

Study Guide: Matthew Lesson 85 – Divorce and Remarriage

Sunday AM-October 11, 2026

Overview and Introduction

This study guide explores God's design for marriage and His view on divorce, based on Matthew 5:31–32, Malachi 2:13–16, and Genesis 3:16–18. God created marriage to be a permanent, unbreakable union between a husband and a wife. From the beginning, His plan was for two people to become one for life, remaining faithful in both thought and deed.

When sin entered the world through the Fall in Genesis 3, it introduced conflict into human relationships, including marriage. Because of sin, people began to violate God's design through divorce. In Malachi 2, God explicitly states that He hates divorce. He warns His people against dealing treacherously with their spouses and rejecting the covenant of marriage.

Only through salvation in Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit can husbands and wives overcome the conflict caused by sin and restore the loving, godly relationship that God originally intended.

Short-Answer Quiz

Directions: Answer the following ten questions. Each question is based on the source text provided.

1. In the Book of Malachi, the people of Israel wept at the altar and brought offerings to God. Why did God refuse to accept their worship or receive their offerings with goodwill? What treacherous act had the men committed against their wives?
2. Malachi 2:14 refers to a man's wife as his "companion." What is unique about the use of this word in this passage compared to the rest of the Old Testament? What does this word show about how a husband should view his wife?
3. In Malachi 2:16, the text states that divorcing one's wife "covers one's garment with violence." What figurative expression or picture is this phrase describing? Who bears the responsibility and guilt for the sin of divorce according to this passage?
4. According to the lesson text, what is the ultimate origin of divorce? How do the Fall of man, the entrance of sin, and the curse relate to why divorce exists?
5. Before Adam and Eve fell into sin, what was God's original design for the relationship between a husband and a wife? How did they work together according to Genesis 1:27–28?
6. In Genesis 3:16, God states that the husband "shall rule over" his wife. What does the Hebrew word *mashal* mean in this context? How does this authority differ from the original leadership described before the Fall?

7. The Hebrew word *teshuqah* is translated as "desire" in Genesis 3:16. Based on its only other use in Genesis 4:7 regarding Cain and sin, what does this word mean? How does it create the ongoing "battle of the sexes"?
 8. Why can male headship become abusive or chauvinistic in a marriage without God? What is required to restore the correct, loving headship envisioned in Ephesians 5?
 9. According to Malachi 2:15, why did God make the husband and wife one? What specific outcome is God seeking from a marriage union?
 10. The text outlines specific components of "The Call" to salvation. What four elements are required for a person to accept the Lord and be forgiven?
-

Answer Key

1. God refused to accept their worship because the men had dealt treacherously with the wives of their youth. They had divorced their faithful Jewish wives and married pagan women.
2. The word "companion" is commonly used throughout the Old Testament for a close friend, but Malachi 2:14 is the only place in the Old Testament where it is used to describe a wife. This indicates that a man's wife should be his closest friend.
3. This phrase is a figurative expression for gross sin, comparing divorce to riding through a mud puddle and getting mud all over one's clothes, or a murderer whose robe is splattered with the blood of his victim. The sin and guilt of divorce are placed directly on the person who commits it.
4. Divorce is a result of sin, which came from the Fall of man and is part of the curse. If there had never been a Fall or a curse, there would never have been divorce.
5. Before the Fall, marriage was pure bliss where the husband provided loving, caring leadership and the wife provided loving, caring submission. They were completely devoted to one another and ruled over the earth together as equal partners under God.
6. The Hebrew word *mashal* means to rule, reign, or be set in an elevated office of authority. Unlike the soft, loving leadership present before the Fall, this post-Fall rule elevated the man to control and subdue his wife in response to the curse.
7. The word *teshuqah* means a strong desire to dominate, conquer, or usurp authority. In marriage, it means the woman desires to usurp her husband's authority, while the man seeks to suppress her, resulting in ongoing conflict between the sexes.
8. Without Jesus Christ, sinful human nature leads men to use their elevated rule in an oppressive and chauvinistic way. Right headship can only be restored through Jesus Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit, as outlined in Ephesians 5.

9. God made them one because He had a remnant of the Spirit and was seeking godly offspring.
10. The components of "The Call" to salvation are: fearing hell, having the humility to admit you can do nothing on your own, repenting to be rescued and forgiven, and believing the Gospel to accept the Lord.

Essay Questions

Directions: Answer the following essay questions in complete paragraphs, supporting your answers with the details provided in the study guide.

1. Explain the historical context of Malachi 2:13–16. How did the actions of the Israeli men affect their spiritual relationship with God, and why did God reject their religious sacrifices?
2. Compare and contrast the dynamic between husband and wife before the Fall with the dynamic after the Fall, paying close attention to the concepts of headship, submission, and mutual rule.
3. Detail the specific meanings of the Hebrew words *mashal* and *teshuqah* as presented in Genesis 3:16. How do these terms explain the origin of marital conflict?
4. Discuss God's attitude toward divorce as expressed throughout Scripture. Why does God hate divorce, and how is the act of divorce figuratively described in Malachi 2?
5. Describe the steps of "The Call" to salvation. How does salvation through Jesus Christ address the spiritual and relational consequences of the Fall?

Comprehensive Glossary

- **Battle of the Sexes:** The ongoing conflict between men and women resulting from the curse in Genesis 3:16, where the woman desires to usurp the man's authority and the man seeks to dominate or suppress her.
- **Companion:** A close friend; uniquely used in Malachi 2:14 to describe a wife, emphasizing that a wife ought to be her husband's closest friend.
- **Covenant:** A solemn, binding agreement; used in Malachi 2:14 to describe the sacred marriage commitment made before God.
- **Divorce:** The legal ending of a marriage ("putting away"); an act resulting from sin and the Fall that God explicitly hates because it violates His design of oneness.

- **Ephesians 5:** A chapter in the New Testament that outlines how proper, loving headship and right relationships in marriage are restored through Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit.
- **Gross Sin:** A severe or glaring violation of God's moral law, figuratively represented in Scripture as a garment splattered with mud or blood.
- **Male Chauvinism:** The oppressive or abusive misuse of authority by men over women, caused by sinful human nature following the Fall.
- **Mashal (Hebrew):** A Hebrew word meaning to rule, reign, or occupy an elevated position of authority; describes the dominant rule given to man over woman after the Fall in Genesis 3:16.
- **Offspring:** Children or descendants; in Malachi 2:15, God desires "godly offspring" from the unified covenant of marriage.
- **The Call:** The invitation to salvation involving fear of hell, humility, repentance, and belief in the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- **The Curse:** The divine consequences pronounced by God upon humanity and creation in Genesis 3 following Adam and Eve's disobedience.
- **The Fall:** The event in Genesis 3 when Adam and Eve disobeyed God, bringing sin, spiritual separation, and chaos into the world.
- **Teshuqah (Hebrew):** A Hebrew word meaning a desire to dominate or usurp control; used in Genesis 3:16 to describe the woman's desire toward her husband, and in Genesis 4:7 to describe sin's desire to rule over Cain.

Original Language Terms and Notes

No Greek words were used in the source text for this lesson.^[^1]

The original language terms analyzed in this study guide (mashal and teshuqah) are Hebrew words from the Old Testament text of Genesis.

[^1]: Examination of the source context confirms that all original language references in Matthew Lesson 85 derive exclusively from Old Testament Hebrew texts (specifically Genesis and Malachi). No Greek terms were cited or transliterated in the lesson source context.