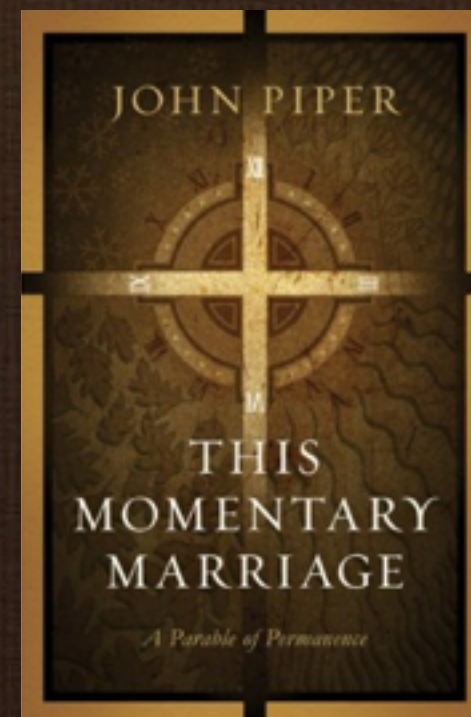


# Marriage ( 8 )

## Divorce

Slides by: Timothy Chan, based on  
John Piper's "This Momentary Marriage"





# History of Divorce in America

- ❖ **1969** - Governor Reagan signed the nation's first no-fault divorce bill into California law. (Reagan later admitted this was one of the worst mistakes of his political life.)



