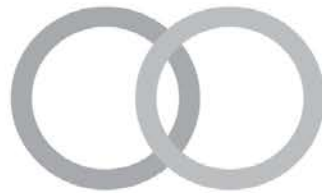


DIVORCE & REMARriage

ECCLESIASTICAL DISCERNMENT
AND PASTORAL CARE

Discussion Questions



BENJAMIN T. G. MAYES

Discussion Questions¹

Chapter 1

- To what extent did Jesus accept the theology of marriage found in the Old Testament? To what extent did He accept or reject the civil laws of Moses regarding divorce?
- Explain the general rule regarding divorce and the exception that the Lord gives in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew 5:31–32; 19:3–12; Mark 10:2–12; Luke 16:18).
- In your mind, what are the most difficult and surprising aspects of Jesus' teaching on divorce and remarriage?
- What kinds of people will have hearts that want to live according to Christ's commands about divorce and remarriage?

Chapter 2

- What does “separates” mean in 1 Corinthians 7:15?
- Why are there only two exceptions to the prohibition of divorce and remarriage (Mark 10:9–12)?
- Explain why Paul's exception (1 Corinthians 7:15) does not disagree with the Lord Jesus' one exception (Matthew 5:32; 19:9).
- What common reasons for divorce cannot be found in 1 Corinthians 7:15 (nor in Matthew 5:31–32; 19:3–9; Mark 10:2–12; Luke 16:18)?
- Our culture, and even many churches, do not hold to what Scripture teaches on divorce. Is teaching on this topic more or less important at this time, when it is unpopular or even rejected? Why?

Chapter 3

- What does “husband of one wife” mean in 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:6?
- In what way are the standards for clergy marriages the same as for those of all Christians? In what way are pastors (and other public servants of the church as well) held to a higher standard?
- If a pastor must be the “husband of one wife,” why is it acceptable for a pastor to be single?
- Should a pastor suffer discipline or be removed from ministry because of the sins of his wife or of his children, if these sins are against his will and out of his control?

Chapters 4–5

- In North American culture, people highly value personal privacy. When do issues of marriage, divorce, and remarriage become matters of public knowledge within the

¹ For inspiration leading to these questions, I thank the participants of the CTSFW continuing education class “Pastoral Care in Cases of Divorce and Remarriage,” at Lutheran Church of Our Savior, Cupertino, CA, June 16–18, 2026. The participants were Rev. John Bestul, Rev. Dennis Bestul, Vicar Isaiah Mudge, Rev. Robert Weller, Rev. Adam Debner, Mr. Johnathan Raelison, Rev. Jonah Laws, Deac. Faith Swenson, Rev. Jacob Swenson, Rev. Brennan DeForest, Rev. Clinton Hoff, Rev. Dr. Martin Noland, and Mr. Paul Kvamme. —B. Mayes

church? (Consider 1 Corinthians 6 and Matthew 18:12–20.)

- In what situations would it make good sense to use people outside the local congregation to give churchly discernment for cases of divorce and remarriage?
- What kinds of people should adjudicate these cases?
- Why is it necessary that an objective finding of fact be obtained in cases related to marriage?
- How might a pastor or layman be harmed by a lack of adjudication or sloppy adjudication? How might one be aided in his or her Christian life by godly ecclesiastical adjudication (cf. Proverbs 9:8–9)?
- Consider and discuss what changes and improvements could be made in your congregation or wider denominational structures to enable the church to discern and give judgment on marriage cases for her members (cf. 1 Corinthians 6:5).

Chapter 6

- Review the principles on divorce and remarriage. If the biblical reasons for any of these are still unclear, go back and review the pages that explain the principle.
- Pick a case or two and explain in more detail how biblical passages apply to the case.
- If there is a case that you (or someone else) might disagree with, are there biblical passages and reasons that contradict the answer given? Or is the disagreement due more to previous assumptions or simply what “seems right”?
- How should we give an answer for cases that are unclear or confused?