

# Kingdom Culture

sermon on the mount series

June 25th

PERSONAL REFLECTION OR GROUP DISCUSSION

MATTHEW 5:31-32

## **Divorce**

Warning: This topic needs to be treated in discussion groups with a great deal of respect for each other. Divorce has touched many families both outside and inside the church. The issue has the power to polarise people, and when not discussed with love and understanding, it can cause division and feelings of being rejected. We all live as broken people in a fallen world, when marriages fail it is a sad situation.

## **Some background**

*Martin Lloyd Jones in his superb commentary on the Sermon on The Mount makes the following observations. (D .Martyn Lloyd Jones – Studies in the sermon on the Mount - IVP 1976, Pages 252-261)*

*The Biblical context is Deuteronomy 24:1-4, Matthew 19:3-9; 1 Corinthians 7:1-11.*

*In summary he says:*

## **In the Old Testament:**

*God allowed divorce as an act of grace because of people's fallen nature.*

- *That adultery was not specified in Deuteronomy for that already carried a death penalty.*
- *A certificate of divorce, witnessed by two others, allowed the divorced woman to remarry*

## **The Religious leaders in Jesus' time:**

*Cited numerous, unworthy frivolous reasons to enact divorce revealed as seen in Matthew 19:3 when they asked Jesus "**Some** Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"*

*The tone and implications in their question, indicates that women were not treated as equals at that time.*

## **Jesus:**

*Wants to bring people back to creation and God's intention for marriage in 'the two becoming one'. The marriage covenant may be terminated by adultery, but Jesus does not say divorce is inevitable, nor does he say God commands it in such circumstances.*

***Discuss or reflect upon:***

1. What is the significance of Jesus' statement in Matthew 5:31-32 regarding divorce, particularly in the context of the cultural and religious beliefs of his time? How does this teaching challenge our modern understanding of marriage and divorce?
2. How does Jesus' teaching on divorce in Matthew 5:31-32 relate to his broader message of love, forgiveness, and reconciliation? What implications does this have for our understanding of conflict resolution within relationships?
3. What practical steps can individuals and communities take to support and encourage healthy, thriving marriages?
4. How can we promote understanding, forgiveness, and reconciliation in the face of marital difficulties?
5. How can the church community demonstrate grace, compassion, and inclusion while upholding the biblical principles surrounding marriage?