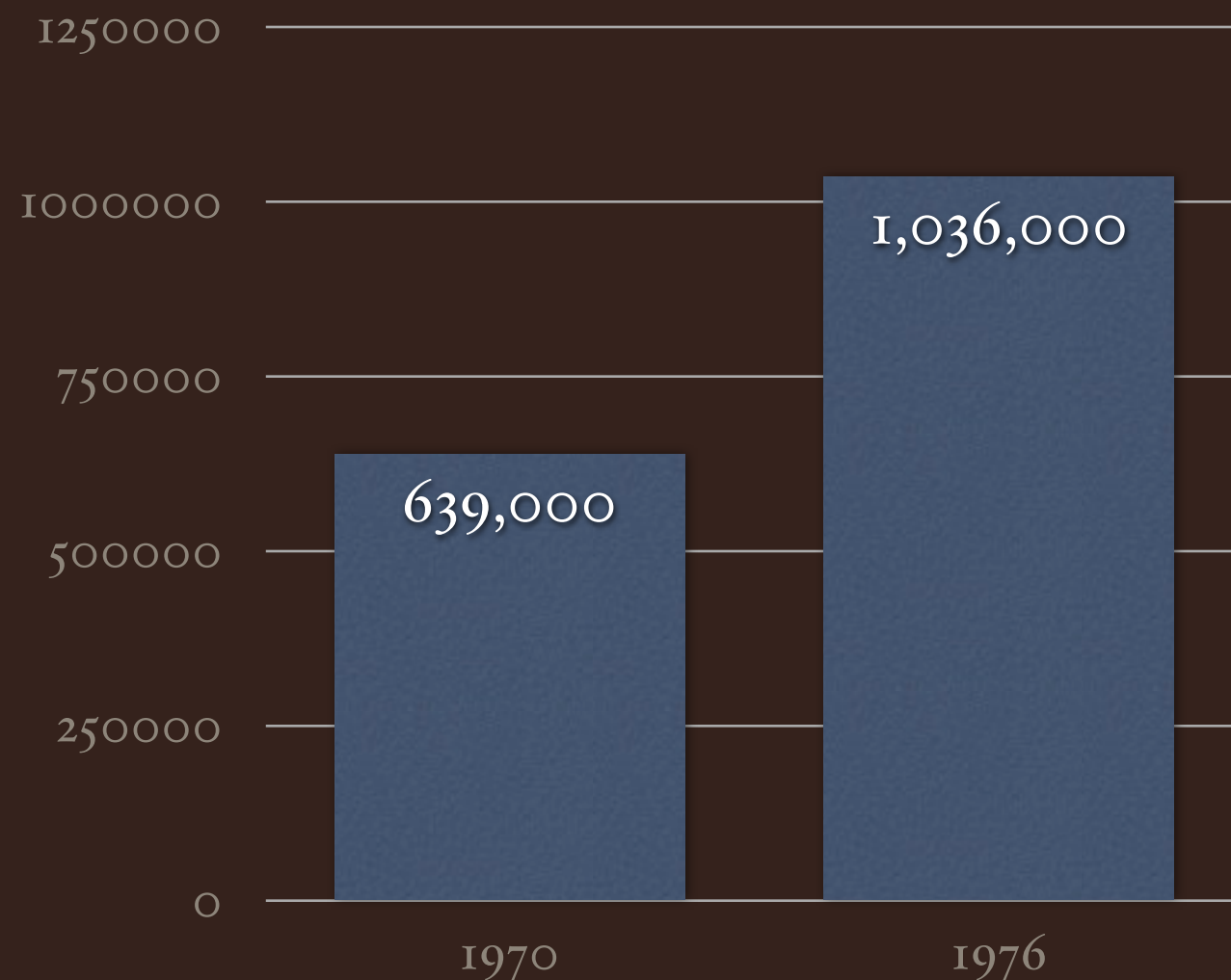
# History of Divorce in America

- ❖ **1974** - Following California's lead, by 1974, 45 states have signed their own no-fault divorce law.



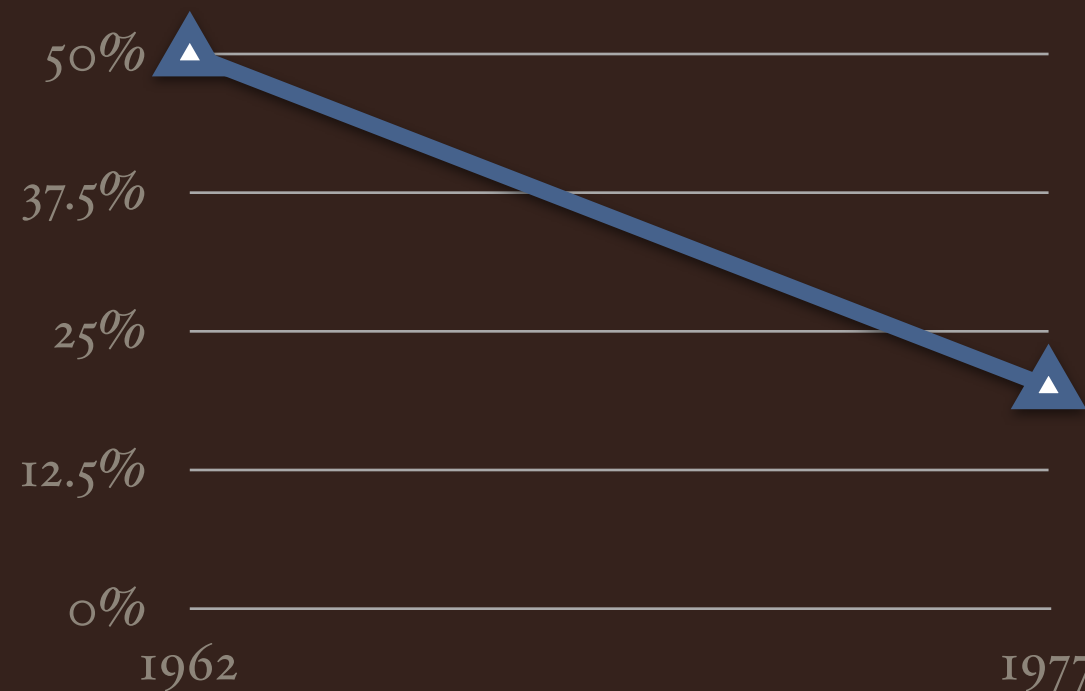
# History of Divorce in America

- ❖ **1976** - Between 1970 and 1976, divorce rate in America has risen 63% within a mere six years.



