

## “Jesus on Marriage & Divorce”

*Mark 10:1-16*

### Introductory Question

**Q** – What ingredients or actions strengthen a marriage? What weakens a marriage?

### Discussion Questions

- 1) **Read Mark 10:1-16.** What made the Pharisee’s question a challenging one for Jesus to answer? What makes the question a challenging one to answer today?
- 2) When Jesus asked the Pharisees what Moses’ “command” (v.3) was on this issue, why do you think they responded with what Moses had “permitted” (v.4; cf. Deut. 24<sup>1-4</sup>)?
- 3) Why did Moses include rules about divorce in God’s Law (Deut. 24<sup>1-4</sup>; cf. Ex. 21<sup>8-11</sup>)?
- 4) What did Jesus say is God’s design for marriage?
- 5) In what way(s) did Jesus reframe the issue or shift the conversation?<sup>1</sup>
- 6) What similarities & differences can you find between Matthew’s account and Mark’s account?<sup>2</sup>
  - In the opening verses (Mark 10<sup>1-2</sup>; Matt. 19<sup>1-3</sup>)
  - In Jesus’ response (Mark 10<sup>3-9</sup>; Matt. 19<sup>4-9</sup>)
  - In the disciples’ question (Mark 10<sup>10</sup>; Matt. 19<sup>10</sup>)
  - In Jesus’ response to his disciples (Mark 10<sup>11-12</sup>; Matt. 19<sup>11-12</sup>)

What questions or clarifications do you find when comparing Matthew’s account with Mark’s?

- 7) Why were the little children being brought to Jesus? As one of those parents or children, how would you have felt about his disciples’ response?
- 8) Is there anything in Jesus’ response that you as a parent or disciple would have found: surprising? Encouraging? Confusing? Other? Why?
- 9) What childlike qualities that Jesus commends, have you seen or experienced as a Christian that has challenged or inspired you?

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<sup>1</sup> You might also want to ask your group the following question: “Do you think Jesus would respond the same to someone in a troubled marriage who was sincerely asking the question in verse 2? Why or why not?”

<sup>2</sup> Provide the people in your group with the side by side copy of the parallel passages from Mark 10<sup>1-12</sup> and Matthew 10<sup>1-12</sup> on the next page. If using Zoom show page 2 on “share screen”.

### Mark 10:1-12

Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

<sup>2</sup> Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

<sup>3</sup> “What did Moses command you?” he replied.

<sup>4</sup> They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

<sup>5</sup> “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied.

<sup>6</sup> “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ <sup>7</sup> ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, <sup>8</sup> and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

<sup>10</sup> When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. <sup>11</sup> He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. <sup>12</sup> And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

### Matthew 19:1-12

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 flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one 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 sexual immorality, 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.”

<sup>11</sup> Jesus replied, “Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. <sup>12</sup> For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it.”