

GOD CARES WHO WE DIVORCE

David Halbrook

Our culture's view of marriage continues changing--not for the better. Forgetting that marriage is God's idea, God's teaching about divorce is neglected or ignored, even in American religious groups.

We need God's permission for both marriage and divorce. Jesus said, *whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery* (Matthew 5:32), and *whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery* (Matthew 19:9). American law once agreed with Jesus' teachings but not anymore. Today, American law permits couples to divorce for any reason and immediately marry someone else. Jesus said that marrying a second time results in adultery, unless the first marriage ended due to sexual immorality. Homosexuality gets plenty of attention, but the outcry against the adultery Jesus mentioned is rare. Why???

Whether we are talking about what we eat, who we marry, or who we divorce, we must ask "What has God said on this subject?" and find the answer in the Bible. Can we help you do that?

-- *Editor's Note*: If you were wondering "Why all the obvious questions the past few weeks?," I hope now you see the answer. The "obvious" questions must be answered the same way as the challenging questions. Think about this and help others to do the same by helping them find our article in *Arkansas Weekly*. If you still have last week's article, consider handing it out together with this week's article.

We assemble each Sunday at 10AM, 10:45AM, 5PM & Wednesday at 7PM

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The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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THE LOGICAL CONSEQUENCES OF BELIEF IN GOD

Stan Cox

Have you ever thought about the fact that atheists, agnostics and skeptics speak a different language than those who profess a faith in God? A believer will look at the skies above and attribute the glories to His creator, the Almighty God of heaven. He approves the sentiment of King David, who wrote the 19th Psalm, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard. Their line has gone out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world" (1-4).

The skeptic attributes that same glory to chance and time, and denies that a divine hand is behind its existence.

A believer will consider his own existence, and the wonders of his physical body, and will declare, again with David, "I will praise You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Marvelous are Your works, And that my soul knows very well" (Psalm 139:4).

The atheist considers man the product of evolution. He again claims that chance and time have combined over millions of years to bring about the serendipitous present reality. He may admit that there is an appearance of design behind the physical universe, and the flora and fauna that now exists, but insists that scientific inquiry proves otherwise.

It is not surprising that the believer has a difficult time convincing the skeptic of his need to conform himself to the teachings of the Bible. If God does not exist, then the Bible is an ancient book, and of little value in guiding modern man. So, the sticking point is an unwillingness to accept the existence of God. David wrote, "The fool has said in his heart, 'There is no God.' They are corrupt, they have done abominable works, there is none who does good" (Psalm 14:1). Until such time as the atheist

accepts the reality of God's existence, he will not consider it either necessary or important to heed a book that claims to be a record of His will for man.

What is surprising, however, is the large number of individuals who believe that God does exist, and yet despite that belief, do not seek to know His will. Some will say, "I am a spiritual person, but not religious," and will depend upon their own feelings to validate their relationship with a Creator who is otherwise a mystery to them.

Others have the audacity to create a concept of God as they desire Him (or Her) to be. They are arrogant enough to state with authority that "their God" is a loving God, or a tolerant God, or a God who desires only happiness for His creation. They have no basis for that view other than it seems right to them, but they will state it confidently, and do not care to examine the possibilities further.

If I might be so bold to say it, this is not logical. It makes no sense at all to acknowledge the existence of a supreme being who has the ability to create a universe and the life in it, and then be unconcerned about knowing who that God is, and what He is like. And it is just as illogical to think that you can know who He is and what He is like unless He has revealed Himself to you! Surely such a Being as this is as different to you and I as we are to the lowliest amoeba or paramecium.

The Bible makes this claim clearly in Isaiah 55:8. "For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," says the LORD." The apostle Paul certainly agreed, and wrote to the Corinthians, "Even so no one knows the things of God except the Spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11). The wonderful thing about this passage is, however, the claim made by the apostle that, "God has revealed them to us through His Spirit" (10). God is not inscrutable. We can know His will because He has chosen to make it known. That is what the Bible does for man, it reveals God's will to him.

And, it reveals that God is just. He is a God that will reward those who obey Him, and will punish the man who disobeys His will. It is only logical that if we believe that God exists, it is in our best interest to find out what He expects of us, and how we can please Him. The wise man of Ecclesiastes understood this, and wrote, "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all" (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

Do you believe that God exists? Well, that belief has a logical consequence. If you do, then you must seek Him out, to determine what He requires of you!

(<http://navarrechurchofchrist.net/Bulletins/nm072912.htm>)

SING TO THE LORD

Joe Price

Worshiping God in song deserves an honored place of respect as a cherished chance to praise His name for all His wondrous works.

I will praise the name of God with a song, And will magnify Him with thanksgiving (Psa. 69:30)

It is good to give thanks to the LORD, And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High. (Psa. 92:1)

Oh, sing to the LORD a new song! For He has done marvelous things; His right hand and His holy arm have gained Him the victory. (Psa. 98:1)

Praise the LORD! Sing to the LORD a new song, And His praise in the assembly of saints. (Psa. 149:1)

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. (Col. 3:16)

These and many more Scriptures teach us important lessons about worshiping God in song:

1) *Singing is an important and serious part of our worship to God.* It is a time when we express profound gratitude and praise to God for His wondrous works of creation, redemption and provisions. We must sing "with the spirit" and "with the understanding", not with casual disregard for God and His honor (1 Cor. 14:15).

2) *We do not sing to amuse ourselves or to impress others.* Among other things, worshipful singing expresses joy, cheer and good courage (Jas. 5:13). It is not entertainment. Singing motivated to be seen (heard) by others is not true worship and is unacceptable to God (cf. Matt. 6:5).

3) *Worshiping God in song deserves our best effort.* We must be fully engaged, not halfheartedly mouthing words without thought and meaning. Our intent is to make melody in our heart to the Lord (Eph. 5:19). Singing demands we fully focus our thoughts as we sing praise to God and as we teach and admonish one another (Col. 3:16).

Of Christ it was said, "*I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You*" (Psa. 22:22; Heb. 2:12). Similarly, let us raise a joyful shout of praise to God our Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer (Psa. 66:1-4; 95:1-2; 98:4-6; 100:1-5).

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