

# Small Groups

## SERMON-BASED STUDY GUIDE

Sermon on the Mount – Week 8 – *What Jesus Says about Marriage and Divorce*  
October 29, 2023

### DIGGING IN:

1. What, in your opinion, is marriage, and why does it matter?
2. What has been your understanding, up to this point, of what scripture teaches about divorce?

### MAKING IT REAL:

1. "A flourishing marriage is a wonderful witness to a watching world."  
"A restored and re-storied marriage is a wonderful witness to a watching world." Respond to these statements.
2. We know from scripture that God takes marriage very seriously and doesn't want it to be broken. But the passages that talk about divorce are complicated to interpret and sometimes seems to be saying different things. Have each group member read one or two verses from the chart on the last page of this guide and fill in the middle column with a summary of what it says. Then, as a group, discuss column 3 – the implications of the scripture for marriage and divorce. This won't be an easy discussion – the truths are challenging and not always clear.
3. Many Christian scholars and teachers say that the Bible supports four reasons for divorce. How do you see these played out in the scriptures you just briefly studied?
  - Adultery/sexual immorality
  - Physical neglect/abuse
  - Emotional neglect/abuse
  - Abandonment by an unbeliever
4. What if you have already experienced divorce? If your divorce was not on biblical grounds, God's forgiveness is available for you! In *any* situation, His grace and mercy are there for you. He is more concerned with your present than your past. What is your response to these statements?
5. What if you are experiencing problems in your marriage and/or are considering a divorce?
  - Consider the high value God puts on marriage. Have you done everything you can to pursue restoration and healing? Are you willing to seek restoration and a new story for your marriage?

- See a Christian counselor (South can refer you) to help you process the issues in your marriage. If your spouse won't join you, go by yourself.
  - If you are in a relationship where there is adultery, abandonment, or abuse, restoration is not impossible, but it may or may not be possible in your situation. Seek professional assistance (South can refer you), and know that God's love and grace surround you whether you seek restoration or pursue divorce.
6. What are some ways you can strengthen your marriage? Share ideas, and consider doing the following on a daily basis (*from Alex – these were cut from his message because of time constraints*).
- Practice Gratitude (and express it to one another)
  - Don't try to change them. (Pray; Jesus changes people, we can't)
  - Encourage them. (Affirming words, building up, support self-care)
  - Invite God in daily. (Individually, or together, invite God to be present in your marriage and your home).

## PRAYER IDEAS

Pray for the strength of marriages in your group, for God's grace to be over them, for struggles to be worked through. If there are group members who have been divorced or are in the midst of separation and/or divorce, pray for specific needs that they share. Consider praying over each individual or couple, one at a time, so that each one is prayed for specifically rather than generally.

## WANT TO DIG A LITTLE DEEPER?

(Extra Bible study ideas)

Use [biblegateway.com](http://biblegateway.com) or [blueletterbible.org](http://blueletterbible.org) to look up more scripture passages about marriage and divorce. Write down what you learn. Look at commentaries to help you understand difficult passages.

Google Christian marriage and divorce to read articles from various Christian authors that may help you understand and process different views.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### *Red Couch Theology Podcast*

If you or group members have questions around parts of the sermon that are not included in the discussion guide, it's always helpful to listen to *Red Couch Theology*, where Alex and Aaron talk about the sermon and answer questions that come in from people in the congregation. <https://guysdrinkingtea.podbean.com/>

*[The Life-Saving Divorce: Hope for People Leaving Destructive Relationships](#)*  
by Gretchen Baskerville

Verse	What it says (summarize)	Implications for marriage/divorce
Ex 21:10-11		
Gen 2:24		
Jer 3:8		
Mal 2:13-16		
Mk 10:2-12		
Mt 5:31-32		
1 Cor 7:10-16		
1 Cor 5:11-12		
Eph 5:3-7		
Eph 5:31-33		
2 Tim 3:1-5		
1 Tim 5:8		
Heb 13:4		