

## Are You Testing Jesus?

In Mark 10:1-12, the Pharisees seek to test Jesus by asking about the law's provisions for divorce. Jesus instead talks about God's design for marriage, revealing that the law merely expresses minimum requirements for acceptable behavior, and not the ideal standard for our lives.

### Mark 10:1-12

<sup>1</sup> And he left there and went to the region of Judea and beyond the Jordan, and crowds gathered to him again. And again, as was his custom, he taught them.

<sup>2</sup> And Pharisees came up and in order to test him asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" <sup>3</sup> He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" <sup>4</sup> They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of divorce and to send her away." <sup>5</sup> And Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote you this commandment. <sup>6</sup> But from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female.' <sup>7</sup> 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, <sup>8</sup> and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two but one flesh. <sup>9</sup> What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

<sup>10</sup> And in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. <sup>11</sup> And he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, <sup>12</sup> and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery."

### Discussion Questions

1. Like the Pharisees, we often test God's design for life. How do you look for limits with God, ultimately seeking ways in which you can feel self-righteous? How do you look for license, advocating for as much personal freedom as possible, while still "feeling OK" with God?
2. When Jesus is asked about divorce, he instead wants to talk about marriage. Are you comfortable with the fact that this passage does not mention provisions for divorce? Why or why not? Why is it important for Jesus to speak positively about God's design rather than engage politically about stipulations made by the law?
3. How can God remain married to His bride (the church) without sending us away with a certificate of divorce for our adultery? Is God's covenant this certain? If so, how should that shape how we live our lives? In this vein, how ridiculous is the story of Hosea and Gomer in Hosea 1-3?
4. We discussed the law's role of "expressing the limits of socially acceptable behavior" and not "describing God's ideal behavior" for His people. In what areas of our lives do we settle for socially acceptable behavior and not for ideal behavior? How have we been hardened by sin?
5. God, in His grace, does provide Biblical reasons for divorce: adultery (Matthew 19) and abandonment (1 Corinthians 7). How does wrestling with God's design for marriage affect how we engage His provisions for divorce? How should this shape how we love and serve people struggling in their marriage? How should it influence how we fight for our own?