

(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.

The Mishnah, Gittin 9:10

9:10	A	The House of Shammai say, "A man should divorce his wife only because he has found grounds for it in unchastity,
	B	"since it is said, <i>Because he has found in her indecency in anything</i> (Dt. 24:1)."
	C	And the House of Hillel say, "Even if she spoiled his dish,
	D	"since it is said, <i>Because he has found in her indecency in anything</i> .
	E	R. Aqiba says, "Even if he found someone else prettier than she,
	F	"since it is said, <i>And it shall be if she find no favor in his eyes</i> (Dt. 24:1)."
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.
 - b. The Pharisees' took Moses' divorce statement as a command (Matt. 19:7 cf. Deut. 24:1-4).
 - 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).