

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

June 2, 2024

SUMMER ON THE MOUNT

Divorce
Matthew 5:31-32
Pastor Matt.Manning
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NOTES

Pastor Matt talked about the way Jesus responded to a trap set up by the Pharisees about divorce. In Jesus’ response, he not only emphasized the sacredness of the marriage covenant, but addressed what happened when heart-wrenching, vow-breaking behaviors nullified those covenants.

MY STORY

Pastor Matt said, “Honestly speaking, much of the teaching on divorce in the church has been heavy on shame and short on compassion.”

Why is this a difficult issue for many Christians? What drives the emotional energy behind it?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO HEAR?

Why did God initiate a divorce against his “spouse,” the people of Israel? (See Jeremiah 3:8). How does God’s heartbreaking action help us to understand why he hates divorce? (See Malachi 2:16).

According to Jesus, why did Moses allow for divorce? Where did the two Pharisee “camps” land in regard to legitimate reasons to legally end a marriage?

Pastor Matt said that vow-breaking behaviors nullified, revoked, and cancelled marriage covenants.

How can moving toward divorce in response to vow-breaking behaviors (adultery, abuse, or abandonment) provoke repentance? What might happen instead?

What are some non-vow-breaking behaviors that are used as reasons to file for divorce?

Why, in these cases, does the marriage covenant still exist, even though the state declares the marriage over?

What should Christians do if they find themselves in the middle of this type of situation?

What does God want us to hear? Based on the passage and the questions above, what “takeaways” do you think God has revealed to you?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO?

Again, clear-cut vow-breaking behaviors that nullify a marriage covenant include: adultery (sexual infidelity), abandonment (moving out), and abuse (actual or threatened violence).

Looking back at your notes from this week’s message, was there anything you heard for the first time, stuck with you, challenged or confused you?

What is the one important thing you will take away from this weekend’s message or our community group discussion? Is there any challenge, difficulty or praise that you would like to share with the group for prayer?



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What about emotional affairs, or “checking out” of a marriage, or verbal abuse? When do these become vow-breaking behaviors?

How can believers best support one of their own going through the traumatic experience of separation and divorce?

What does God want us to do? Flowing out of our reading and interpretation, what action does this passage or the Spirit’s leading, call us to?

WHAT DOES GOD WANT ME TO DO?

If you find yourself in a situation where you are in any sort of danger, ensure your safety as quickly as possible.

Make the healing and restoration of each person in a crumbling marriage a higher priority than saving the relationship.

If you have a friend going through separation and divorce, and he or she is willing to share what’s going on—actively listen to that person’s story. Ask probing questions. Show compassion. Walk alongside that person through the heart-wrenching process.

If you are going through separation or divorce, or it happened years ago, consider joining [Crossroads’ DivorceCare group](#), which begins August 27, 2024.

What does God want ME to do? What is the personal application and action step God is calling you, personally, toward?