THE BLUEPRINT FOR MARRIAGE
AND FAMILY
JESUS: CHECK THE ORIGINAL BLUEPRINT
THE BLUEPRINT FOR MARRIAGE

AND FAILED MARRIAGES

JESUS: CHECK THIS BLUEPRINT

DIVORCE
DIVORCE TRENDS:

Increased after World War II, then decline. Rose in ‘60s and ‘70s, leveled during ‘80s. 22.6 divorces per 1,000 marriages in 1980. 20.9 divorces per 1,000 marriages in 1990. 18.8 divorces per 1,000 marriages in 2000.

And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?” 4 He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, 5 and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

MATTHEW 19:3-6
They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” 8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

MATTHEW 19:7-9
"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'

32 But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual immorality, makes her commit adultery, and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery."

MATTHEW 5:31-32
DIVORCE SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

RABBI SHAMMAI:
divorce specifically only for "indecency"
(sexual sin or unfaithfulness)

RABBI HILLEL:
divorce for "some"/"any" reason
"When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and she departs out of his house, 2 and if she goes and becomes another man's wife, 3 and the latter man hates her and writes her a certificate of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, or if the latter man dies, who took her to be his wife,
4 then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she has been defiled, for that is an abomination before the LORD. And you shall not bring sin upon the land that the LORD your God is giving you for an inheritance."

DEUTERONOMY 24:1-4
PHARISEES:  
"But Moses *commanded* ... certificate of divorce."

JESUS:
"Moses *permitted* ... because your hearts are hard."
PROBLEMS WITH “EXCEPTION CLAUSE”:

1. “Exception clause” may encourage some to abuse freedom and walk through divorce door prematurely.

2. Undue attention to “exception clause” may lead some to disregard Jesus’ teaching that all divorce is undesirable.
FOLLOWING JESUS ON MARRIAGE:

1. Jesus assumed the validity of God’s original blueprint.
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2. Jesus focused primarily on discipleship.
3. Jesus reaffirmed the biblical pattern of marriage.
The disciples said to him, “If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry.”

11 But he said to them, “Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given. 12 For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let the one who is able to receive this receive it.”

MATTHEW 19:10-12
“If many Roman Catholics have overly exalted celibacy as an ideal, most Protestants have drastically undervalued it. Christian singles need much more support from their married friends and their churches, who must value them as equally significant members of the body of Christ. In a society that constantly pressures people into hasty marriages, the church desperately needs to encourage all who sense God leading them to remain single, for however long or short a period of time, to remain faithful to his guidance.”

CRAIG BLOMBERG, NAC Vol. 22, Matthew (Broadman, 1992), 294
FOLLOWING JESUS
ON MARRIAGE:
1. Jesus assumed the validity of God’s original blueprint.
2. Jesus focused primarily on discipleship.
3. Jesus reaffirmed the biblical pattern of marriage.
4. Jesus extended grace in the face of brokenness.
“There is an undeniable tension between the absolute idealism of vv. 4-8 and the acceptance of a reality which falls short of this ideal in v. 9, and the danger is that we will do as Jewish legalism had done and build our expectation on the concession rather than the ideal.”
But Christian ethics in a fallen world will always be subject to tensions; sinful situations sometimes make it impossible to choose between courses none of which leaves no room for regret. What is important is that in so doing we do not lose sight of the ideal, and that we accept the ‘lesser evil’ for what it is, an ‘evil’, even where it is the best course open to us in the circumstances.”

RT FRANCE, Matthew, Tyndale NT Commentaries, IVP, Leicester 1985, p.280
God gave us the “ideal” for marriage. Jesus reaffirmed that ideal … but graciously affirmed the broken.

1. NEVER be content with less than that ideal!
2. If you’ve been forced into less than ideal … know God’s grace!
3. Toward those forced into less than ideal … demonstrate godly grace … and nothing less!
HOLD TO GOD'S WORD ON ALL MATTERS!
GOD'S WORD AND GOD'S LOVE COEXIST