# History of Divorce in America

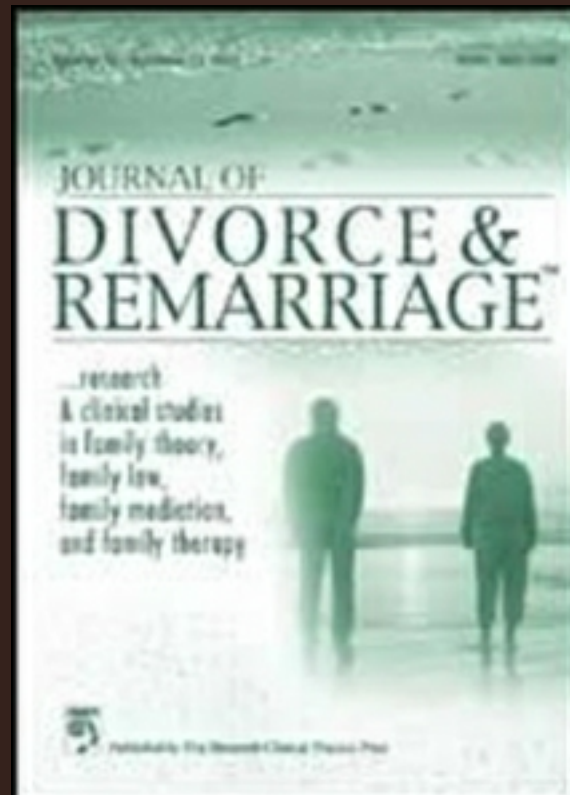
- ❖ **1977** - Public sentiment changed dramatically from divorce as a social evil to something that could be good. In 1962, 50% of American women agreed that “when there are children in the family parents should stay together even if they don't get along.” By 1977, only 20% agreed.





# History of Divorce in America

- ❖ **1979** - One prominent scholar wrote that divorce has “growth potential” for mothers, as they could enjoy “increased personal autonomy, a new sense of competence and control, development of better relationships with children.”



# History of Divorce in America

- ❖ **1980** - Divorce rate reached a peak of 22.6 divorces per 1,000 married women. This meant about 50% who married in 1970 ended up divorced.



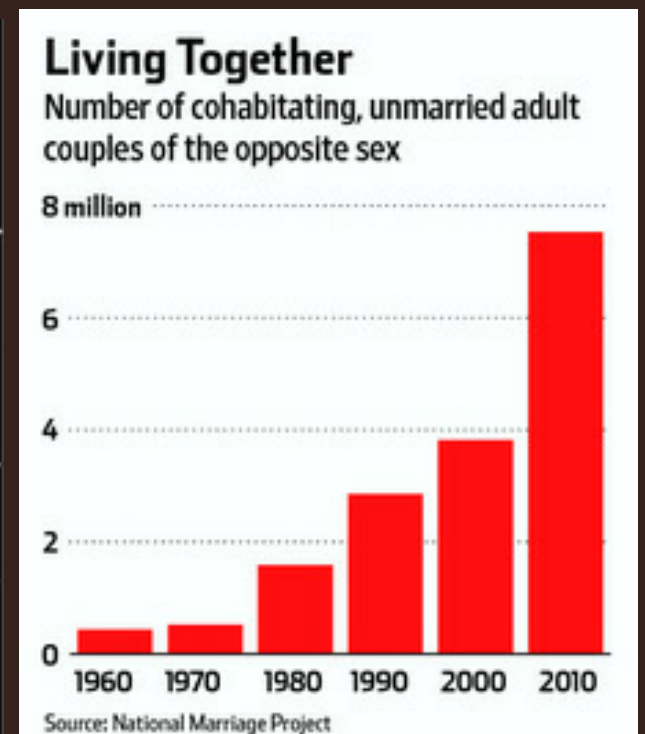
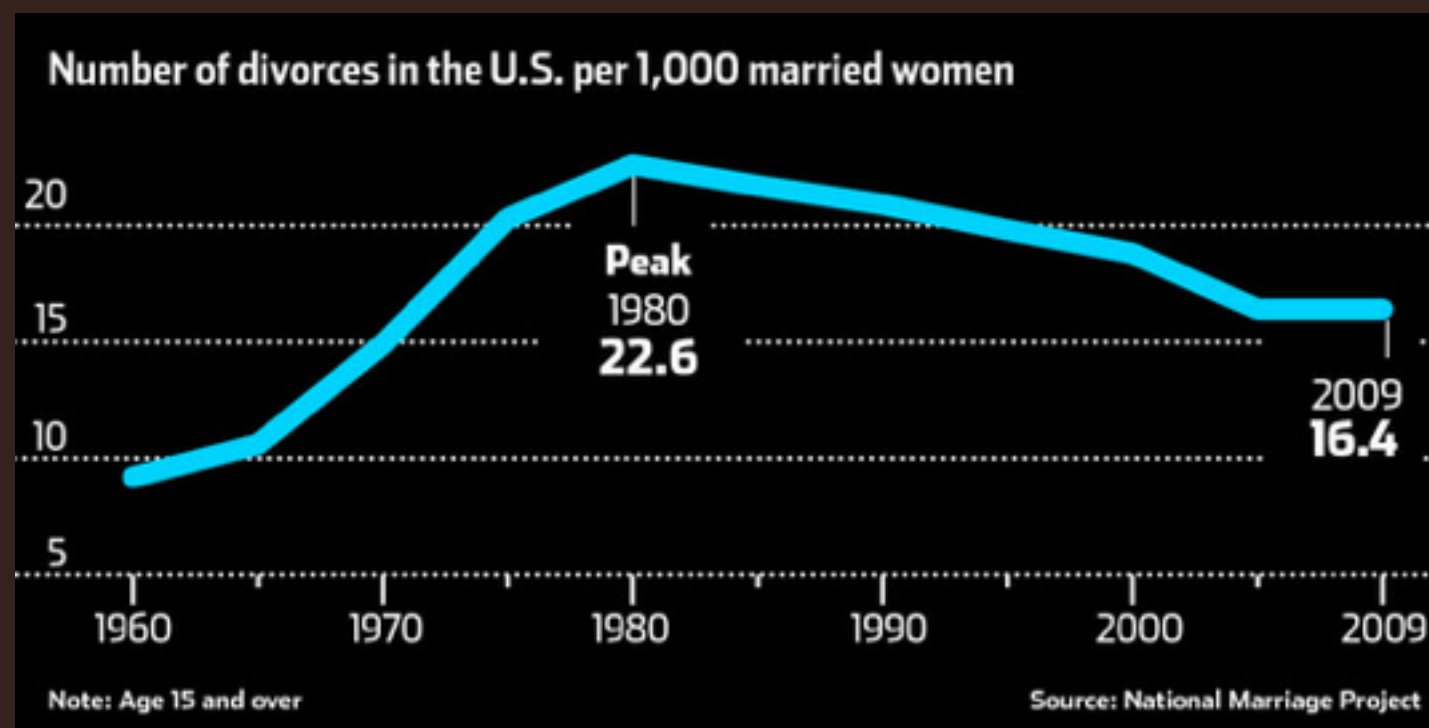
# History of Divorce in America

