

# Marriage and Divorce

## A Different Perspective



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It was a bright, beautiful day, with a breeze blowing ever so gently. The colorful flowers were in full bloom. The myriads of green vegetation made a canopy over the region, filtering the heat of the sun. Walking down the path sprinkled with beams of sunshine that made their way through the treetops, God brought the excited woman to the waiting man. God saw all that he had made and it was very good. Marriage was very good. It was created to be a blessing.

Something happened. A change took place. Sin entered the world causing havoc wherever it seeped. Marriage became broken and divorce resulted. God hates divorce. But why? Does anyone consider this?

Marriage was instituted and designed by God to be a special place where love was shared by words and actions, and where physical and spiritual needs were met. A divorce signifies a marriage was not the blessing it was created to be. It means selfishness, lack of love or abuses occurred in an institution designed for blessings. Instead, it becomes a hidden place of verbal, physical or emotional abuse, a place of sin and transgressions.

Marriage is the ideal; divorce is not. God did not intend for there to be divorce. It is not divorce that breaks God's heart, but the hurtful actions that took place within the marriage that led to divorce.

God uses marriage as an analogy of his church and his divine kingdom. His Word tells us how to love him and how to love others. Jesus tells us to love as he has loved us, which was to the point of giving up his own life for ours. God loves by giving of himself—by caring for us and sharing his love with us. He educates us through the Holy Spirit and his Word. To show our appreciation for the things he does for us, we shower him with our love, respect and honor. This is the ideal model for marriage. It was meant to be a place overflowing with love, respect and all things good. God hates divorce because it means this marriage didn't fulfill its divine purpose.

Don't think that God would continue in a loveless, unfulfilling relationship forever. The same as we choose a mate, God chose Israel. He called himself their husband. Yet, even God became frustrated, angry and hurt over Israel's lack of appreciation for what he did for them, their lack of love towards him, and their desire to trust others over him. He finally came to the end of his patience. In Jeremiah 3:8, we read that God gave the northern kingdom of Israel a certificate of divorce, because they were faithless, and for their idolatry or worship of other gods, and for their immorality. He separated himself from Judah, the southern kingdom of Israel, for their unfaithfulness, and for only going through the motions of worshiping him, while they worshiped other gods.

There is a period of 400 years between the Old and New Testaments. This is a good example of taking time to heal from past hurts before getting involved in a new relationship or making another commitment. After this time, God began to form a different type of relationship that would eventually lead to another marriage. This time he chose a people who wanted and desired this relationship with him, not just with their minds and what they could get out of it, but more importantly with their hearts. This future marriage would consist of people who accepted his love, appreciated it and returned that love through their words and actions, as they continued to grow in their relationship with him.

We have seen that even God himself will eventually walk away from a relationship where love is not shared. Instead, he will join himself to those who meet his expectations. God desires and expects us to reciprocate his love. Jesus said, "Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them" John 14:21. We can do this by acting as he does, "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you" John 15:12.

How can someone encourage another person to stay in a relationship where they or their children are being physically, verbally or emotionally harmed or sinned against? How can a person criticize or condemn someone who has the strength and courage to walk away from these types of situations? In God's eyes, wouldn't such a person be seen just as guilty as the abuser or as an accomplice? Consider – "Whatever you did for [to] one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for [to] me" and "Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me" (Matthew 25:40, 45). Only God truly knows all that goes on behind closed doors. There is no way an outsider can really know the scope of the toll an abusive marriage takes on the lives of those involved: the harm being done to their hearts, emotions and/or bodies. Abuse is abuse.

It is a medical fact that ongoing, stressful situations lower a person's immune system by dumping toxic chemicals and hormones into their system. This sets them up for all types of diseases. If there is no relief and the dumping continues on and on, it can lead finally to death. In many instances, men or women in abusive situations, whether verbal, emotional or physical, need to remove themselves from that environment. They should be supported by others when they do, because not only is their health at stake but their very life is also.

Even though it is good to ask for prayer and seek counsel, in the end, it is between that person and God. They have to do what is best for them and their children. No one should keep themselves or their children in dangerous situations. People are more important than an institution. These are not godly marriages or relationships. There is nothing holy about such a marriage. It is an abomination in the sight of God.

I agree that it is a tragedy that the rate of divorce is so high in the church or anywhere else for that matter. However, we must remember, it isn't marriage that's the problem; God said what he created was good. That means the problem lies with the people in it. If the marriage was functioning as the institution God created it to be, and those in it were portraying the attributes and love of God toward each other, the thought of divorce wouldn't even arise.

God doesn't hate the act of divorce, but what took place in the marriage that defiled it, that brought it to this point. God's love is real. Just like we don't like to see others hurt or our children hurt, God doesn't want to see you or your children being abused in any way either. Marriage was to be a safe haven from the world, filled with godly love and respect for one another.

God expects those that claim to know him, to live lives that represent him. He expects them to learn his loving ways and come up to a higher plane of living with him. Then his love in them will overflow to everyone around them. As we let the Lord live through us, our homes will become a safe haven, instead of the cause of so much pain. Our spouses will be the ones we can always turn to and rely on, instead of the ones we want to escape from. Then our marriages will be the blessing God meant them to be, instead of the curse so many have become. Today, let's let the Lord live through us. Let's let our marriages be the blessing they were meant to be.