

Don't Mess with God's Design

2026-05-25 • PASTOR MATT ROSE



Matthew 19

FOR THE LEADER

These questions help you run the conversation. They are not your study. Get into the passage yourself first, because your group needs what God taught you, not just a list of questions. These also lean on Sunday's message, so a few will not land for anyone who missed it. Watch it before you lead.

WHAT THE MESSAGE WAS ABOUT

The Pharisees asked Jesus to pick a side in a rabbinic debate: which reasons make divorce acceptable? Jesus refused the question and went back to Genesis instead. What God has joined together, no one should separate. Pastor Matt's point is that refusing to keep an exit clause changes how a marriage gets fought for. He was also direct about the line: safety and divorce are two separate questions, and physical abuse means getting to a safe place immediately. And he insisted on hope: a marriage that looks finished is not beyond what God can do.

To get started

- What is something you committed to before you knew how hard it would be?

Looking back at the message

Some people in the room will be divorced. Nothing here is an audit of anyone's past.

- 1 Pastor Matt said there is something liberating about not giving yourself an out. Does that sound liberating to you, or frightening? Why?
- 2 Pastor Matt drew a firm line between safety and divorce: physical abuse means getting to a safe place immediately, and that is a separate question from ending a marriage. Why does keeping those two questions separate matter?
- 3 Pastor Matt said the reason couples usually give for divorce is not dramatic. It is: we grew apart. What do you make of growing apart being the most common ending? OPTIONAL

Looking at the passage

Read Matthew 19:3-9 aloud. Note that Jesus answers a question with a different question.

- 4 Read Matthew 19:3-6. What are the Pharisees actually asking Jesus, and what does he quote back to them?
- 5 The Pharisees ask about permission. Jesus answers with design, going back to how God made marriage in the first place. What changes when you start there?
- 6 In verse 8 Jesus says Moses permitted divorce because your hearts were hard. What is the difference between what God permits and what God intends?
- 7 Look at the disciples' reaction in verse 10: if this is the deal, better not to marry at all. What does that reaction tell you about how high Jesus set the bar? OPTIONAL

Bringing it home

Aim at how people fight for something, not at grading anyone's marriage.

- 8 Pastor Matt said marriage is not about your happiness but is a picture of Christ's love for the church. Does that land on you as a relief or a burden?
- 9 How do you love someone well in a season when you do not feel loved back?
- 10 Pastor Matt's repeated answer to complicated situations was: seek him first. What does seeking God first look like when a situation is already tangled?
- 11 Is there a relationship you have quietly decided is finished? You do not have to say which one. OPTIONAL

The group together

If anything here raises a safety concern, stop the study and involve a pastor.

- 12 What would make this group a place where a struggling marriage could be honest without it becoming gossip?
- 13 Pastor Matt told a story of a marriage that looked far past repair and was reconciled anyway. What does hope look like when you cannot promise an outcome?
- 14 Who in your life needs someone to fight for their marriage alongside them, not just advise them about it?

BEFORE YOU FINISH

What is one thing you could do this week that treats a commitment as something to build on rather than reconsider?

You might pray about

- For marriages in this group that feel more like an arrangement than a covenant
- For anyone whose situation is not safe, that they would find help
- For those carrying regret over a marriage that ended
- For the willingness to seek God before seeking an exit

