# **SOTM Pt 25 - Furthermore what about Divorce**

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Sermon on the Mount / Marriage; Divorce; Sexual Immorality / Matthew 5:31–32

**Matthew 5:31–32 NKJV**

31 “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’ 32 But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

Much like last week we begin this week’s message with the same understanding that this is a sensitive topic today. It is in fact a continuation of Jesus context from last week’s text:

**Matthew 5:27–30 NKJV**

27 “You have heard that it was said to those of old, *‘You shall not commit adultery.’* 28 But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell. 30 And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and cast *it* from you; for it is more profitable for you that one of your members perish, than for your whole body to be cast into hell.

Why is that? Because Jesus begins this using the statement: “furthermore.” The word “furthermore” means “in addition to what precedes” So Jesus takes us into today’s text saying, in addition to what I just said include this in your understanding because these two topics, lust and divorce are linked.

And I want to acknowledge this message for some may feel like a scab is being ripped off an old wound and a significant trauma you may have gone through because of a past relationship that ended in divorce. And here is the unfortunate reality: There are 1.3 marriages that end in divorce every MINUTE.

Statistically 40% to 50% of marriage end in divorce. Today almost every person in America has been touched by divorce, whether experienced divorce in their own marriage, are a child or parent of someone who has been divorced, or lost friends because of divorce.

This is another one of those reasons why we need to understand the Grace of God we talked about last week as this “spoon full of sugar” that helps the medicine go down because without the Grace of God non of us could stand under the weight of the Scripture and God’s perfect will.

We have to remember why we struggle with things like this that we discussed last week:

1. **The tension inside of us between the flesh and the Spirit**

2. **Current cultural norms that are contrary to Biblical principles and values**

3. **Our own life situations where perhaps we have fallen into a place of disobedience and sin in regards to Biblical principles**, and let me just say here: this is one place the enemy has waged a great war and in many is seeing great victory. He uses guilt and shame as vehicles to cause man to abdicate adherence to biblical truths often resulting in abandonment of those truths!; or

4. **Someone we love is entangled in unbiblical behavior and sin and we struggle with how to address it and help them.**

God’s Grace is here for you if you have found yourself effected by divorce in your life, and we don’t shy away from talking about these topics knowing they may be hard to swallow. God’s way is best, not our way!

So lets get into this:

[Matthew 5:31](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.31) “31 “Furthermore it has been said, ‘Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.’”

Jesus is referring to [Deuteronomy 24:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Dt24.1) “1 “When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house,” But not what it says, but rather with the “it has been said” He is referring to two common Rabbinic schools of His day and what they taught this passage ment:

1. The School of Shammai - Led by Rabbi Shammai and his teaching on [Deuteronomy 24:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Dt24.1) was very strict and conservative.

2. The School of Hillel - Led by Rabbi Hillel and his teaching on [Deuteronomy 24:1](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Dt24.1) was very lax and liberal. Rabbi Hillel’s view was the most popular in Jewish culture (probably no surprise there)

The conflict between these two revolved around the interpretation of the phrase: “because he has found some uncleanness in her”

Rabbi Shammai took a literal interpretation of the Hebrew words that are defined as “nakedness and to uncover a shameful thing” saying that this interpretation speaks to sexual immorality.

Rabbi Hillel took a lax view of interpretation by separating the first clause “she finds no favor in his eyes” from the second clause “because he has found some uncleanness in her” to mean that the first clause “she finds no favor in his eyes” is the justification for divorce and the second clause is not the reason for the first but merely one example of many that support the first.

Here are some of the ACTUAL reasons Rabbi Hillel gave for justification of divorce (These are NOT made up, though they may seem unbelievable):

“a man could divorce his wife if”:

1. She spoiled (burned or over-salted) his dinner,

2. If she spun (danced)

3. If she went with unbound hair

4. If she spoke to men in the streets

5. If she spoke disrespectfully of his parents in his presence

6. If she was a loud woman whose voice could be heard in the next house.

By the time we get to around AD 100 (about 70 years after Christ is crucified) this has moved to Rabbi Akiva saying … that a man could divorce his wife if he found a woman whom he liked better and considered more beautiful.” He carried this through then to its ultimate end: no-fault divorce.

So AD 100 and a Rabbi’s liberal thought introduces the Jewish culture to no fault divorce. He opened up an **aqueduct** that carried this idea all the way to Christendom and the modern world.

In 1969, Governor Ronald Reagan of California made **what he later admitted was one of the biggest mistakes of his political life**. Seeking to eliminate the strife and deception often associated with the legal regime of fault-based divorce, Reagan signed the nation's first no-fault divorce bill.

From 1969 to 1985 no fault divorce laws were enacted in virtually every state in America and it is the law of the land today.

Let me just say here, because I have had some questions that have their root in our daily Bible reading about polygamy (polygamy is the practice of a husband marrying more than one wife) that part of our understanding of polygamy being contrary to God’s design and perfect will is found in the conversation over divorce. If polygamy was the design then divorce is simply not necessary.

