

Matthew 19:1-12: Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ² And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. ³ And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?" ⁴ He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, ⁵ and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." ⁷ They said to him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?" ⁸ He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ⁹ And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery." ¹⁰ The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." ¹¹ But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. ¹² For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it."

Intro: Marriage [define here] **John MacArthur:** Procreation; Pleasure; Provision; Partnership; Picture

1) We want to uphold God's Biblical standard concerning marriage. 2) We also want people who have failed in this area to know there is grace, mercy, & forgiveness for all who repent, trust in Jesus, & then, by the power of the Holy Spirit, seek to obey what Jesus teaches us in these verses about marriage and divorce.

We've seen Jesus confront false teachers (Pharisees) by pointing them back to God's Word in Genesis which shows that divorce is against God's righteous command because marriage is God permanently joining one man and one woman in a one flesh union that should never be separated. Divorce is permitted in the case of sexual immorality.

1. Jesus Keeps Loving And Healing

2. The Pharisees Test Jesus By Asking Him About Divorce

3. Jesus Teaches That There Are Only Two Genders

4. Jesus Teaches That The Words Of Moses In Genesis Are The Words Of God

5. Jesus Teaches That Marriage Is Primary, Personal, And Permanent

6. The Pharisees Ask Jesus A Second Question About The Law Of Moses And Divorce

7. Jesus Corrects The Pharisees And Teaches That Hard Hearts Are The Central Reason For Divorce

8. Jesus Commands The Highest Standard Of Commitment In Marriage And Warns Against Adultery

Today we see Jesus' disciples react strongly to His high standards for marriage: they say if Jesus' teaching is true, then it's better not to marry. Jesus responds by teaching them that God gives both the gifts of singleness & marriage, & each person should receive their own gift from God, & use the gift faithfully by His grace & for His glory!

9. Considering Jesus' High Standards For Marriage, His Disciples Say It's Better Not To Marry

Matthew 19:10: The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

a. When Jesus taught on marriage, His disciples concluded that no one should ever get married:

Sam Allberry: I've preached on marriage I don't know how many times. No one has ever come up to me after I've preached on marriage and said, "Huh, I think it's better not to marry." Which begs the question, "Am I teaching marriage in the way that Jesus is teaching marriage?" Because when Jesus teaches marriage, people become conscious of the weightiness of it. (The last two Sundays, one man has told me he'll never get married.)

b. Consider again Jesus' teaching on marriage (Primary; Personal; Permanent): Matthew 19:4-9: He answered, "Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male & female, ⁵ & said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father & his mother & hold fast to his wife, & they shall become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate." ⁷ They said to

him, "Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce & to send her away?"⁸ He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so."⁹ & I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery."

Marriage is a life long commitment. That can be scary! That takes faith! In one sense, you don't know who you are marrying! You don't really know a person until you live with them 24/7. And spouses change over time!

c. You should consider this before you get married: Sam Crabtree (premarital counseling): If your husband is in an accident & becomes brain dead, you are still married.

If your wife gets struck by lightning on your honeymoon, you are still married.

If your husband commits some crime and goes to jail for the rest of his life, you are still married.

If your husband falls away from the Christian faith, you are still married.

If in ten years your spouse changes radically from the person they were when you got married, you're still married.

Marry only in the LORD: 1 Corinthians 7:39: A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.

- **1 Corinthians 9:5:** Do we not have the right to take along a believing wife, as do the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas?

- **2 Corinthians 6:14:** Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness?

10. God Gives The Gift Of Marriage And The Gift Of Being Single

Matthew 19:11: But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given."

When Jesus says, "Not everyone can receive this saying," He's probably referring to what His disciples have just said in verse 10: "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." Not everyone can receive this! So what do those people receive? They receive the gift of marriage.

a. Marriage is a gift given by God: Matthew 19:6: What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

- **Genesis 2:18:** Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him."

- **Proverbs 18:22:** He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the LORD.

b. If you struggle with sexual temptation, you should seek to get married: 1 Corinthians 7:8-9: To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am.⁹ But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.

