

My Family is a Mess – Surviving Divorce

Surviving as a Teen, Part 7

Open

- It's a sad fact today that the divorce rate is climbing ever faster. A few decades ago, it was a rare thing to have divorced parents, but now it's almost commonplace.
- If your family is going through a divorce, you're feeling lots of crazy emotions that don't make much sense most of the time, and you're hearing different advice from everybody, so today we'll clear some things up by looking at what divorce isn't.

Genesis 2:15, 18-24

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. ... The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the beasts of the field and all the birds of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds of the air and all the beasts of the field.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."

For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh.

When God made men and women, He intended for them to be married and in love their whole life long. In a fallen world, with fallen people who sometimes make bad choices, that isn't always how it works out, but it's still His plan.

Despite what anybody may tell you, marriage is an amazing, wonderful, lifelong thing that is a blessing to everybody involved. Our culture tries to cheapen marriage to make divorce seem easier, but God created it to be something awesome and unbreakable.

If your family is going through a divorce, this may be hard to hear, but know that it's not God's plan. God can and will use it for His glory, but it's not what He originally intended, and you can do things differently when you get a chance.

Now, with all the misinformation out there, let's take a look at what divorce is not!

DIVORCE IS NOT... GOD'S PLAN

1. Marriage = Good

"Marriage should be honored by all..." – Hebrews 13:4

- What does it mean to honor marriage?
- You saw in *Genesis 2* that God created marriage and intended it to be between a man and a woman for life.
- The author of Hebrews wrote that marriage should be honored, held up as being the good thing that it is.
- Marriage allows men and women to minister to each other (*Genesis 2:20-23*).
- Marriage helps men and women stay sexually pure (*1 Corinthians 7:8-9*).
- Not everyone is called to get married (see *Matthew 19:10* and *1 Corinthians 7:1*), but even those who are unmarried should honor it as a good thing.

2. Divorce = Bad

"I hate divorce," says the LORD God of Israel..." – Malachi 2:16a

- Not only does God think marriage is a great thing, but He hates divorce.
- You don't need to feel guilty if your parents are divorced, but it's important to know how God views it, so you can decide to make different choices in your life.
- Jesus said that "what God has joined together, let man not separate" in *Matthew 19:6*.
- Jesus said that the only time divorce is an option is when marital unfaithfulness is involved (*Matthew 5:31-32*).
- What are some reasons that people get divorced?

DIVORCE IS NOT... YOUR FAULT

1. God Doesn't Blame You...

"The son will not share the guilt of the father, nor will the father share the guilt of the son." – Ezekiel 18:20

- You never made your parents get a divorce, so God doesn't count their mistake against you. Their sin is theirs alone, not yours.
- The second part of *Ezekiel 18:20* says, *"The righteousness of the righteous man will be credited to him, and the wickedness of the wicked will be charged against him."*
- If your parents got a divorce or are currently getting a divorce, God doesn't hold you accountable. Your job is to be righteous and loving in the midst of it, and do things God's way when you're married.
- According to *Jeremiah 31:30*, you are judged for your own sin, and your parents for theirs.
- If you obey God and do things His way, He'll call you righteous, no matter what your parents have done (*Romans 2:13*).

2. And Neither Do Your Parents

“Which of you fathers, if your son asks for a fish, will give him a snake instead?” – Luke 11:11

- Hopefully you’ve got great parents, but even bad parents want the best for their children.
- Your parents, even if they make mistakes, really do love you and try to do their best for you. Chances are, they’re not blaming you for their mistakes.
- *Psalm 103:13* says that parents have compassion on their children.
- *Ephesians 6:4* says that parents should lovingly train and instruct their children (see *Proverbs 4:10* for one example of a father giving loving instruction).

DIVORCE IS NOT... THE END OF THE WORLD

1. Your Life Could Be Worse

“Eat the food as you would a barley cake; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel.” – Ezekiel 4:12

- Divorce is hard for everyone involved, but it’s not the end of the world.
- That verse from *Ezekiel 4* is meant to be humorous, but it serves the point – people have had to deal with a lot worse stuff than divorce through the years, like being commanded by God to cook food over human waste. ;)
- Can you think of anything else worse than finding out your parents are getting a divorce?
- People who have served God in the Bible have gone through a lot harder things than their parents getting divorced (*Hebrews 11:35-38*).
- Paul dealt with countless difficulties worse than his parents going through a divorce (*2 Corinthians 11:23-29*).
- Jesus went through harder stuff than a divorce (*Hebrews 5:8* and *1 Peter 4:1*).

2. Your Life Is Normal

“...do not be surprised at the painful trial you are suffering, as though something strange were happening to you.” – 1 Peter 4:12

- Divorce is hard, but going through hard circumstances is a normal fact of life. Don’t be surprised by it – trials are normal!
- Everybody has to deal with unpleasant stuff (*Philippians 1:29*).
- God will be a comfort to you during trials like your parents going through a divorce (*2 Corinthians 1:3-4*).

3. Your Life Will Be Better

“I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.” – Romans 8:18

- The difficulties you’re going through are tough, but they’re so insignificant compared to what God’s got in store for you, in this life and the next.
- Jesus promised that we’d have troubles, but He told us not to worry, because He overcame it all (*John 16:33*).

- Paul said that by going through “light and momentary troubles,” we’ll get “eternal glory that far outweighs them all” (2 *Corinthians 4:17*).
- Would you have said that Paul’s troubles were “light” and “momentary?”

DIVORCE IS NOT... WORTH HOLDING A GRUDGE

1. Don’t Be Bitter At God

“The LORD gave and the LORD has taken away; may the name of the LORD be praised.” – Job 1:21

- God didn’t intend for your parents to get a divorce, but He’s still God, He’s still good, and He’s still in charge, so you don’t have any right to be bitter at Him.
- If even Job, after losing his property and all his children, could praise God, you can still praise Him too.
- In *Habakkuk 3:17-18*, the prophet says that even if everything goes wrong, He will still rejoice in God.
- A root of bitterness will ruin your life and the lives of people near you (*Hebrews 12:15*).

2. Don’t Be Bitter At Your Parents

“But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” – Matthew 6:15

- You can’t get much clearer than this – don’t forgive your parents for their mistake, and God won’t forgive you.
- It’s not that He doesn’t want to forgive you, but that bitterness will cause your heart to harden toward Him.
- In *Matthew 18:21-35*, Jesus told the story of the unmerciful servant who refused to forgive a fellow servant. Because of his bitterness, his master allowed him to be tortured. Jesus warned that the same would happen to us if we didn’t forgive.
- Love your parents enough to forgive them and overlook their sins (*1 Peter 4:8*).

Close

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” – Romans 8:28

- If your family is going through a divorce, rest assured that God is in charge.
- God can use every bad situation, even a divorce, for good in the end.
- God can do the impossible, if you just believe (*Romans 4:17*).
- Just hold onto Him, keep believing, and keep praying.