

Theme: Marriage and Children

Mark 10:1–16

¹ Then He arose from there and came to the region of Judea by the other side of the Jordan. And multitudes gathered to Him again, and as He was accustomed, He taught them again.

² The Pharisees came and asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce *his* wife?” testing Him.

³ And He answered and said to them, “What did Moses command you?”

⁴ They said, “Moses permitted a *man* to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss *her*.”

⁵ And Jesus answered and said to them, “Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept. ⁶ But from the beginning of the creation, God ‘made them male and female.’ ⁷ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, ⁸ and the two shall become one flesh; ⁹ so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. ⁹ Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.”

¹⁰ In the house His disciples also asked Him again about the same *matter*. ¹¹ So He said to them, “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her. ¹² And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery.”

¹³ Then they brought little children to Him, that He might touch them; but the disciples rebuked those who brought *them*. ¹⁴ But when Jesus saw *it*, He was greatly displeased and said to them, “Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁵ Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.” ¹⁶ And He took them up in His arms, laid *His* hands on them, and blessed them.

Consider

10:1. Everywhere Jesus went, crowds followed Him. What did people want to see? Why did so many people want to be around Him?

What does it reveal to us about Jesus’s character that when he had people around Him, he took time to teach?

10:2. The NKJV says, “The Pharisees came and asked Him . . . testing Him.” The word translated “testing” here is also used earlier in Mark 1:12–13 when Satan “tempted” Jesus. How does this comparison help you understand the intent of their question?

- What do you think motivated their question?
- How does Jesus respond?
- How would you respond in this situation?

10:3–5. According to Jesus, why did Moses write this precept (law) concerning divorce?⁶ Read Deuteronomy 24:1–4 to see what law Jesus is referring to.

10:6. What is significant about Jesus answering their question by referencing “the beginning of creation”?

Note: Remember that Jesus is speaking primarily to a Jewish audience (Pharisees are Jewish spiritual leaders), and He is referencing what was true before the Law existed (the Law God gave to Israel through Moses that Jews still obeyed). These leaders knew this Law very well and would have memorized large portions of it.

10:7–9. God’s formula for marriage:

One _____ and one _____
for _____.

Note: In the traditional Jewish context, the command to honor one’s parents was greatly emphasized over all other commands except the command to honor God Himself.

How does Jesus’s reminder about marriage (10:7) change the traditional Jewish order of importance?

Jesus says, “let not man separate” marriage. What would this “separating” look like in our current context? Is Jesus exclusively talking about divorce?

10:13. Why are people bringing children to Jesus? Why do you think the disciples rebuked those who were bringing them? What do their actions indicate about the disciples’ hearts?

⁶ At this time, the Jews would often refer to the first five books of the Bible written by Moses as either the “Law” or “Moses.” The rest of the Old Testament would be called either the “Prophets” (sometimes “Jeremiah”) or the “Prophets and the Psalms.”

10:14. How does Jesus handle the situation with the children? What does Jesus's response to the disciples reveal about His heart?

10:15. How do children receive the kingdom of God?

Ask Yourself

According to Mark 10:6–8, God created man as male and female, and He created marriage to be between one man and one woman for life. Have I allowed our culture to influence my thinking about gender or marriage?

Do I consider marriage with the same sacred seriousness Christ did? Do I protect my own marriage (or the marriages of my friends and family) by working to unite and not divide?

How does our culture view children? How does the way I see children differ from Jesus's view on children?

Have I "received the kingdom of God" as a little child, or am I trying to get to God on my own terms?

Cross References

Mark 1:12–13

¹² Immediately the Spirit drove Him into the wilderness. ¹³ And He was there in the wilderness forty days, tempted by Satan, and was with the wild beasts; and the angels ministered to Him.

Deuteronomy 24:1–4

¹ When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some uncleanness in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, ² when she has departed from his house, and goes and becomes another man's wife, ³ if the latter husband detests her and writes her a certificate of divorce, puts *it* in her hand, and sends her out of his house, or if the latter husband dies who took her as his wife, ⁴ then her former husband who divorced her must not take her back to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that *is* an abomination before the LORD, and you shall not bring sin on the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

Genesis 1:27

So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.

Song of Solomon 2:15

Catch us the foxes, The little foxes that spoil the vines, For our vines *have* tender grapes.

Matthew 5:31–32

³¹ "Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ³² But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.

1 Corinthians 7:10–11

¹⁰ Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: A wife is not to depart from *her* husband. ¹¹ 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.

Luke 18:15–17

¹⁵ Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw *it*, they rebuked them. ¹⁶ But Jesus called them to *Him* and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. ¹⁷ Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."