

Although God created marriage as something very good, sin marred marriage and we can observe many marriages today ending in painful divorce. It is a worldwide phenomena and has existed for thousands of years. But it was never God's intention for marriage. From the beginning God intended marriage to be for one man and one woman for life. You need God's grace to make marriage work well and you need to commit to making it work. Three truths from Mark 10 will help you honor the one-man-one-woman-for-life protective boundary which God has placed around marriage.

I. *God's design for marriage is under attack.*

The Pharisees questioned Jesus about divorce to test Him and get him into trouble. The context, their question, and even Jesus's answer show how God's design for marriage is under attack.

1. *The culture around you attacks this truth.* People assumed that divorce was a legitimate option, and opinion, whether right or wrong, puts pressure on you. The pressure on Jesus was high, because he was in a region ruled by Herod Antipas who had beheaded John the Baptist after John had preached against Herod's wrongful marriage. The Pharisees knew what Jesus taught on marriage and divorce (cf Matthew 5:31–32) and posed their question only to attack Jesus. A stand today for God's truth about marriage may get you in trouble, too.
2. *Christian's may attack this truth by distorting Scripture.* The Pharisees often twisted the intent of Scriptures for their own benefit. They did not directly answer Jesus question, but worded their answer in a way to justify they own practice of divorce. The Pharisees inferred permission to divorce from Deuteronomy 24:1–4, but it was not commanded there. At best it was only tolerated. People today also attempt to twist Scripture to use it for their own purposes, such as pointing to the Bible's emphasis on love and joy without accepting how the Bible defines love and joy. Those virtues cannot be twisted to excuse divorce.
3. *Hard, sinful hearts attack this truth.* The greatest attack on God's intention for marriage as one man and one woman for life comes from hardened, sinful hearts which reject God's truth. God gave the law through Moses to people with hard hearts and placed limits on their evil. Arguing for divorce may show a hard heart. A soft heart wants to keep marriage as God designed it.

II. *God's design for marriage has been established since creation.*

1. *Jesus's use of the creation account shows its continuing validity.* Jesus applied Genesis 2 to the Pharisee's question showing that God's intent at creation was His intent for Jesus's day and for us. Although sinful hearts resists God pattern for marriage, the pattern remains the same: one man and one woman for life.
2. *God's lasting design in marriage is the uniting of a man and a woman.* God created marriage as the joining of a man and a woman into one flesh. The Bible does not explain it, though implies that the sexual relation has something to do with it. The Apostle Paul calls it a mystery and compares it to the believer's union with Jesus Christ. Marriage includes a mutual promise but is much more than that.
3. *God's uniting of a man and a woman should not be broken.* Jesus said there was no good reason for man to separate what God had joined. People do not have the right to change what God has created.

III. *God's design for marriage cannot be destroyed by man.*

The disciples did not fully understand what Jesus had taught and asked further when alone with Jesus. Jesus said that divorce and remarriage is committing adultery. This leads to the conclusion that mankind cannot totally destroy God's design for marriage.

1. *Legal separation does not destroy the marriage bond.* Legal separation or divorce may end certain legal privileges and responsibilities, but it does not destroy the one flesh union in marriage.
2. *Neither a man (male) nor a woman can destroy the marriage bond.* Cultural practices varied in Jesus's day, but Jesus made it clear that both the man and the woman would be committing adultery in a remarriage (cf. Matthew 5:32).
3. *Multiple mates does not fit God's intent in the marriage bond.* Some cultures allow polygamy. Although it was even tolerated in the Old Testament, it does not fit God's intention. Calling a second marriage after divorce adulterous rather than a form of polygamy, rules out polygamy as a God-pleasing option. It is just another form of adultery, i.e. unfaithfulness to the one wife or one husband with whom you are joined.

God's design for marriage was and is one man and one woman for life. The believer can fulfil God's pattern by the power of God in your life, because of the changed heart which He has given and the Spirit which indwells.

The unmarried should commit to being faithful, if they ever do marry. Make sure that any prospective mate has the same commitment. The married should also commit to being faithful. Do not let the world convince you that divorce is an option. Seek godly counsel to deal with struggles and be prepared to work at your marriage.

If you have a divorce behind you, and neither you nor your former spouse have remarried, then it may be possible to seek reconciliation (cf. 1 Cor 7:10–13). If you are already remarried, remain in the situation you are in (1 Cor 7:17–20) and make your marriage work. Commit to following God's guidelines.

All should be praying for one another and encouraging one another. Guard your hearts. Confess sin. God's design for marriage is good and for our best. One man, one woman, for life.