(32) Doctrine on Divorce (Matt. 19:1-12; Mark 10:1-12)

1. Pharisee questions were normally designed to trap the Lord, but in this instance one division of Pharisees was hoping to use the Lord to resolve their in-house debate concerning divorce (Mt. 19:3).
   a. The school of Shammai (50BC-30AD) taught that a man could only divorce his wife for a sexual offence.
   b. The school of Hillel (60BC-20AD) permitted divorce for almost any reason.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Mishnah, Gittin 9:10</th>
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<td>9:10</td>
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<td>A  The House of Shammai say, “A man should divorce his wife only because he has found grounds for it in unchastity,</td>
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<td>B  “since it is said, Because he has found in her indecency in anything (Dt. 24:1).”</td>
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<td>C  And the House of Hillel say, “Even if she spoiled his dish,</td>
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<td>D  “since it is said, Because he has found in her indecency in anything.</td>
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<td>E  R. Aqiba says, “Even if he found someone else prettier than she,</td>
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<td>F  “since it is said, And it shall be if she find no favor in his eyes (Dt. 24:1).”</td>
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2. Jesus used Genesis to demonstrate that divorce is never the directive will of God (Mt. 19:4-6 cf. Gen. 2:24).
   a. Previously (Mt. 5:31-32), Jesus referenced Deut. 24:1-4 in His messages pertaining to marriage after the fall.
   b. On this occasion, Jesus took His message back to marriage before the fall.
      1) Humanity was biologically designed for male/female partnership.
      2) Humanity was psychologically designed for father/mother child raising.
      3) Humanity was generationally designed for leaving & cleaving.
      4) Cleaving (life-long marital commitment) precedes copulation (one flesh).
      5) Intercourse is an outer-man & inner-man activity (Gen. 34:2-4,8-12; Song. 1:7; 3:1-4; 1st Cor. 6:16-17).
   c. The joining of two into one is something God Himself accomplishes (Mt. 19:6). The directive will of God then is for man to not divide one into two.
      Principle: “Do not” does not equal “can not.” It actually admits “can” as a real possibility that ought not be realized.
      Similar constructions in Matt. 6:3; 24:17,18; Jn. 14:1,27; Rom. 14:3,16; 1st Cor. 7:12,13; 2nd Pet. 3:8.

3. The Pharisees objected to Jesus reference to Genesis by misquoting Deuteronomy (Mt. 19:7-9).
   a. Jesus’ divorce statement in application of Genesis (v.6) is even more restrictive than the Shammai position.
   c. Jesus rejected Moses’ divorce statement as a command, but described it as a permitted concession in a hardness of heart context. Important notes:
      1) God’s Word through Moses never commanded divorce.
      2) God’s Word through Moses never prohibited remarriage after divorce.
      3) God’s Word through Moses did prohibit reconciliation of a marriage once a remarriage took place to someone else.
   d. Jesus expands His first divorce statement with a second divorce statement (Matt. 19:6,9)
      1) Consistent with His previous divorce teaching (Matt. 5:32) Jesus stipulates fornication as a basis for permitted divorce (Matt. 19:9).
      2) Jesus nails one particular divorce motivation: another woman (Matt. 19:9; Mk. 10:11-12; Lk. 16:18). The close linkage between the verbs highlights that one was the motivational cause for the other.
      3) Jesus twin statements plus Moses’ divorce statement form the essence of Paul’s synthesis on the subject (1st Cor. 7:10-11).

4. The disciples reaction (Mt. 19:10-12).
   a. Jesus’ disciples reacted strongly to Jesus’ tough stance on marriage. “It is better not to marry” (Mt. 19:10) runs contrary to it is not good for the man to be alone (Gen. 2:18).
   b. Jesus rejects the disciples’ opinion. Only a select few “have been given” a celibate way of life (Mt. 19:11; 1st Cor. 7:7-9).
   c. Three conditions of deliberate non-marriage are based upon castration.
      1) Birth defects of emasculation (Lev. 21:20; Deut. 23:1a).
      2) Slavery castration (Deut. 23:1b; Isa. 39:7; Dan. 1:3,4).
      3) Kingdom of Heaven self-castration (metaphoric) (1st Cor. 7:26,32; Rev. 14:4).