

Wednesday, October 17, 2018  
Wednesday night couple's groups  
Week 9  
"From this day forward"  
Small group questions

**Main Idea:**

Marriage is a covenant and not a contract. It is a permanent relationship with no end date. No matter how tough things might become, divorce should not an option.

- What's one idea from the message that really stood out to you? Why did this idea grab your attention?
- Examine your marriage. What and where are you sowing in your marriage currently?

Read and discuss Matthew 19:1-12

Points to help explain:

The Pharisees began with a tough question on divorce, but Jesus turned the focus to marriage, dealing with divorce and remarriage as side issues. Sin causes us to fall short of the intended permanent marriage bond.

**Marriage** is *God's* plan, not man's. It had to do with God's image (Gen. 1:26–27), not man's. Christians would do well to understand that their marriage is not so much about them as it is about God. Such revolutionary thinking is not very American, but it is very biblical. Marriage should reflect God's image, not guarantee our personal "happiness." The permanent marriage bond is in keeping with God's original design for men and women.

The second quote from Genesis 2:24 emphasized the one-flesh union of marriage (cf. Eph. 5:22–33), in contrast with the former state of the man and woman, who were members of separate families. There is no way to express the union of two people more vividly than to say that they **become one flesh**. This is true in a figurative sense, for the two still have individual bodies. But there is also a literal sense here: (1) the sexual union unites the bodies of a man and woman, and any children who result from that union are a "single-flesh" incarnation of the married couple's commitment; (2) the bodies of the husband and wife belong to each other (1 Cor. 7:4); and (3) there is a sharing of spirit and soul in marriage—a union that is mysteriously real.

In our day, Satan makes his most strategic attack on the image and glory of God by his influence in the destruction of the marriage vow. Christians need to raise their eyes from themselves, forget *any* justification for divorce, and learn to live together like God requires. We should sacrifice self-gratification for the will and glory of the Father.

Jesus affirmed the sobriety with which the disciples had begun to see the permanence of the marriage commitment. He agreed that marriage was not something to be entered into quickly, without forethought, or with the expectation of an “easy out.”

He also acknowledged that **not everyone** would accept **this word**. The people who can accept the idea of celibacy over the risk of a marriage ending in divorce are **those to whom it has been given**. This refers to those who are enabled by God to remain single without giving in to sexual temptation. Such a disciplined calling is hard enough today, let alone in that culture in which marriage was considered a person’s obligation to family and society.

Jesus was *not* saying that celibacy was holier than matrimony or that it was a requirement for kingdom ministry. He did note it was a limited calling. The apostle Paul affirmed as much (1 Cor. 7:9; 9:5).<sup>1</sup>

- Do you tend to be more selfish or selfless with your spouse?  
Explain.
- How is our commitment to each other a picture of Christ’ commitment to us in salvation?
- If someone has gone through a divorce, affirm that even though it wasn’t a part of God’s plan, He can take our broken pieces and put them back together for His glory.

#### ACTION STEP:

- What’s one thing you will do this week as a result of something you learned from this message?

Take steps to ensure you never give up in your marriage by reading and talking over the following Bible passages this week.

- Matthew 19:1-12
- Malachi 2:10-16
- Mark 10:1-12

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<sup>1</sup> Weber, S. K. (2000). [Matthew](#) (Vol. 1, pp. 308-312). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.