

## When “*Happily Ever After*” doesn’t come true

Matthew 5:31-32

### **Matthew 5:31-32**<sup>1</sup>

<sup>31</sup> “It has been said, ‘Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.’ <sup>32</sup> But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

### **Deuteronomy 24:1-4**

<sup>1</sup> If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, <sup>2</sup> and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, <sup>3</sup> and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, <sup>4</sup> then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

### **Matthew 19:1-10**

When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. <sup>2</sup> Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. <sup>3</sup> 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?” <sup>4</sup> “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ <sup>5</sup> 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’? <sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.” <sup>7</sup> “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?” <sup>8</sup> Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. <sup>9</sup> I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.” <sup>10</sup> The disciples said to him, “If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry.”

### **1 Corinthians 7:12-16**

<sup>12</sup> To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. <sup>13</sup> And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. <sup>14</sup> For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. <sup>15</sup> 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. <sup>16</sup> How do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or, how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

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<sup>1</sup> All Scripture from *The Holy Bible: New International Version*. electronic ed. Grand Rapids : Zondervan, 1996, c1984

## The debate over divorce

<b>Rabbi Hillel</b>	<b>Rabbi Shammai</b>
Liberal	Conservative
Divorce for any reason	Divorce for only one reason

<b>Pharisees</b>	<b>Jesus</b>
Grounds for divorce	Institution of marriage
Divorce is commanded	Divorce is permitted
Treated divorce lightly	Treated divorce seriously

### God's purpose in marriage (Matthew 19:4-6)

- Intimacy
- Unity
- Permanence

### Divorce is allowed because of:

- Hard hearts (Matthew 19:7-8)
- Immorality (Deuteronomy 24:1-4; Matthew 5:32; 19:9)
- Desertion by an unbeliever (1 Corinthians 7:12-16)

### Divorce is an opportunity for grace and forgiveness.

Rather than focus on divorce and its reasons, we should focus on:

- Building strong marriages
- Ministering to those who have experienced the pain of divorce