

THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY SERIES

WHAT IS GOD'S HEART ON
DIVORCE?

Excerpt from
KEYS FOR LIVING LIBRARY



DIVORCE

Beginning Again—from Brokenness

What Is God's Heart on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage?

God's Word begins and ends with a marriage. The first couple, Adam and Eve, were married. We later learn in the New Testament that marriage pointed forward to the relationship between Christ and the Church (Ephesians 5:31–32).

Marriage is a beautiful institution created by God. However, in our broken world – divorces happen for a variety of reasons. God's Word speaks to marriage, divorce, and remarriage. Since these are life-changing matters, it is important to know what God's Word says about them.

*“Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long.”
(PSALM 25:5)*

God's Heart on Marriage

God presents marriage as good and worthy of His favor.

“He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord” (PROVERBS 18:22).

God sees the person you married as being your life partner.

“They are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate” (MATTHEW 19:6).

God portrays marriage as a picture of the sacrificial love of Christ (being willing to lay down your personal rights for your mate).

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her” (EPHESIANS 5:25).

God set apart the marriage relationship as the means by which He would bring children into the world and populate the earth He had created.

“God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth’” (GENESIS 1:28 NLT).

God's Heart on Divorce

God hates divorce. *“I hate divorce,” says the LORD, the God of Israel* (Malachi 2:16 NASB). God does not view divorce favorably, as it dissolves the “one flesh” spiritual bond of marriage.

“Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery” (MARK 10:11–12).

God hates divorce but He also hates sexual immorality and violence: *“Those who love violence, he [God] hates with a passion”* (Psalm 11:5); therefore, God allows for the possibility of separation in such cases.

“Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered . . . I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery” (PROVERBS 22:24; MATTHEW 19:9).

God may close His ears to the prayers of one who breaks a marriage covenant through infidelity.

“You flood the LORD’s altar with tears. You weep and wail because he no longer looks with favor on your offerings or accepts them with pleasure from your hands. You ask, ‘Why?’ It is because the LORD is the witness between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant” (MALACHI 2:13–14).

God’s heart is for reconciliation, even if there has been a divorce.

“To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife” (1 CORINTHIANS 7:10–11).

God’s Heart on Remarriage after Divorce

God allows remarriage in cases where:

- The divorce occurred before the person became a Christian
- The person was divorced without biblical grounds and the former mate has died or has had sexual relations with another
- The person divorced an adulterous mate
- The person’s former unbelieving spouse left the marriage

“If the unbeliever leaves, let it be so. The brother or the sister is not bound in such circumstances” (1 CORINTHIANS 7:15).

God guards and protects the faithful and just, without regard to marital status.

“He guards the course of the just and protects the way of his faithful ones” (PROVERBS 2:8).

God heals the brokenhearted, and He will still accomplish His ultimate purpose for you.

“We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose” (ROMANS 8:28).

God promises to meet your needs, whether you remain divorced or you remarry.

“My God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus” (PHILIPPIANS 4:19).

Go Deeper

Keys for Living Books

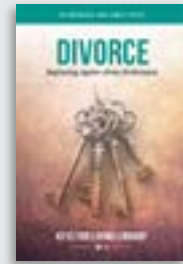
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4 POINTS OF GOD'S PLAN

Whether you're trying to make sense of your past, trying to overcome something in the present, or trying to make changes for a better future, the Lord cares about you. He loves you. No matter what challenges you or your loved ones are facing, no matter the pain or difficult feelings you may be experiencing, no matter what you've done or what's been done to you, *there is hope*. And that hope is found in Jesus Christ.

God has a plan for your life, and it begins with a personal relationship with Jesus. The most important decision you can ever make is whether you will accept His invitation. If you have never made that decision, these four simple truths can help you start your journey together with Him.

*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD,
‘plans to prosper you and not to harm you,
plans to give you hope and a future.’”*

(JEREMIAH 29:11)

God's Purpose for You: *Salvation*

What was God's motivation in sending Jesus Christ to earth? To express His love for you by saving you! The Bible says, *“God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him”* (John 3:16–17).

What was Jesus' purpose in coming to earth? To forgive your sins, to empower you to have victory over sin, and to enable you to live a fulfilled life! Jesus said, *“I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full”* (John 10:10).

The Problem: *Sin*

What exactly is sin? Sin is living independently of God's standard—knowing what is wrong and doing it anyway—also knowing what is right and choosing not to do it. The apostle Paul said, *“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can't. I want to do what is good, but I don't. I don't want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway”* (Romans 7:18–19 NLT).

What is the major consequence of sin? Spiritual death, eternal separation from God. The Bible says, *“Your iniquities [sins] have separated you from your God”* (Isaiah 59:2). Scripture also says, *“The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Romans 6:23).

God's Provision for You: *The Savior*

Can anything remove the penalty for sin? Yes! Jesus died on the cross to personally pay the penalty for your sins. The Bible says, *“God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us”* (Romans 5:8).

What is the solution to being separated from God? Belief in (entrusting your life to) Jesus Christ as the only way to God the Father. Jesus said, *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”* (John 14:6). The Bible says, *“Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved . . .”* (Acts 16:31).

Your Part: *Surrender*

Give Christ control of your life, entrusting yourself to Him. Jesus said, *“Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?”* (Matthew 16:24–26).

Place your faith in (rely on) Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior and reject your “good works” as a means of earning God’s approval. The Bible says, *“It is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast”* (Ephesians 2:8–9).

Has there been a time in your life when you know you’ve humbled your heart and received Jesus Christ as your personal Lord and Savior—giving Him control of your life? You can tell God that you want to surrender your life to Christ in a simple, heartfelt prayer like this:

*“God, I want a real relationship with you.
I admit that many times I’ve chosen to go my own way instead of your way.
Please forgive me for my sins.
Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to pay the penalty for my sins.
Come into my life to be my Lord and my Savior.
Change me from the inside out and make me
the person you created me to be.
In your holy name I pray. Amen.”*

What Can You Now Expect?

When you surrender your life to Christ, you receive the Holy Spirit who empowers you to live a life pleasing to God. The Bible says, *“His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life . . .”* (2 Peter 1:3). Jesus assures those who believe with these words:

*“Truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me
has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”*
(JOHN 5:24)

The information in this resource is intended as guidelines for healthy living. Please consult qualified medical, legal, pastoral, and psychological professionals regarding individual concerns.

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QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

God gives us His Word not just for information but for transformation. The Lord wants you to “*be transformed by the renewing of your mind*” (Romans 12:2). This isn’t something you do alone, but something God does in you by His Spirit.

The following questions are designed to help you reflect on the biblical truths in this resource. Take a moment to pray and ask God to settle your mind and quiet your spirit as you reflect on His truth.

“Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.”
(2 TIMOTHY 2:7)

What are two key truths, Bible verses, or “takeaways” from this resource that you found helpful—or that you simply needed to be reminded of?

In relation to this topic, what behavior(s) do you need to *begin*, *change*, or *stop* in order to help you grow into the person God created you to be?

In relation to this topic, what is the biggest obstacle you need to overcome in order to move forward?

What might your life look like a few years from now if you do *not* make changes regarding this issue? How might your life be different if you *do* make changes?

Is there anyone in your life who needs help with this topic/issue? How can you pray for them, and what is one thing you can do to encourage them?

What can you give thanks to God for today?

*“Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself
and God our Father, who loved us
and by his grace gave us eternal comfort
and a wonderful hope,
comfort you and strengthen you
in every good thing you do and say.”
(2 THESSALONIANS 2:16–17 NLT)*

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