Voddie Baucham: The wisest man in the Bible [Solomon], the strongest man in the Bible [Sampson], and the most godly man in the Bible [David] all fell to sexual sin. I am not wiser than Solomon, I am not stronger than Sampson, and I am not more godly than David. I'm getting married! **GOSPEL!**

c. Singleness is a gift given by God: Verse 11: But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given."

11. The Gift Of Being Single

Matthew 19:12: For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.

What is a eunuch? Jesus uses the term in 3 ways here: 1) It means someone born without the ability to have sexual relations; 2) It's someone who had a procedure that prevents them from having sexual relations; 3) Or it's someone who has voluntarily renounced or renounced marriage & sexual relations in order to do God's work more faithfully.

a. Eunuchs who have been so from birth: Because of sin entering the world, which has effects even on the human genes and everything about us, there are people who are born with birth defects, disorders, or abnormalities that prevent them from having sexual relations or from even having the desire to have sexual relations.

b. Eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men: Men who have been castrated so they could work as a court official, like in a king's court. This could also refer to religious orders who would castrate themselves.

c. Eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven: This is not referring to any kind of castration or cutting procedure, but simply refraining from marriage for the sake of having more time and more focus on labor for the kingdom of heaven.

d. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it: Wayne Grudem on the gift of being single:
(Barry Danylak, *A Biblical Theology Of Singleness; Redeeming Singleness*)

1) The New Testament Highly Values Singleness: Jesus was single. Paul was single.

1 Corinthians 7:7, 32-40: I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another . . . ³² I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. ³³ But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, ³⁴ and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. ³⁵ I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. ³⁶ If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry - it is no sin. ³⁷ But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. ³⁸ So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better. ³⁹ A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. ⁴⁰ Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

2) There Is Spiritual Value In Having Single People In A Church: **Grudem:** single people in the church remind us that we will all be single in the age to come [with respect to human marriage], and the joyful fellowship and companionship that single people and married people can have in this age provides a reminder and foretaste of the age to come as well.

3) The New Testament Emphasizes The Church As A Spiritual Family That Is Greater Than One's Physical Family:
Danylak: Those who are single may experience two different but related voids. The first is the absence of intimacy & companionship resulting from living without a marriage partner. . . A second is the absence of physical offspring

Grudem: The New Testament answer to the need for intimacy and companionship, notes Danylak, is fulfilled in the relationship of brothers and sisters in a new spiritual family . . . the New Testament authors refer to fellow believers in the church as "brothers" (or "brothers and sisters") 127 times in the Epistles

Matthew 12:48-50: But he replied to the man who told him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"

⁴⁹ And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

1 Timothy 5:1-2: Do not rebuke an older man but encourage him as you would a father. Treat younger men like brothers, ² older women like mothers, younger women like sisters, in all purity.

Deepak Reju: May there be a deep mingling of lives together in the local church: Single college student invited he and his family to his dorm room for dinner.

- They had a young single lady from the church live with them: godly influence on their children.
- He invited a single man to come watch as his family went through the bedtime routine with his children.
- He invites single men to come with him to his son's soccer games.
- His wife couldn't meet with the single lady (she home schools), but the single lady could join them and help.
- Young couple offered to baby sit for them once a month, if they would counsel them one hour after date night.

4) In The New Testament, The People Of God Multiply Through Spiritual Birth:

1 Corinthians 4:14-15: I do not write these things to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. ¹⁵ For though you have countless guides in Christ, you do not have many fathers. For I became your father in Christ Jesus through the gospel.

Galatians 4:19: my little children, for whom I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!

1 Thessalonians 2:7: But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of her own children.

1 Timothy 1:2: To Timothy, my true child in the faith

Titus 1:4: To Titus, my true child in a common faith

1 John 2:1: My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. But if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous.

