



In 1 Corinthians 7, Paul affirms both singleness and marriage as good options for all Christians. But when he is asked about issues of separation and divorce, Paul applies the teaching of Jesus and the heart of God in a way that offers both grace and truth. There is hope for every marriage to stay together, there is hope for victims, and there is hope for life after divorce.

These questions are intended to deepen your experience of the message. Use them for your personal or family study time, or with an open Bible as you share the good news with your neighbor.

Group Ice-Breaker:

(1) When does Jesus make anyone feel “less-than”?

(2) When does Christianity teach a situation is too hopeless to be redeemed?

(3) how does both “a cross” and “a resurrection” proclaim the gospel?

**SAD REALITIES.** Read Isaiah 28:11-13 (NCB) and Jer 6:13-15 (GW). Marriage is tough, divorce is costly, and everyone is affected. How do these passages challenge us to fuse grace and truth when dealing with sad realities? Nathan said that if we take both discipleship and mercy seriously, “we need to tighten the screws on the truth side...and widen the road on the grace side.” Discuss.

**HOPE FOR THE MARRIED.** Read 1 Cor 7:1-40. Underline where Paul says marriage is good to be pursued (ex: v.9, 14, 28, 36, 38). This is rooted in Genesis 2:24. Now underline where Paul says separation and divorce are to be avoided (ex: v.10-11, 13, 27, 39). Jesus says this was God’s divine intention in Genesis (Matt 19:6; Mk 10:9).

**GOD’S MARRIAGE LAW.** Read Matt 19:1-6; Mk 10:9-11; Lk 16:18. Discuss Jesus’ general teaching on the permanence of marriage. Your marriage can be saved. Do you believe this?

**HOPE FOR THE DIVORCED.** Read Gen 21:14-20; Isa 49:13. God provides for and protects victims. Discuss how this truth tells us about the heart of God.

**JESUS IS AGAINST USING LAWS TO ABUSE THE HURTING.** Read Matt 11:28-12:14 & Mark 2:27. How did the religious leaders think of “the sabbath law”? What does Jesus mean “the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath?” Does Jesus break the law, or help us see the law’s intent?

**LEGAL DIVORCE WAS GOD’S IDEA.** Read Deut 24:1-4; Ex 21:10-11; Matt 19:7-8. Why did God set up divorce in the first place? Discuss how it protects victims from further victimization. Read Matt 5:32 & 19:9. How does Jesus acknowledge this to still be the case?

**WHAT THEN?** Read 1 Cor 7:10-15. Jesus emphasizes ideals—even with hyperbole (Matt 5:21-48). But Paul answers “what if separation/divorce happens?” Discuss his answers.