- ❖ **2002** - According to the Institute of American Values, strikingly, longitudinal studies demonstrate that two-thirds of the unhappy marriages out there will become happy within five years if people stay married and do not get divorced. This led sociologist Linda Waite to say, “the benefits of divorce have been oversold.” ([source](#))



# History of Divorce in America

- ❖ **2009** - Divorce rates stabilized to 16.4 per 1,000 married women. Since many Generation Xers grew up in divorced families, they wanted to avoid divorce themselves. But marriage rates also dropped, while cohabitation rates skyrocketed. ([source](#))



# History of Divorce in America

- ❖ **2010** - New York became the last state in the nation to adopt a no-fault divorce law. (Notably, it was opposed by National Organization for Women (NOW) because “it hurts women.”)



# Divorce

- ❖ (Q) What are the pains and ill effects of divorce that you've seen or experienced?
- ❖ (Q) What would you say to your friend if he/she is considering divorce?
- ❖ “The world treats this diamond like just another stone.” (John Piper)



# God's Heart Towards Divorce

- ❖ Divorce is not just a social evil to God.
- ❖ If God has such a high view of marriage, how does He view divorce?
- ❖ **(Mal 2:16a, NASB)** “For I hate divorce,” says the Lord, the God of Israel, “and him who covers his garment with wrong,” says the Lord of hosts.
  - ❖ The word translated “hate” here does not have a casual meaning (such as “I hate the weather”).
  - ❖ It is a serious word that also has the meaning “enemy.” It is used in reference to hatred toward an enemy of God.

# Jesus on Divorce (Mark 10:2-12)

- ❖ (Mark 10:2-3) And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?” He answered them, “What did Moses command you?”
- ❖ Jesus (as is typical) replied with a question, wherein he used specific wording: “What did Moses command you?”
- ❖ (Mark 10:4) They said, “Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away.”
- ❖ They replied “Moses allowed ... divorce.” (as a reference to Deut 24:1)

## Jesus on Divorce (Mark 10:2-12)

- ❖ (Mark 10:5) And Jesus said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment.”
- ❖ Command ≠ Permission
- ❖ “Divorce is never commanded and never instituted in the Old Testament. But it was permitted and regulated — like polygamy was permitted and regulated ... Jesus says here that this permission was not a reflection of God’s ideal for his people; it was a reflection of the hardness of the human heart.” (John Piper)
- ❖ So what *did* Moses command?



