

# Jesus' Teaching Concerning Marriage, Divorce, and Children Matt. 19:3-15

by R.A. Torrey

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*Jesus teaches that marriage is a sacred institution, divorce is only permissible on the ground of fornication, and children are the peculiar objects of His love and should be brought to Him for a divine blessing.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 19:3

**Topics:** "Children", "Marriage"

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## Description

R.A. Torrey discusses Jesus' teachings on marriage, divorce, and children, emphasizing the unnaturalness and wickedness of divorce as contrary to God's original design for marriage. He highlights that marriage is a sacred union intended to last a lifetime, and divorce is permitted only in cases of sexual immorality, reflecting the hardness of human hearts. Torrey also underscores Jesus' love for children, encouraging parents to bring their children to Him for blessings, as they are uniquely suited to receive the kingdom of heaven. The sermon calls for a return to the biblical understanding of marriage and the value of children in God's eyes.

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## Transcript

(Compare Mark 10:2-16; Luke 18:15-17)

### DISCOVERY OF THE FACTS

1. The Unnaturalness and Wickedness of Divorce, vv. 3-9 What class of persons do we see coming to Jesus in the first verse of the lesson? For what purpose did they come to Jesus? Did they often come to Him in this way? (Compare 16:1; 22:15-18, 35; Luke 11:53, 54.) What is the force of the word "tempting"? (See Am. R. V.) What was their object in thus "trying" or testing Jesus? (Compare John 8:6.) What question did they put to Jesus in order to try Him? Were they really seeking information?

Had Jesus already given any instruction on this point? (Matt. 5:31, 32.) What makes this question a very important one in our own day? To what did Jesus refer them for an answer (v. 4)? Was Jesus accustomed to refer men to the Old Testament Scriptures for an answer to their moral and religious questions? (12:3; 21:16, 42; 22:31; Mark 2:25; Luke 10:26.) What was Jesus' own view of the Old Testament Scriptures as an authority on moral and spiritual subjects? (John 10:35; Luke 24:27, 44; Luke 16:29, 31.)

What passage from the Old Testament did Jesus cite in this instance? (Compare Gen. 1:26; 5:2; Mal. 2:14, 15; Gen. 2:21-24; Eph. 5:31.) How did the Old Testament citation answer their question? Who has the superior claim upon a man, father, mother or wife? (v. 5; compare Eph. 5:31.) When a man forsakes his wife, or when a woman forsakes her husband, for father or mother or any one else, who are they disobeying? What do husband and wife become? How ought a husband to treat a wife? (Eph. 5:25-28.)

How ought a wife to treat a husband? (Eph. 5:22, 23.) Who has joined husband and wife together? For how long has He joined them together? (Ro. 7:2; 1 Cor. 7:10, 14.) What then ought no man dare to do? What difficulty did the apostles bring up at this point? Did it seem like a real difficulty? Where had Moses given commandment to give a bill of divorcement? (Deut. 24:1-4.) What answer did Jesus give to their difficulty (v. 8)? What is the point of the answer? Was the law of Moses anything beside a moral code?

Under a legislative enactment what must we regard besides the highest moral requirements in the case? For what reason did Moses permit divorce? Was this wise? Had divorce been a part of God's original plan? (Compare 2:24; 7:7.) What awful indictment did Jesus bring against any man who put away his wife and married another (v. 9)? Was there any exception? Does the word "fornication" refer only to an act of illicit intercourse committed by a person before marriage or is it the generic word applying to adultery as well? (Ezek. 16:8, 15, 29; 1 Cor. 5:1.)

Is adultery a sufficient ground of divorce in God's sight? (Jer. 3:8.) What indictment does Jesus bring against the man who marries a divorced woman? Does Paul allow any exception? (Ro. 7:2, 3; 1 Cor. 7:39.) Why does not Paul state the exception in these passages? Has a man whose wife has been untrue a right to put her away and marry another? 2. Is It Better to Marry or Not to Marry?, vv. 10-12 What was the disciples' reply to Jesus' teaching about divorce (v. 10)? What did that reveal of their own hearts?

According to the teaching of the Bible is it a good thing to marry? (Gen. 2:18; Prov. 5:15-19; 18:22; 21:9, 19; 1 Tim. 4:3; 5:11-15; 1 Cor. 7:1, 2.) Do conditions ever exist in which it is better not to marry? (1 Cor 7:8, 26-28, 32-35, 40.) What was Jesus' answer to the statement of His disciples that it was not expedient to marry? What is the point of this answer? 3. Jesus and the Children, vv. 13-15 Who were brought to Jesus just at this point? How old were these children? (Luke 18:15, R.

V.; Mark 10:16.) For what purpose were these children brought to Jesus? (v. 13; compare Mark 10:13; Luke 18:15.) Were these parents wise to bring their babes to Jesus? Would His laying His hands on them and praying do them any good? What ought we to do with our babes today? How did the disciples regard the bringing of the children to Jesus? Why did they think such action worthy of rebuke? While the disciples rebuked the mothers for bringing their children to Jesus, how did Jesus feel toward the disciples? (Mark 10:14.)

How does Jesus feel today toward any one who tries to keep little children from Him? What did Jesus say? What did He mean by saying, "Of such is the kingdom of heaven." (Compare 18:1-3; 11:25; 1 Cor. 14:20; 1 Peter 2:1, 2.) Is a child a member of the kingdom of heaven before it is born again? (John 3:3, 5.) Is a child peculiarly fitted to receive Jesus and thus be born again and to become a member of the kingdom of heaven? What did Jesus do with the children? (v. 15; compare Mark 10:16.)

Was any actual blessing imparted to these babes by Jesus laying His hands on them? How old must a child be before the Spirit of God can work in his heart? (Luke 1:15.) What prophecy was being fulfilled in Jesus taking the children in His arms? (Is. 40:11.) Do children of believing parents stand in any different relation to God and the kingdom from that in which children of unbelieving parents stand to Him? (1 Cor.

## 7:14.) CLASSIFICATION OF TEACHINGS

### 1. Jesus Christ

His wisdom; able to answer at any time any question put to Him, 3-9, 10-12; loyalty to the Old Testament Scriptures--to them He always appealed as a conclusive authority to answer every question, 4, 5, 6, 8; ready knowledge of the Scriptures, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8; high estimation of the marriage relation, 5-9; love for children, 13; power to bless children, 13-15.

### 2. The Disciples

Their low standard of conduct, 10; contempt for children, 13; Jesus' disagreement and displeasure with them, 14; compare Mark 10:14.

### 3. Marriage

Instituted by God, 6; its sacredness, 5-9; duration--as long as life lasts, 5-9; deep unity, 5, 6; may be inexpedient under some circumstances, 12.

### 4. Divorce

Abominable in the sight of God, 6; not a part of God's original plan, 8; permitted temporarily only because of the hardness of men's hearts, 8; testimony against the hardness of the hearts of men, 8; permissible only on one ground, 9; if undertaken on any other ground a disgusting sin, 9.

### 5. Little Children

The peculiar objects of Jesus' love, 13-15; should be brought to Jesus, 13, 14; can receive a divine blessing from Jesus, 14, 15; peculiarly fitted to receive the truth that will make them members of the kingdom of heaven, 14.

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Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/ra-torrey/jesus-teaching-concerning-marriage-divorce-and-children-matt-193-15/>

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