

# **Divorce & Remarriage Excerpts from Matthew**

## ***Part III Jesus and the “Any Cause”***

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### **Divorce**

*Matt. 19:3 And Pharisees came up to Him and tested Him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?” [4] He answered, “Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, [5] and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? [6] So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.” [7] They said to Him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” [8] He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed 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.”*

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## Divorce

*Deut. 24:1* "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because of a cause of sexual immorality, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,

Old Testament marriage vows:

Not providing material support (food, clothing) & physical support (conjugal love and faithfulness)

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## Divorce

History of Rabbi Hillel:

*Deut. 24:1* "When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because of a cause of sexual immorality, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house,

He asked, "Why did Moses use the phrase CAUSE of sexual immorality"?

Result = Sexual immorality OR ANY CAUSE

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# Divorce

## History of Rabbi Hillel:

Hillel's followers concluded 2 things:

1) "Any cause" divorce could only be carried out by men because the example case in Deuteronomy 24 involved a man divorcing his wife

2) He could do it for ANY REASON

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# Divorce

## History of Rabbi Hillel:

*Matt. 1:19 "And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly."*

- Joseph wanted to avoid public trial even though unfaithfulness justified it
  - He opted instead for the private, quiet "Any Cause" divorce
  - No proof of wrong doing was required...just quick/quiet
  - In the case of unfaithfulness Joseph was not required to pay Mary's marriage inheritance but he wants to take care of her financially
  - He elects to not go the unfaithful route and rather the "Any Cause" route
  - And for this he is called JUST...he used a lousy thing (the "any cause" divorce) for Mary's benefit
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# Divorce

Rabbi Hillel vs. Rabbi Shammai

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# Divorce

What does all this have to do with Matthew 19?

Matt. 19:3 “And Pharisees came up to Him and tested Him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for **any cause**?”

- *The question wasn’t, “Is it OK to get a divorce?” That would have been illogical to ask...they knew the 4 marriage vows*
  - *The question to Jesus is, “Where do you stand on the any cause debate?”*
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# Divorce

## What does all this have to do with Matthew 19?

Matt. 19:3 “And Pharisees came up to Him and tested Him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?”

Jesus isn't interested in their ridiculous translations & debate

- *He didn't mean there was no divorce ever*
  - *He didn't mean ONLY for unfaithfulness*
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# Divorce

## What does all this have to do with Matthew 19?

Marriage is what Jesus was interested in, not divorce!

- a) God intended marriage to be lifelong*
  - b) Marriage break-up is a tragedy*
  - c) Therefore, try and work it out and forgive if it is possible*
  - d) Moses didn't command it, he ALLOWED it*
  - e) Moses allowed divorce for hardheartedness – there is a limit to what someone should have to endure*
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# Divorce

## What does all this have to do with Matthew 19?

Hardheartedness = stubbornness

The only place this word is used in the context of divorce is in Jeremiah

*Jer. 4:4a Circumcise yourselves to the LORD; circumcise your hardheartedness, O men of Judah and inhabitants of Jerusalem;*

*Chapter 2 – Israel described as God's wife*

*Chapter 3 – God is forced to divorce her*

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# Divorce

## What does all this have to do with Matthew 19?

*Luke 17:4 and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."*

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# Divorce

## Summary of the Matthew 19 passage:

- 1) Pharisees ask if Hillel is right, can you divorce for "any cause"?
  - 2) Jesus is interested in other things
  - 3) The goal is to stay married to one wife and FORGIVE
  - 4) Breaking up marriage is a serious deal therefore what God brings together LET no one separate
  - 5) The Rabbi's bring Jesus back to their question, didn't Moses command it?
  - 6) Jesus – He ALLOWED it because he knew how stubborn, how unrepentant people are so sometimes it needs to happen
  - 7) Jesus returns to Deut. 24:1 and says that text only gives one ground for divorce, sexual immorality...not that there is ONLY one, but one in that verse
  - 8) The Disciples then wonder if anyone should get married
  - 9) Jesus says it clearly isn't for everyone
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# Divorce

## Cleaning up some messy topics:

- 1) Why is Jesus so cryptic?
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# Divorce

Cleaning up some messy topics:

1) *Why is Jesus so cryptic?*

2) *How did Jesus feel about the 3 other areas of neglect from Exodus 21?*

- Food
  - Clothing/shelter
  - Conjugal love
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# Divorce

Cleaning up some messy topics:

1) *Why is Jesus so cryptic?*

2) *How did Jesus feel about the 3 other areas of neglect from Exodus 21?*

Paul DOES address the marriage vows as specified in the Torah = I Cor. 7

a) Conjugal love

*"I Cor. 7:3-5 The husband should give to his wife her **conjugal rights**, and likewise the wife to her husband. [4] For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.*

*[5] Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. "*

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# Divorce

Cleaning up some messy topics:

- 1) *Why is Jesus so cryptic?*
- 2) How did Jesus feel about the 3 other areas of neglect from Exodus 21?

Paul DOES address the marriage vows as specified in the Torah = I Cor. 7

- a) *Conjugal love*
- b) *Providing clothing/shelter & food*

I Cor. 7:32 I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. [33] But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, [34] and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.

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# Divorce

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- 2) How did Jesus feel about the 3 other areas of neglect from Exodus 21?

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- a) *Conjugal love*
- b) *Providing clothing/shelter & food*
- c) Did THEY wrestle with what constituted neglect like we do?

Eph. 5:25b = as Christ loved the church and gave (betray) Himself up for her,

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# Divorce



## Closing comments:

God created marriage to emulate two things:

- 1) *The Trinity*
- 2) *God's marriage to Israel*

