

Qualities of a Sound Church

Titus 2:6 Likewise, exhort the young men to be sober-minded, 3

Paul did *not* urge Titus to teach the young women. For discretion's sake this ministry is left to the older women. 13

But Titus is told to **exhort the young men**, and the particular admonition is that they should **be sober-minded** and control themselves. An appropriate word—since youth is the time of brimming zeal, restless energy, and burning drives. 23

In every area of life, they need to learn continence and balance.33

Titus 2:7 in all things showing yourself to be a pattern of good works; in doctrine showing integrity, reverence, incorruptibility, 4

Paul has a special bit of advice for Titus too. As one charged with a public ministry in the churches, Titus has to exercise care to present a consistent **pattern of good works**. 14

There should be a close parallel between his **doctrine** and his deportment. His teaching should be characterized by **integrity, reverence, and incorruptibility**. **Integrity** means that the teaching should correspond with the faith once-for-all delivered to the saints. 24

By **reverence** Paul insists that the teaching should be dignified and sensible.34

Incorruptibility, a virtue unfortunately deleted here in most modern Bible versions, has to do with the sincere teacher who cannot be corrupted from the way of truth.44

Titus 2:8 sound speech that cannot be condemned, that one who is an opponent may be ashamed, having nothing evil to say of you.3

Sound speech that cannot be condemned is free from anything to which exception might be taken. It should be free from side-issues, doctrinal novelties, fads, crudities, and the like. This type of ministry is irresistible. 13

Those who oppose sound teaching are put to shame because they cannot find a chink in the believer's armor. 23

There is no argument as effective as a holy life!33

Experiencing Spiritual Breakthrough in Relation to Marriage

Ice Breaker: Where are you in the birth order of your family?

A View of Marriage

In Jesus' time there were great differences in opinion whether divorce should be easy or difficult for Jewish couples. Some supposed that when the minimum basis for divorce was met, divorce must follow - "for any reason . . . divorce and send her away." How is this view of marriage and divorce like our world today? What are some "for any reasons" that are given to rationalize divorce today?

Matthew 19:3 The Pharisees also came to Him, testing Him, and saying to Him, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for just any reason?"

Probably it was the multitudes that followed Him for healing that alerted **the Pharisees** to the Lord's whereabouts. Like a pack of wild dogs, they began to close in, hoping to trap Him by His words. They asked if **divorce** was legal on any and every ground. No matter how He answered, He would infuriate some segment of the Jews. One school took a very liberal attitude toward divorce; another was extremely strict.

Matthew 19:4 And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' :5 and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? :6 So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."

Macdonald, Farstad Grady Scott, Hindson, E. MacArthur, J. F., Jr. (2006).

Our Lord explained that God's original intention was that a man have only one living wife.

The God who created **male and female** decreed that the marriage relationship should supersede the parental relationship.

He also said that marriage is a union of persons. God's ideal is that this divinely ordained union should not be broken by human act or decree.

Matthew 19:7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?"²

The Pharisees thought they had caught the Lord in a flagrant contradiction of the OT. Hadn't **Moses** made provision for **divorce**? A man could simply give his wife a written statement, then put her out of the house ¹²

Moses spoke in: Deuteronomy 24:1 Suppose a woman was divorced by her first husband because he found something disgraceful about her. He wrote out divorce papers, gave them to her, and sent her away. :2 Later she married another man, :3 who then either divorced her in the same way or died. :4 Since she has slept with her second husband, she cannot marry her first husband again. Their marriage would pollute the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and he would be disgusted.²²

Matthew 19:8 He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. ³

Jesus rejected the view that divorce inevitably follows marital breakdown. What does Jesus mean when he points out that divorce is the result of a hardening of hearts (v. 8)?¹³

Jesus agreed that **Moses** had **permitted** divorce, not as God's best for mankind, but because of Israel's backslidden condition: "**Moses because of the hardness of your hearts permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.**" ²³

God's ideal was that there be no divorce. But God often tolerates conditions that are not His directive will. Please give examples.³³

Matthew 19:9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."

Then the Lord stated with absolute authority that the past leniency on divorce was henceforth discontinued. Hereafter there would be only one valid ground for divorce—unchastity. If a person was divorced for any other reason and remarried, he was guilty of **adultery**.

Although not directly stated, it would seem from the words of our Lord that where a divorce has been obtained on the grounds of adultery, the innocent party is free to remarry. Otherwise divorce would serve no purpose not equally achieved by separation.

Sexual immorality, or fornication, is generally taken to mean adultery. However, many capable Bible students think it refers only to pre-marital immorality which is discovered after marriage (see Deut. 22:13–21). Others believe it refers to Jewish marriage customs only and that is why the "exception clause" is only here in Matthew, the Jewish Gospel.

Matthew 19:10 His disciples said to Him, "If such is the case of the man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

When the **disciples** heard the Lord's teaching on divorce, they proved themselves creatures of extremes by adopting the absurd position that if divorce is obtainable on only one ground, then to avoid sinning in the married state it would be **better not to marry** at all. But that would not save them from sinning in the single state.

Matthew 19:11 But He said to them, "All cannot accept this saying, but only those to whom it has been given: