**Questions for Sermon 17: D.I.V.O.R.C.E**

**Introduction**: Nothing seems as humanly painful that the reasons, the process and the results of divorce. Most certainly these study questions will be unable to plumb the depth of heartache, guilt and shame many have are experiencing because of divorce. But even here, grace triumphs, if the heart can, by His grace be brought to renewal, for we know that all sin damages, but not all sin has to leave permanent damage, thanks be to God. So please bow in prayer and prepare your own heart for this study.

1. I quote John Stott when he says that “there is almost no tragedy so great as the degeneration of what God meant for love and fulfilment into a non-relationship of bitterness, discord and despair.” What is he referring to? And do you have any experience or knowledge of what he says?
2. Tim Keller quite sharply uncovers the foundation of nearly all the research done on marriage in the US in particular, but applies to Canada also, when he says that they all have discounted the studies on true biblical marriages. What does that tell you, if anything?
3. Cohabitation has clearly overtaken in the journey people are taking today. Why would you say that is? He goes on to say, “ It may well feel empowering, but the long-term effects do not solve the problems they hoped living together promised to do.” What problems can it not solve?
4. In the background we have two schools. (1) The school of Shammai, and the school of Hillel. The school of Shammai were strict, severe and austere. Sexual sin was the only reason. So, they emphasized some indecency as sexual immorality. (2) The school of Hillel were liberal, broadminded and very generous in allowing all kinds of reasons for divorce. Put on different hats and ask yourself, what are the pros and cons of both sides?
5. The question the Jewish leaders were asking Jesus later was in reference to which side Jesus was on? Which school does it seem Jesus lines up with?
6. If Jesus was liberal, he was on the side of **Shammai**, (and by all appearance, evangelicalism today); or if Jesus was conservative, on side of the moralistic, austere school of **Hillel.** It might be a set up if I asked us all, which side are we on?
7. I say that Jesus won’t answer because he’s on neither side! How can he do that?
8. Please be sensitive to the “one exception only” Jesus makes for divorce. But why is adultery the one exception? Aren’t all kinds of sexual immorality damaging to marriage and to the individuals do it?
9. I turn the corner on this discussion mostly because Jesus does also. He refers to God’s original intention. Knowing what we know today, is there any point in doing so when the institution has almost collapsed in our culture? In other words, when the Pharisaical spirit that look for all kinds of justifications for divorce, and when they say that Moses commands it (where Jesus says he only allowed it because of hardness of heart), and when divorce is spoken so very lightly, what can be done to save marriage?
10. In the first marriage, Adam is given the responsible for Eve alone. What kind of responsibilities does a man have?
11. Adam says, what I imagine is at the top of his lungs, “This is the one.” In the context of Genesis, what does that mean and what are the implications?
12. He leaves his family. What does that really mean, and is it just geographically?
13. He cleaves to his wife and to no other. What does that mean?
14. They are united in heart soul, mind and body a relationship that is exclusive, (one man and one woman), and it is permanent. They are no longer two but one flesh. He joins his wife, but it is a joining by God at the same time in the covenant of marriage. How has that faired in our day?
15. God’s purpose for marriage was companionship. It seems like it’s not enough. It seems like the end of all joy, excitement, adventure and creativity! But is that necessarily true? Explain.
16. God gave is marriage to solve the problem of loneliness. It is a covenant of companionship. It is a gift we must constantly work at and pursue. And so, I ask “are you your spouse’s companion?” Are you growing closer, more intimate, more in united in thought, goals, and plans, efforts, and bodies? What would that mean for you? Have things slipped? What are they? Are there things you could share that would help real companionship?
17. As Jay Adams says. The goal God has given you is the utter devotion to the elimination of loneliness. The sooner we wake up to the fact that the marriage that God intends is contractual, formal and covenantal, not primarily sexual by nature. I know this sounds a little stilted, but if the covenant of marital promises is constantly present, what would it mean for your quest to do what Jay Adams says?
18. Marriage begins when the vows are exchanged. The sexual act may consummate the marriage, but it is the covenanted vows that make a marriage. Do you remember your vows? What are they?
19. The most obvious statement is that “healthy marriages are not instant.” Has Christ by His Spirit been saying anything specifically to you in these days?