

Summer With Jesus: Week 3

God Time – Jesus on Divorce

These scriptures are selected to help you gain a deeper understanding of who Jesus is. You can read them each day or listen to the daily audio that is sent to you. They are intentionally designed for you to engage in your time alone with God. You will find them complementary to the teachings on the weekend (gatherings) and to the LIFE Group materials.

Some tips:

Use a Bible that is easy to read. The ESV or The NLT are both good translations.

Use a prayer journal. After you read the passages jot down what “jumped out” at you while reading. Then take a few minutes to write a prayer response to what you have read.

There are only five days of reading provided so if you miss a day, you have time to catch up. Do not get legalistic! If you miss a day or even a week...God still loves you!

Monday: Matthew 19:4-6

Tuesday: 1 Corinthians 7:10-11

Wednesday: Malachi 2:16

Thursday: Matthew 19:3-6

Friday: Philippians 4:8-9

Diving Deeper

The Summer of Jesus – Jesus on Divorce Matthew 5:31-32

- 1. Jesus puts some tough restrictions on divorce. But over the last forty years, the leading marriage indicators have been in steady decline. In fact, the divorce rate is nearly twice the rate it was in 1960. On average a modern marriage lasts for 7-10 years, and the reasons for marriage breakup include infidelity, financial problems, egoism, or a lack of understanding between the spouses. Timothy Keller says, 'Marriage is glorious but hard. It's a burning joy and strength, and yet it is also blood, sweat and tears, humbling defeats, and exhausting victories. Have you found this to be true? Why is marriage so hard?**

An older man and his young friend were talking about marriage during their coffee break at work. "It's true," the older one said, "my wife and I do argue occasionally. But we've been committed to never going to bed while angry. 'Course, there was that one time we stayed up for three months straight." — David Jeremiah, *One Minute a Day* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2009).

- 2. Verse 31. Knowing that divorce is common, even among Christians, how can we make sure it doesn't happen to us?**

Three things. #1: humbly acknowledge it could happen to you. Don't think you are above it. You are not. You are capable of the worst of sins. If you don't think it is true—if you don't feel it is true deep inside you—you are most vulnerable.

#2. Be a life-long student of marriage. My wife and I read a book every year together. Work on your marriage. Learn. Grow. If you are married, your #1 Christian obligation is to be a good husband or wife. If you are miserable enough with your marriage, there is not enough commitment in the universe to keep you in it. And the goal is not to stay married and miserable. You can have a better marriage, but it takes learning and practicing what you learn. If you keep doing what you been doing you will keep getting what you been getting.

#3. If you can avoid the temptation, you can avoid the sin. Did I say that already? I follow the Andy Stanley rule: I don't have lunch with another woman. I don't get in the car with another woman. I don't counsel another woman. I am never alone with another woman. I never talk about anything personal with another women.

3. Read Ephesians 5.21 – 33. What do we learn about marriage from this passage?

Paul gives us the definition of marriage, not just the power. The definition of marriage is tied to a covenant. Focus on the word, cleave in verse 31, where it says, “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife ...”

The word cleave is a technical, covenantal term in the Bible. To cleave means to be glued to. It means to be bound legally to somebody. It’s not simply a word that means to hold onto in some general way. It means to be bound. It means, essentially, marriage is an institution of law. It’s covenantal. It’s designed by God, and you enter marriage through a public promise. — Timothy J. Keller, The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

4. Why is the leaving important?

Your relationship with your father and mother is a pretty fundamental relationship. It’s the most fundamental relationship you have until you get married.

It’s the one (whether you like it or not) that has most driven and shaped your life and who you are. Marriage is more powerful in its impact than your relationship with your parents, and it must have priority. If you don’t leave, if you don’t give it priority, it introduces all sorts of distortions into your marriage, and we’ll talk about that in the future. Plenty of people have marriage problems because they haven’t left. In some cases, they haven’t left their father or their mother.

You say, “I know those kinds, the kinds that are tied to their apron strings.” No. If you hate your parents, you haven’t left them either. If you cannot enter into a new marriage and really say, “We’re going to be a new decision-making unit. We’re going to develop new patterns,” but instead you impose the patterns you saw in your own family, you haven’t left. There are all kinds of ways in which you can fail to give marriage its priority. — Timothy J. Keller, The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive (New York City: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).

5. **Look at the context. What does the context teach us about marriage?**

Ephesians 5:21–33 gives specific instructions for both husbands and wives. A husband is to love his wife “as Christ loves the church and gave Himself for her” (verse 25). Such self-sacrificing love creates an atmosphere in which a wife can more easily submit to her husband’s leadership. When a husband is committed to demonstrating love for his wife, and a wife is committed to graciously allowing her husband to lead, the marriage will work.

It is also wise to pay close attention to the verses just before the specific marriage instructions. Verses 17–21 say, “Therefore, do not be foolish and thoughtless, but understand and firmly grasp what the will of the Lord is. Do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.”

Notice all the commands that precede the marriage instruction. All Christians are to seek to understand and grasp the will of God.

- refuse to get drunk
- be filled with the Spirit
- encourage each other
- sing hymns and songs of praise
- have an attitude of continual worship
- live in a spirit of gratitude
- submit graciously to each other

We miss vital truth when we skip straight to the marriage instruction without applying the practical guidelines in the preceding verses. When each spouse applies those truths to his or her personal life and strives to make his or her relationship with the Lord the primary focus, marriage problems take a back seat. When two committed Christians purpose to seek God’s heart and follow His will no matter what, there is no problem that they cannot work through. — Got Questions Ministries, *Got Questions? Bible Questions Answered* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software, 2002–2013).

6. What is the mystery in verse 32?

Paul says, “This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.” This image in the Old Testament, that God is like a husband and Israel is like his bride, and this image in the New Testament, that Christ is like our husband, and we are like his bride, is not just a metaphor. According to Revelation, it points to a reality that someday, at the end of time, there will be the marriage supper of the Lamb, that Jesus Christ is going to unite with us, that we are really going to fall into his arms.

Let me say it as vividly as I can. The Bible says human marriage is, therefore, penultimate. It points to the ultimate marriage. Even the most wonderful, rapturous episode of marital love is just a dim hint of the ecstasy and cosmic joy of falling into the Lord’s arms, because that’s what you were created for. Human love is just a pointer to that. Human love is penultimate. That’s the ultimate marriage. — Timothy J. Keller, *The Timothy Keller Sermon Archive, 2012-2013* (New York: Redeemer Presbyterian Church, 2013).