5) Marriage Is Not Necessary For Full Humanity Or For A Truly Fulfilling Life: The happiest and holiest man Who ever lived, the greatest man Who ever lived, the most fully human, human being Who ever lived was both single all his earthly days and unsurpassingly satisfied in God. (Michael's comment ab/t Becky:Yes! God gives to singles)

John Piper: The greatest, wisest, most fully human person who has ever lived never married: Jesus Christ. His greatest apostle never married & was thankful for his singleness. Jesus Himself said that in the age to come we do not marry. & He added that the age to come had already broken into this world. [Quoting Barry Danylak he says singleness] "is a visible reminder that the kingdom of God points to a reality which stands beyond worldly preoccupations of marriage, family, & career." Indeed, & that greater reality is the all-satisfying, everlasting friendship of Jesus Himself in the new heavens & the new earth. Marriage & singleness will be transcended, & Christ Himself will make those categories obsolete in the joy of his presence. A life of joyful singleness witnesses to this.

And so, marriage is necessary for a truly fulfilling life – marriage to the LAMB! As a single man, my hope is not in everlasting singleness! What a horrid thought! My hope is in the absolute FACT that I and all God's people as the Church, the Bride of Christ, will be married one day to the only One Who can and will satisfy our bodies and souls forever and ever! The Lord Jesus Christ!

6) Singleness Allows Greater Time To Be Given To Christian Ministry: 1 Corinthians 7

7) Jesus Promises A Great Reward For Those Who Are Faithful In Their Lives Of Singleness:

Mark 10:29-30: Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or lands, for my sake and for the gospel, ³⁰ who will not receive a hundredfold now in this time, houses and brothers and sisters and mothers and children and lands, with persecutions, and in the age to come eternal life."

8) God Is Sovereign Over Who Gets Married And Who Doesn't: **Psalms 139:16:** All the days ordained for me were written in your book before one of them came to be.

- **Matthew 10:29-31:** Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰ But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows.
- **Ephesians 1:11:** In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will
- **Matthew 19:6:** What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.

9) What About Single Christians Who Long To Be Married But Have Not Found A Marriage Partner?:

Read letter in Grudem ethics book: Page 734-735

- **1 Peter 1:6-9:** In this you rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, ⁷ so that the tested genuineness of your faith - more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire - may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. ⁸ Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, ⁹ obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.
- James 1:2-3:** Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds, ³ for you know that the testing of your faith produces steadfastness.
- Romans 8:18:** For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

10) In a unique way, singleness gives us a picture of Christ being our all in all: Luke 14:26: If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

- **Psalms 73:25-26:** Whom have I in heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth that I desire besides you. ²⁶ My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.
- **Philippians 3:8:** Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ
- **Isaiah 56:3-5:** let not the eunuch say, "Behold, I am a dry tree." ⁴ For thus says the LORD: "To the eunuchs who keep my Sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, ⁵ I will give in my house and within my walls a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off."

Sam Allberry: If marriage shows us the shape of the Gospel, singleness shows us its sufficiency. It's a way of declaring to a world obsessed with sexual and romantic intimacy that these things are not ultimate, and that in Christ we possess what is . . . Sexual unfulfillment itself becomes a means of deepening our sense of the fuller, deeper satisfaction we await in Jesus. It helps us to hunger more for Him. We skip the appetizer, but we await the entrée. Celibacy isn't a waste of our sexuality; it's a wonderful way of fulfilling it. It's allowing our sexual feelings to point us to the reality of the Gospel. We will never ultimately make sense of what our sexuality is unless we know what it is for—to point us to God's love for us in Christ.

Jesus' disciples react strongly to His high standards for marriage: they say if Jesus' teaching is true, then it's better not to marry. Jesus responds by teaching them that God gives both the gifts of singleness and marriage, and each person should receive their own gift from God, & use the gift faithfully by His Grace & for His glory!

Let's end meditating on Jesus! David Murray: Remember Jesus was able to live 33 single years, tempted in all points like as you are, & yet without sin. He is therefore able to sympathize, support, & strengthen you when are tempted. He is THE SINGLE. He lived a life of perfect singleness & died a death of perfect singleness: experiencing the greatest possible sense of abandonment, desertion, & loneliness – so that we could be brought into the deepest marriage relationship of all.

Jesus was THE SINGLE of all singles on that cross! No one was there for Him! He knew the deepest of the depths of what it means to be single, forsaken, & all alone! No wife (His bride He came for totally rejected Him!), no father, no mother, no friends, all His disciples fled, Peter denied Him, Judas betrayed Him, no wife, no father, no mother, no friends, no disciples, &, in a sense, no God – “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?!” He did this for you!

