

# Matthew 5:31

by Chuck Smith

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*Chuck Smith explores the biblical teachings on divorce, contrasting the Law of Moses with Jesus' perspective on marriage and separation.*

**Scripture:** Matthew 5:31

**Topics:** "Divorce", "Marriage"

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## Description

Chuck Smith discusses Jesus' teachings on divorce, emphasizing that the Law of Moses did not command divorce but provided regulations for it due to the hardness of people's hearts. He clarifies that the Pharisees misinterpreted the law, suggesting it encouraged divorce for any reason, while Jesus pointed back to God's original intention for marriage as a sacred union. Smith highlights that the only just cause for divorce recognized by Jesus is mental cruelty, and he asserts that the innocent party in a divorce due to adultery is free to remarry within the Christian faith. The sermon underscores the importance of understanding the true meaning of marriage and divorce in light of Jesus' teachings.

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## Transcript

"JESUS AND DIVORCE"

Intro: Value of systematic study. Background of text - 6 statements, "Ye have heard, but I..."

Not comparing law of Moses with His teaching, but Pharisees interpretation with His teaching.

I. WHAT DID THE LAW OF MOSES TEACH?

A. Deut. 24: 1-4, Matthew 19.

1. Word adultery not mentioned in excuses for divorce.

a. Punishment for adultery was death.

b. Thus, no need to mention.

c. Marriage did not end in divorce, but death.

2. Mosaic legislation to control divorce.

a. Men's estimate of the wife.

b. Felt they had a right to divorce for any reason.

c. Just kicked her out.

B. Three great principles.

1. Limited divorce to certain causes.

2. Must give wife bill of divorcement.

a. In it stating cause.

b. Otherwise might be stoned.

3. Prevented remarriage to same wife if she married some one else.

## II. TEACHING OF PHARISEES.

A. They said, "Law of Moses commanded even urged man to divorce his wife under certain conditions."

1. Never did command.

2. It just said, If you want a divorce it can only be under these conditions.

B. They interpreted Moses' word "uncleanness" to fit most any need.

C. The only fact that really mattered was the giving the bill of divorcement.

1. "Let him give her a writing of divorcement."

## III. WHAT DOES THE LORD SAY ON THE SUBJECT?

A. "But, I say unto you." Matt. 19:3-9

B. Jesus goes back, beyond the law of Moses to first principle given by God in the beginning.

1. Marriage is not civil contract or sacrament.

2. Two persons have become one flesh.

a. This was God's intention.

3. How do you then explain the law of Moses allowing divorce?

a. The hardness of their hearts.

C. God has never commanded anyone to divorce.

1. Pharisees suggesting this in Law of Moses.

D. There is only one just cause for divorce - "Mental cruelty."

1. Breakdown of laws today.

2. Jesus says it is a legitimate cause.

E. Effect of this teaching.

1. Penalty under law for adultery was stoning.

a. This then was changed.

2. Made divorce for cause of adultery legitimate.

a. Established the law on this matter.

F. One important and serious deduction.

1. The innocent party in a divorce on grounds of adultery is free to remarry.

2. If a Christian, he or she is entitled to a Christian remarriage. This only applies however to the innocent party.

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