



Group Leader Guide

Series: Till Death Do Us Part – Week 1

Scripture: Matthew 19: 1-12

Leader Notes:

Leaders, this week we are kicking off a marriage series! We want to be a church that takes marriage seriously and invites the married people in our congregations to have a biblical marriage. People will be all over the place as we talk about this topic. There are divorced, never marrieds, re-marrieds, and a wide variety of others in your group. For some, this will be a difficult few weeks. Don't be afraid to approach this topic with sincerity, authenticity, and humility as we look at it in light of the Bible!

Bottom Line: Marriage is designed by God to display God's message.

Teaching Points: In Matthew 19: 1-12 we are confronted with Jesus' view on marriage. Jesus is asked a question by the Pharisees who are hoping to trip him up. They ask if is divorce permissible under any circumstances. This question is in relation to a debate that was taking place in Judaism. One side of the argument (we will call it the S-School) argued that you could only get divorced for sexual immorality. The other side of the argument (we will call it the H-School) argued that a man could divorce his wife for any reason he saw fit. The question was meant to trap Jesus. Either way he answered, someone would be mad. Jesus didn't take the bait. Instead, Jesus grounded marriage in the creation order of God. God designed marriage and God's desire is that marriage would last forever. Divorce is never supposed to be a first option. Instead, Jesus makes clear, divorce is a last resort that exists because sinners sometimes cannot fix things in a broken world.

BELONG – Begin by allowing the group a time to connect and care for one another! Take prayer requests and start the group in prayer.

Ice Breaker Questions:

As we start off a series about marriage, find out who in your group has been married the longest and the shortest amount of time! See who got married the youngest and the oldest!

What has being married taught you about following Jesus?

What is the one piece of advice you would give to someone who is about to get married? (If you are single (divorced or never married) you still have to answer this question. Keep it light hearted)

*** To the singles in the group, it's ok not to be married. Approach this series to learn about marriage in the knowledge that you are in a different place in life.

BELIEVE – Take time to study the Bible together.

Teaching About Divorce

19 Now when Jesus had finished these sayings, he went away from Galilee and entered the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ²And large crowds followed him, and he healed them there.

³ 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." ⁷ 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."

Teaching Points:

- The marriage relationship must become the relationship of highest loyalty for any married couple. (v.5, highlights the necessity for a married relationship to take precedence over every other relationship.)
- God's design is for marriage to be one man and one woman for one lifetime.
- Divorce is never God's preference, but is permissible in cases of adultery, abandonment, and abuse (1 Cor 7.)
- God's desire is for marriage to last a lifetime. This can only happen if spouses are willing to die to themselves.

Questions For Discussion

What does this passage teach us about God's design for marriage?

How does God's design for marriage look compared to what our culture's current view of marriage is?

How can we as Christians hold onto a biblical view of marriage and represent that view in a Christ like way in a world that doesn't see marriage the same way?

God's desire is for marriage to last a lifetime. What has to happen for marriages to actually do that?

When God's desire is not met and marriages don't last, how should we as Christians respond and move forward?

BECOME – Make application and determine to follow Christ better.

Close the group by praying for God to protect those who are married and make their marriages strong. For those who are not married, who are single, never married, or divorced, ask God to give them wisdom to live for his kingdom as fully as possible in this season.