

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Jesus and Divorce The Gospel of Mark - Week 45

ICEBREAKER: If you could spend one hour doing absolutely anything, what would you do?

OVERVIEW: Is it okay for a Christian to get a divorce? No? Yes? Sometimes? How does God feel about divorce? And how should we view divorce? Fortunately Jesus was asked this question, and His answer is recorded for us in Mark 10:1-12. The purpose of this study is not to condemn people who are divorced. Once a divorce has happened, it's almost impossible to undo. The point is to learn about God's plan for marriage and divorce so that we can do our best to glorify Him from this point on.

1. **Read Mark 10:1-12.** What insight, principle, or observation from this week-end's message did you find to be the most helpful, eye-opening, or troubling? Explain. (Or what was your key takeaway from Sunday's message?)

2. **Read Malachi 2:13-16.**
 - a. Why was God upset with the Jews?
 - b. What did God want marriages to produce (see v. 15)?
 - c. How might divorce interfere with the production of godly children?
 - d. Verse 16 says that divorce is an act of "injustice," or "violence (ESV)," or "overwhelming cruelty (NLT)." What makes divorce so bad that God chose to use such negative language to describe it?

3. Studies show that divorce does great harm to children. Adult children of divorce have "less education, lower income, poorer mental and physical health, more suicide, weakened parent-child relationships, more cohabitation, more problematic marriages, and more likelihood of divorce (Mary Jackson, "Sins of Their Fathers & Mothers," *World Magazine*, May 2016)." If your parents are divorced, how has it negatively impacted you, or what negative side-effects have you seen in others whose parents are divorced?

4. The divorce rate for first marriages in America is 40%. Why do you think so many marriages don't last?

5. The Bible is clear that there are only two legitimate reasons for divorce: Prolonged, unrepentant adultery, and abandonment by an unbelieving spouse (Mt 5:32; 2 Cor 7:12-13, 15). Therefore singles must enter into marriage very carefully. What are some practical things singles can do to be sure that they find a good spouse?

6. While God allows divorce under certain conditions, it is clearly not part of His original plan for marriage. What can married couples do to avoid divorce and glorify God through marriage?

7. Divorce is a reality for many in the church. What can the church do to minister to people who are divorced or are children of divorce?

The Last Word: When a married couple eliminates the option of divorce, the marriage becomes much stronger. Once a couple realizes that they are "stuck," they are much more driven to strive for a happy marriage.