

Divorce and Remarriage

Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard.

MATTHEW 19:8

Written by Bill Perkins

Many believe Jesus allowed
one condition for divorce
that permitted remarriage—adultery (Mt. 19:9).
Sadly, that reason has stirred shame
in those whose marriages ended
for other legitimate reasons.

Yet a careful study of Jesus' life and teaching
reveals He was naming one example.
And if that example is the only one,
why did Paul give a second? (1 Cor. 7:15)

You may not know this about Jesus,
but He often used a single example
to reveal a larger truth.
Mt 5:21–22; 27–28; 31–32; 38–39

Jesus mentioning adultery
is like saying,
“If someone blows open the hatch,
the submarine will sink.”
He wasn't claiming
that opening the hatch
is the only way to destroy it.
Torpedoes,
fire,
or a fractured hull
produce the same collapse.
The vessel survives only
when its sealed environment is preserved.
Adultery is simply

the most obvious,
catastrophic breach
of that seal.

Any action that dismantles
the covenant structure God designed—
leave, cleave, become one flesh—
breaks the seal itself.

Jesus said hardness of heart
is the real cause for divorce. (Mt. 19:8)
It takes the shape
of emotional and relational closedness—
a progressive, stubborn condition
where a spouse becomes impenetrable.

The heart becomes a stone wall.
Affection is withheld.
They cannot say,
“I’m sorry. I was wrong. Please forgive me.”

Scripture shows this hardness
in Pharaoh’s defiance (Exodus 7:13),
Israel’s stubbornness (Psalm 95:8),
and those who shut themselves off from Jesus (Mark 3:5).

Within marriage,
hardness appears
when faithfulness is violated,
and the seal God designed
is broken.

Abandonment creates distance.
Betrayal gives love to another.
Hardness turns loyalty inward.

Covenant loyalty turns the heart outward:
toward the covenant partner in unity,
a shared life,
mutual protection.

Hardness flips the direction—
inward, toward self.

These forces break the seal
that holds a marriage together.
Adultery is one example.
Abandonment is another.

And into broken marriages
Jesus steps with surprising grace—
not to shame,
but to heal,
to restore,
to lift the wounded,
and to speak truth with mercy.