One cant really talk about divorce I think without first at least in a precursory way talk about marriage:

### Marriage is intended by God to be permanent

#### Marriage is intended by God to be exclusive

These two thoughts, that God intended marriage to be both permanent and exclusive is rooted in the scripture:

[Genesis 2:24](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ge2.24) “24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be **joined to his wife**, and they shall **become one flesh**.”

[Matthew 19:4–6](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt19.4-6) “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.””

In [Genesis 2](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ge2) the Hebrew for **Joined: dā·ḇǎq cling to, i.e., fasten oneself , stick to, joined fast, or be made to cleave. Stuck like Glue. It is permanent joining**

When Jesus first quotes this in [Matthew 19](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt19) ([Mark 10](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mk10))He uses a Greek word that has the same meaning: **προσκολλάω (proskolláō) “to glue or join together,”**

There would be nothing odd about Jesus using the word that is the Greek equivalent to the Hebrew word from Genesis. But Jesus adds a significant piece to this understanding.

[Matthew 19:6](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt19.6) “6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore **what God has joined together**, let not man separate.””

**Joined, here in this second use by Jesus in this passage is the Greek word συζεύγνυμι (syzeugnymi)** ("closely-yoked") - yoked together as oxen and so coupled together as a **team**), let no man separate means “put space between, isolate one from the other”.

 **syzeúgnymi** ("closely-yoked") is only used for marriage in the NT - a union in which a husband and wife **live better for the Lord together, than either would do alone.** And notice the picture of two oxen yoked as a team. How difficult for them to labor if them are not working in harmony with the other party. And such is true of the marriage "yoke.” For one reason is the picture of Jesus the Bridegroom yoked to His covenant partner, His Bride the church. In [Matthew 11:28-30](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt11.28-30) Jesus make an invitation to be yoked together with Him, it is an invitation to from the Bridegroom to the Bride.

Marriage is a unique Dyadic relationship. Dyadic meaning **consisting of two - for a purpose**.

**Monogamy is implicit in the story of Adam and Eve, since God created only one wife for Adam.**

**Monogamy indicates the unique relationship of husband and wife, and serves as a picture of the relationship between God and his people (**[**Je. 3**](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Je3)**;** [**Ezk. 16**](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eze16)**;** [**Ho. 1–3**](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ho1-3)**) and between Christ and his church (**[**Eph. 5:22–33**](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Eph5.22-33)**)**

So these two ideas, Marriage is designed by God to be permanent and exclusive **is for a purpose**. That the married couple in the faith would model to a lost world the **covenant relationship between God and His people**. ([Ephesians 5:30–32](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Eph5.30-32) “30 **For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones. 31 “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.”** )

Marriage was not designed by God for your happiness, to fulfill you or make you “complete”. Marriage was designed by God as a means of Grace to:

1. Sanctify us through the process of Growing together, learning self sacrifice and yielding ourselves to each other. ([Ephesians 5:22-33](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Eph5.22-33))

2. Being fruitful - Filling the whole earth with His people through the discipleship of our children ([Genesis 1:28](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Ge1.28), [Deuteronomy 4:9](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Dt4.9), [Deuteronomy 6:7-9](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Dt6.7-9), [Deuteronomy 11:19](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Dt11.19), [Ephesians 6:4](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Eph6.4))

3. Model the covenant relationship of God with His people through our covenant with our spouse ([Ephesians 5:22-33](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Eph5.22-33))

4. Help us understand our “Closely Yoked” Relationship with Christ for His Kingdom ([Matthew 11:28-30](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt11.28-30))

### So then, what about divorce?

[Matthew 5:32](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Mt5.32) “32 But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.”

Remember our understanding last week that Jesus was not simply talking about adultery but all Sexual immorality. One reason we understand this is because of the context of coupling this passage today with last weeks passage through the use of the phrase “furthermore”

The Greek word for “Sexual Immorality” is what we call a “blanket” or “umbrella” term: πορνεία (porneia) It is the word we get our English word pornography from, it is sometimes translated in the Bible as “fornication”

Jesus goal in this dialogue in the sermon on the mount is to remove the thought that you don’t fight for the purpose and calling of marriage and simply divorce over any reason you want to.

### Want to make your marriage more divorce proof? Get connected to the Body of Christ!

W. Bradford Wilcox, a leading sociologist at the University of Virginia and director of the National Marriage Project, finds that Statistically those who are nominal Christians, who do not consistently and regularly participate in their local church have a 20% HIGHER rate of divorce that the world (non Christians) and those whose family is strongly committed to their local church and participate with it have a 35% LOWER rate of divorce than the world (non Christians). Want to divorce proof your marriage, be connected to your local church and committed to it. This is the mystery Jesus spoke of in [Ephesians 5:30-33](https://ref.ly/logosref/BibleNKJV.Eph5.30-33)

**Matthew 5:27–32**

