

Are There Multiple Causes for Divorce?

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Our question has a Scriptural basis. The Pharisees asked Jesus, “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?” (Matthew 19:3). In light of some things being said today, our question is one that deserves our attention. We have been told, “...the Bible does not teach, ‘The only cause for divorce is fornication.’ That simply is not a true statement. There are other causes for divorce....” (*Bible Causes of Divorce*, p. 27). Are there multiple causes for divorce? The Lord’s answer to the Pharisees’ question is sufficient to settle this issue.

Not According to Genesis 2. Jesus answered the Pharisees by referring them to the beginning: “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:4-6). This takes us back to the beginning of the marriage relationship as recorded in Genesis 2. Read all 25 verses of Genesis 2 and you will not read one word about divorce. There was no such thing as a “cause for divorce.” Divorce was not a part of God’s plan for male and female at the beginning!

Not According to Deuteronomy 24. The Pharisees then respond saying, “Why did

Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?” (Matthew 19:7). This is a reference to Deuteronomy 24 where Moses said, “When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house” (v. 1). Notice that when divorce was suffered under the law of Moses, there was *a cause* (singular) for divorce (“...because he hath found some uncleanness in her...”), but there were not *causes* (multiple) for divorce. Jesus gave the cause for this divorce cause saying, “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8). Jesus affirms that no cause for divorce was given from the beginning.

Not According to Matthew 19:9. After referring the Pharisees to the beginning and concluding, “What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” and having answered the Pharisees’ question about divorce under Moses’ law, Christ states His law: “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery” (Matthew 19:9). There is only one Scriptural cause for

divorce given by the Lord - “for fornication” (Matthew 19:9). The Lord grants the man the right to marry another for this singular cause of divorce which He allows.

Not According to Matthew 5:32. The Lord declared, “But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery...” Does that sound to you like there is such a thing as “Bible causes of divorce”?

Not According to 1 Corinthians 7:10-11. Paul wrote, “And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife...If any brother hath a wife that believeth not and she be pleased to dwell with him let him not put her away. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him” (1 Corinthians 7:10-13). Four times divorce is prohibited by the apostle. The clause “if she depart” does not grant another cause for divorce, just as “if any man sin” (1 John 2:1) does not give permission for a man to sin.

If There Are Multiple Causes for Divorce.
Some questions and consequences follow:

Then where is the Scripture that clearly states such? _____ Some believe they have found other causes for divorce in such passages as Matthew 10:34-38; 19:28-29; Luke 14:26; 18:29-30. Divorce is neither stated nor necessarily implied in these passages. If divorce is included, then I would be obligated to divorce my wife and will be blessed with “an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life”! Who can believe it?

Then what the Lord and Paul said is contradicted. The Lord said, “What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matthew 19:6). Paul said, “Let not...let not...let not...let not...” (1 Corinthians 7:10-13). Yet, men have come along with a list of causes for divorce and are saying, “Let, let, let, let, let...” This is to loose what the Lord has clearly bound!

Then respect for God’s marriage law is undermined. God’s marriage law is *for life*. This is affirmed again and again (Genesis 2:18-24; Matthew 19:1-9; Romans 7:1-4; 1 Corinthians 7:39). Marriage is permanent!

Then the door is open to divorce for every cause. If you can add another cause for divorce, so can I, and so can the next fellow, until the door is open to divorce for every cause! If not, why not?

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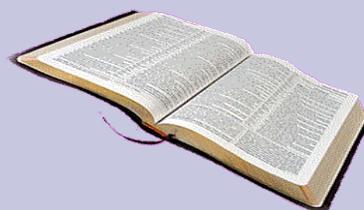
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