Steve. (“Why listen to a man who betrayed Mom and us?”)
7. If my blindness should continue, or my family is unable to forgive, I could lose my wife and my children forever.
8. Shame to my family, my church family, HROCK and HIM, our apostolic network.
9. Shame and hurt to my friends, especially those I've led to Christ and discipled.
10. Guilt that is awfully hard to shake — even though God would forgive me, would I forgive myself?
11. Plaguing memories and flashbacks that could taint future intimacy with my wife.
12. Disqualifying myself, after having preached to others.
13. Surrender of the things I am called to and love to do — preach, teach, write and minister to others. Forfeiting, forever, certain opportunities to serve God. Years of training and experience in ministry wasted for a long period of time, maybe permanently.

14. Being haunted by my sin as I look in the eyes of others, and having it all dredged up again, wherever I go and whatever I do.

15. Possible pregnancy, with its personal and financial implications, or getting an STD.

**V. WALK IN THE LIGHT AND BE TRANSPARENT AND TRUTHFUL**

**A. Matthew 5:33 “Again, you have heard that the ancients were told, ‘You Shall Not Make False Vows, But Shall Fulfill Your Vows To The Lord.’<sup>34</sup> But I say to you, make no oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God,<sup>35</sup> or by the earth, for it is the footstool of His feet, or by Jerusalem, for it is The City Of The Great King.<sup>36</sup> Nor shall you make an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black.<sup>37</sup> But let your statement be, ‘Yes, yes’ or ‘No, no’; and anything beyond these is of evil.”**

1. What Jesus is saying is that you don’t need to make vows; you just need to be truthful and honest as a lifestyle.

2. Especially with your spouse. “If you walk in the light as He is in the light, you have fellowship with one another.”

**CONCLUSION:** Only the gospel can change your life and help you to have a successful marriage.