

**Welcome to the
Common Ground Café!**



Sunday, March 10, 2019

**What “I Do” Really Means
A Study of Matthew 5:31-32**

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If you're married (or widowed), how did you propose marriage to your partner—or how did your partner propose to you? (Alternate opening question: What is the most romantic marriage proposal you've ever heard of, and what is the most *disastrous* marriage proposal you've ever heard of?)

We're in a sermon series called "The Spartan Call." The Spartans were legendary for shaping their men into an elite fighting force. The training program, called the *agoge*, began at the age of 7 and continued to the age of 30. In Matthew 5, Jesus recruited us to heed his "Spartan Call." In verses 21-48, he issued six of his toughest challenges.

The third of these six challenges have to do with our marriage vows. Read Matthew 5:31-32.

When Jesus said, "It has been said," he was quoting from the divinely-guided law of Moses. Read Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

Let's think deeply about what is going on in Matthew 5:31-32. In each of the six challenges Jesus gave us in Matthew 5:21-48, he combats a "good enough" mindset. Think about the first two challenges we've looked at in the last two weeks:

- ❖ According to Matthew 5:21-22, what do people tend to think is "good enough," and how did Jesus correct the moral standard?
- ❖ According to Matthew 5:27-28, what do people tend to think is "good enough," and how did Jesus correct the moral standard?

Jesus is following the same pattern in Matthew 5:31-32. According to these verses, what do people tend to think is "good enough" when it comes to marriage and divorce? In other words, how might the command to provide a ***certificate*** of divorce be Moses's way of ***helping*** vulnerable women in his day? How might a woman be

vulnerable in that culture without a written certificate indicating that a man no longer considered her his wife?

In Matthew 19:1-9, we find more detail about Jesus's views on this subject. Read Matthew 19:1-9.

Do you think that by their question the Pharisees hoped to trick Jesus into opposing Moses? If so, what did they expect to gain by this trap?

The Pharisees asked about a concession Moses granted in his day. But Jesus's answer went a lot further back than just the days of Moses. What Bible story did Jesus point to as the foundation for marriage? (Hint: See 19:4-6.)

In 19:9, what exception did Jesus make in his prohibition of divorce? Why do you think this exception was granted?

In 1 Corinthians 7:12-15, what exception was made in the prohibition of divorce? Why do you think this exception was granted?

We may want to debate whether there are other allowances in addition to these discussed in Matthew 19:9 and 1 Corinthians 7:12-15. In fact, in most studies on this topic, this is where the conversation tends to bog down. But isn't this focus on the biblical allowances for divorce an indication that we've fallen into the same "good enough" mentality that Jesus was combatting in the Sermon on the Mount? Why or why not?

Read Ephesians 5:22-33. The union of husband and wife are meant to be a picture of another union.

- ❖ What is that other union?
- ❖ How can marriage be an image of that other union?
- ❖ How might meditation on that other union help you keep the marriage union?

In light of today's lesson, Pastor Tom issued three challenges to three groups of people.

To the singles: "Marry wisely."

If you're single, or when you were single, what good advice have you been given in searching for a marriage partner?

To the married: "Grow deliberately."

If you're married or single, you can answer this question: What efforts have you seen married couple do to strengthen the marriage relationship? Suggest any books or conferences you have found helpful.

To the remarried: "Learn humbly."

When divorce occurs, what hope does Jesus and his gospel offer someone?

Can someone be grateful for the second chance their remarriage has given them while also grieving the failure in an earlier marriage? If not, why? If so, how?



Close with praise reports and prayer requests