## Jesus on Divorce (Mark 10:2-12)

- ❖ (Mark 10:6-9) But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”
- ❖ From the beginning, marriage is meant to be a profound one-flesh union between a man and a woman. Marriage is the work of God, not of man.

## Jesus on Divorce (Mark 10:2-12)

- ❖ “The meaning of marriage is such that human beings cannot legitimately break it. The ultimate meaning of marriage is the representation of the covenant-keeping love between Christ and his church.” (John Piper)

## Paul on Divorce (1 Cor 7:10-15)

- ❖ (1 Cor 7:10-11) To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband (but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.
- ❖ Paul is saying: do not divorce; but if you did, either stay unmarried, or seek reconciliation with your spouse.



## Paul on Divorce (1 Cor 7:10-15)

- ❖ (1 Cor 7:12, 13, 15a) To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. .... But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so.
- ❖ Paul personally “permits” (but not as a “command” from the Lord) grounds for divorce — as a concession — if an unbelieving spouse leaves.

## Paul on Divorce (1 Cor 7:10-15)

- ❖ Similarly, there's (arguably) an added concession of permission for divorce by apostle Matthew:
  - ❖ **(Matt 19:9)** Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.
  - ❖ It's Matthew's concession and permission for divorce in the case of sexual immorality. Compare to the synoptic **Mark 10:10-12** and **Luke 16:18**.
  - ❖ We should avoid replacing one adultery/evil (sexual immorality) to another adultery/evil (divorce).

# Grace and Faithfulness of God

- ❖ (Q) Why does the Bible take such a strong stance on divorce and remarriage?
  - ❖ Because marriage reflects God's faithfulness toward the church.
  - ❖ We are broken people, and we are frequently unfaithful to God — like, daily or hourly.
  - ❖ Yet God never divorces us because of His grace and faithfulness.



# Grace and Faithfulness of God

- ❖ (Jer 3:20, 22a) Surely, as a treacherous wife leaves her husband, so have you been treacherous to me, O house of Israel, declares the LORD. ... Return, O faithless sons; I will heal your faithlessness.
- ❖ (Hosea 11:8-9) How can I give you up, O Ephraim? How can I hand you over, O Israel? How can I make you like Admah? How can I treat you like Zeboiim? My heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my burning anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not a man, the Holy One in your midst, and I will not come in wrath.

# Grace and Faithfulness of God

- ❖ **(James 4:4-5)** You adulterous people! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Or do you suppose it is to no purpose that the Scripture says, “He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us”?
- ❖ We are adulterous people. We commit adultery against God with our sins and idolatry.
- ❖ **(James 4:6a)** But he gives more grace.
  - ❖ God’s grace is greater than our sins.

# The Story of Hosea

- ❖ (Hosea 1:2-3a) When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.” So he went and took Gomer ...
- ❖ But then Gomer left Hosea for another man. (Hosea 3:1)



# The Story of Hosea

- ❖ (Q) If you're Hosea's friend, what would be your advice to Hosea? Would you ask Hosea to leave Gomer?
- ❖ At the very least, most everyone would be accepting of Hosea if he chooses to leave Gomer.
- ❖ God's advice to Hosea: go and bring her back, and love her, "even as the Lord loves the children of Israel." And Hosea bought her back for 15 shekels.  
(Hosea 3:1-2)

# The Story of Hosea

- ❖ The story of Hosea is the story of God and us.
- ❖ Hosea → God
- ❖ Gomer (the prostitute) → us
- ❖ We tend to love our idols rather than God.
- ❖ Against popular wisdom, God goes out and finds us and wins us back with His unconditional love. And He paid to bring us back with the price of Jesus's life.
- ❖ “Keep your marriage vows in such a way as to tell the truth about the unbreakable covenant love of Christ.” (John Piper)

# The Story Of Ian & Larissa



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## Summary of Study #8

- ❖ Divorce is hated by God, like it's an enemy of God.
- ❖ Both Jesus and Paul commanded strongly against divorce because it's against God's will, and distinguished "command" versus "permission," the latter as a concession that reflects human brokenness.
- ❖ But even in cases of spousal adultery, we should make all effort to seek reconciliation and restoration.
- ❖ God never divorces us, even though we are adulterous people. But He loves us with His great love and gives us grace and forgiveness.

## Additional References for Study #8

- ❖ “The Evolution of Divorce” by Bradford Wilcox
- ❖ “God's Heart Toward Divorce” by Ryan Kwan