Hallelujah! What a Savior! No one will love you like Jesus! And He rose up from the dead so that we might have and enjoy the gifts of Christian marriage and Christian singleness and someday never be single again and never again suffer in hard marriages but be married to the perfect, most beautiful, most godly, most loving, most all satisfying Spouse – the LORD Jesus Christ! As one has said, it will be an everlasting wedding day, and the joys shall never end but only increase forever!

"That's My King!" Who Was Single Yet He Burned
Aflame With Passion Yearned
For His Bride Who Spurned
Her Righteousness He Earned
And From Her Sin She Turned
To Long For His Return!

Jesus was a single man His whole time on earth, but He was always aflame with passion for His bride, the Church. At the consummation of all things, He will take her to Himself and marry her so that He might express His flaming passion for her in new, glorious, and utterly sensational ways for all eternity! Come Lord Jesus!

He was single all His life
And conquered every strife
Then gave His precious life
So we could be His wife!

That's my King!

Pleasures of marriage He never knew
He lived and died – the single Jew
There's joy in sex and marriage true
But from a greater joy He drew
Eternal pleasures great He knew
Joys from His Father through and through
His delights in the Father flourished and grew
The pleasures of sin away He threw
No lust His heart would ever pursue
For God's beauty itself is the greatest view
His heart was crushed when this Beauty withdrew
For on that cross God's wrath would spew
Forsaken by God He paid our due
Though no sin to Him would ever accrue
He became sin for me and also for you
Then He arose and made all things new
To bring you to God – a bride clean and true
Come to Him now – your desires He'll subdue
You'll cry from your heart: "All my joy is You!"

That's my King! Do you know Him?!

Oh Father please come – my need seems dire
Please come help me fight overwhelming desire
Oh God You alone can put out the fire
Turn my eyes upon You and lift me up higher
To trust and obey all that You require
May I find "Christ is all!" – my great King and Sire
And delight in Him – our greatest Desire!

That's my King!

God's Word says singleness is the best way
And you'll be happier if single you stay
All your attention on God you can certainly lay
He'll fill all your thoughts – to Him you can pray
He wants you alone with Him everyday
A Lover Who's jealous and won't let you stray
He's the Fountain of all delight so survey
His glorious beauty on full display
He died to take your sins away
And lives to give you life His way
So trust in Him and fight to obey
He'll grant you contentment – come what may!

That's my King! I wonder if you know Him?!

Christ is THE SINGLE Who was left all alone
No wife, no father, no children His own
No friends, no disciples from Him they'd all flown
No God, in a sense, forsaken and thrown
Under His wrath where He died with a groan
There Jesus died for our sins to atone
Then rose up alive to sit on His throne
All this for His bride - the bone of His bone
He's single no more, the Lamb has now shown
His love for His bride, the church He has known
We'll praise Him forever our Groom Cornerstone!

That's my King!

One day you'll be married for eternal duration
This fact is certain – God's declaration
For all who trust in Christ for salvation
Will marry the Lamb in the new creation
His bride you will be from every nation
You'll marry the King – the best combination
Most loving, most kind, your closest relation
The greatest Spouse – beyond all expectation!
If you have Him, fear no deprivation
You'll know all is good at the consummation
Where joys in Him pass all imagination
And grow forever in great adoration

The Husband-King is all compensation
So find in Him life's full celebration!

That's my King!

Christ Jesus' Standards Are So High
For Marriage, Makes Disciples Cry
"No One Should Ever Marry!" Why?
But Jesus Calms, Their Fears Defy
God Gives His Gifts With Perfect Eye
Some Are Single, God Draws Nigh
But Others Marry By And By
To Show Christ Loves His Church For Aye
For Her Life He'd Bleed And Die
He Bore God's Wrath Your All To Buy
Then Conquered Death And Rose Up High
Now Marrieds, Singles To Him Fly
By Faith Alone In Him Rely
And To His Every Word Comply
For He Will Never Leave You Dry
But Satisfy With Full Supply
In Him Is Joy, Ask Me Why?
No Pleasure You He Will Deny!

That's my King! That's my King!