

Authentic Christianity Part 5: Protect Your Marriage

June 18, 2023

Matthew 5:31-32

The Christian life is characterized by sacrifice. The biggest enemy of marriage is self-love. In Matt. 5:31-32, Jesus is establishing New Covenant Law. Moses gave a standard (Deut. 24:1), Jesus is giving a new law, correcting self-righteousness abusers of the law (See also Matt. 23). A woman put out of the home needed proof to show that the previous relationship was ended. It was abused by leaders to leave a wife they were displeased with resulting in a chain of adultery.

1) **Coverup of Self-Love:** In V32, the transgression is unrepentant sexual immorality. The word here is "porneais." Is a one-time event of a repentant believer in the same category as an unrepentant unbeliever (1 Cor. 6:9-10)? Is the sin of adultery forgivable? Yes, it is. In Matt. 5:31-32 Jesus is talking about unrepentant spousal adultery. It provides a way out of a marriage with an unfaithful spouse.

>>This passage also demonstrates that one passage is not a full theology on divorce. 1 Cor. 7:15 also deals with divorce due to abandonment. Abandonment can be physical leaving but also the result of abuse. 1) Rule out that Scripture can contradict itself. 2) Context of Matt. 5:31-32 is a pre-church, pre-Pentecost, pre-cross listener. 3) Part of Jesus' aim is righteous indignation against Jews who use the Law to leave their wives for another.

Combat self-love and know that marriage is a gift and grace of God (1 Pet. 3:7). 1) Protect your own heart. Give grace and love to your spouse. 2) Be on guard against preference vs. sin issues in your marriage. Don't cultivate the deceit of self-love or feel that you deserve something better. Self-love is in the list of sins found in 2 Tim. 3:2.

2) **Cruelty of Self-Love:** In V32, what does Jesus mean by "whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery?" Mal. 2:16 is a well know passage that is highly quotable, "God hates divorce." But the correct rendering of Mal. 2:16 is that the divorce that God is describing is one where God hates the divorce that a man has committed found in verse 11-15. It is the hating of a divorce that is leaving a Jewish woman for a pagan (Mal. 2:11-12). It demonstrated unfaithfulness to God and failure to keep the Law (Mal. 2:13-14) and protect the woman who was being divorced. The transgressor has "dealt treacherously with the wife of your youth."

What does Jesus mean by, "whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery?" Why can we say that Jesus is using hyperbole? V28, lustful looks at another woman demonstrates the lust of the heart as the root. V29, Jesus uses hyperbole in telling the person with a lustful eye to pluck it out. Jesus is not making law, He is showing the hypocritical damage of a man unjustifiably divorcing a woman and the result that she is judged by others as an adulterous woman. Application: love and understand your spouse, don't treat every preference as sin.

3) **Catastrophe of Self-Love:** V32, a man/woman is seen as an adulterer when they leave their spouse. In Deut. 24 remarriage is permitted, so Jesus can't mean that the man/woman can't be married again. It is about the first marriage not the second marriage. The woman can't remarry the first husband if she is divorced again with her second husband.

3 Applications: 1) Warning: it is possible to have an outwardly pleasant marriage, but inside the house, you can't be pleased by your spouse. 2) Saturday, July 1 John Street will provide a Biblical seminar on Conflict Reconciliation. 3) To avoid self-love there are 6 ideals or standards to protect marriage against self-love.

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6 Ideals and Gifts of God in Marriage: 1) Gift of Mutual Belonging: Gen. 2:24, a man/woman leave and cleave to one another, Song 2:16, 6:3, 7:10.

2) Gift of Mutual Love: Eph. 5:25, Tit. 2:4, husbands love their wives and wives love their husbands, how: a) unconditional covenantal love, b) sacrificial love: 1 John 3:18, in deed and truth, c) purifying love: Eph. 5:26-27, a helper in sanctification, d) affectionate love: deep love with words and understanding, 1 Pet. 3:7.

3) Gift of Protection: for her: love, cherish, respect, spiritual equality, relief from the harshness of life, 1 Pet. 3:7, she is described as the “weaker vessel.” They are heirs of the grace of life too.

4) Gift of Help: Gen. 2:18, a mutual companionship in life. A wife who helps her husband succeed in life, Eph. 5:22, wives submit to their husbands to see her role as a companion.

5) Gift of Loving Intimacy: oneness and intimacy of the marriage bed, Heb. 13:4, 1 Cor. 7:3-4.

6) Gift of Family: Ps. 128:3-4, a place where the wife plans for the family.

The believers’ marriage is a witness to a dying world.

Further Discussion and Application

How do we create an atmosphere in our homes of understanding with our spouses? What does that even mean? Do we see that how we treat our spouses demonstrates worship to God when we obey Him and sin when we don’t obey Him?

Marriage is a grace of life. For all the gifts of marriage that married couples receive, how can we strive to experience all of them? How do we help our spouse? How can we do it better? How can we cherish one another and secure the hearts of our children by how the parents love one another? What are the most important things in our lives?

Self-love is justified in the heart of the one who is a malcontent. Examine the last time the Lord convicted you of the words you spoke to your children and spouse? What did the Word of God reveal about your heart towards your family? What does it reveal about your desire to please the Lord?

Self-love is self-deceiving difficult for any partner to help with. It consumes the other and causes fights and arguments in the home. What is the last thing you argued about with your spouse? What was the pride that you exhibited? What was the proper response to the situation? How will you fix the conflict with understanding, truth, and love for the other?

There is a cruelty displayed by the actions of a spouse against the other when they can’t be satisfied. How are trust in the Lord, gratefulness, and thankfulness keys to living our Christian life at home, in the church, and in the workplace?