

Question: “When does God allow divorce?”

Only a few decades ago, the civil courts upheld moral responsibility in marriage. Divorces were easily obtained for adultery, but very difficult to secure for other reasons. Today however, with the ongoing erosion of moral standards in society, a married couple can obtain a divorce for nearly every reason. Many judges in our land will not stand in the way of a married couple who wants to dissolve their relationship. The question we should all be asking is “when does God permit divorce?” The answer to the question, as with all issues pertaining to human conduct, is in the Bible, the inspired word of God.

God, very simply, does not allow divorce for every reason. Just because an individual can obtain a divorce from a spouse in the civil courts, does not mean that God approves of such action. Our tendency to be self-serving often puts us in conflict with the will of our Holy Creator. Read the following verse and identify the single reason for which God allows divorce. “And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife (or husband, bj), except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her (or him, bj) who is divorced commits adultery” (Mt 19:9).

I want you to notice a few reasons people use to head for the divorce courts, which are not stated in the verse above: drunkenness, abuse, neglect, poor provider, incompatibility, and loss of affection.

God addressed the topic of divorce with Israel before breaking off communication with them for four hundred years. He stated, “For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, for it covers one’s garment with violence, says the Lord of hosts. Therefore, take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously” (Mal 2:16).

You may ask, “what do I do if I have divorced for reasons other than the one God allows?” Paul said, “Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart, let her remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife” (1Co 7:10-11). The English word “depart” is from the same Greek word Jesus used to describe divorce (separate, put asunder) when He said, “Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate” (Mt 19:6). If a wife divorces her husband when he has not committed adultery, her two options are to remain unmarried or be reconciled to her husband. The principle equally applies to the husband who divorces his wife under the same conditions.

I hope this addresses the question above in an intelligible manner. If you have questions or comments feel free to contact me. Study your Bible and search the Truth. Write us today for a free Bible correspondence course by mail. Thanks for reading!