



Divorce, Through The Eyes of Jesus

Some might say I'm overreacting when I claim that the divorce rate is at epidemic levels in our country and in most of the world! 2008 Barna Group research indicated that divorce rates were between 45-50% for those in a first marriage. How would you consider a similar percentage of individuals with an illness or disease? Epidemic, right?! Those finding themselves in subsequent marriages fare even worse in that up to 67% of second marriages fail and third marriages have a failure rate of up to 73%. It seems highly unlikely the 'loosing of self' for the purpose of finding a more suitable life partner will succeed. Now, is this practice consistent with the Creator's plan for man and woman? To find out we go to His Word with open and honest hearts. First we find in Malachi 2:16 that God 'hates' divorce and alludes to the treacherous dealings that are often associated with it. If God hates divorce and we are to seek to please the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:9), what would our inclination toward divorce be? Do you see the connection?

The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia says that everything we need to know about divorce for today can be found in Matthew 19. Let's look at a few details... Divorce is not lawful 'for any reason at all' as had been the practice of the Jews. This was only 'tolerated' because of their hardened hearts (rejection of God's will) and rather than risk more grievous consequences, Moses 'permitted a writ of divorcement'. Jesus told His listener's that from the beginning this was not the way it was to be. God is the uniting force in marriage and man is forbidden to break that bond. If it is broken and the person breaking it remarries, they are guilty of adultery. Jesus does give an exception, an allowance if you will, but not a command. There is no adultery if a history of sexual sin is discovered and the offended party puts away the offender. My 'opinion'? Jesus would have us work it out!

In our culture today it appears that the readiness to dispose of marriage is increasing, both in choosing divorce or cohabitation. A return to God and His ways is the only recourse that would please Him and we know that a contrite and broken heart God will not despise (Psalm 51:17), this is the approach to God that succeeds!