

The “D” Word

While at the hospital the other day, I picked up a magazine with Dr. Phil and his wife on the cover promising to tell me 15 keys to maintain love in my marriage. Smack in the middle of Dr. Phil’s suggestions was a really interesting tidbit. “Never use the ‘d’ word.” He went on to explain that no matter what else is going on in the marriage, no matter what we are arguing about or how mad we get, we should never, ever say, “Do you think we should get a *divorce*?” His advice was if we don’t even entertain the idea, we won’t ever end the marriage.

Why can Dr. Phil say that and people think it is amazing advice and talk about how wonderful Dr. Phil is for making these ground breaking claims? However, when preachers of the gospel have given this advice over the years people everywhere have gotten mad and accused us of being judgmental and uncaring. What is the difference?

In **Malachi 2:16**, we learn what God thinks about divorce. He hates it. Yes, I know there is one scriptural ground for divorce and, yes, I know there are some divorced among us who were put away unlawfully through no fault of their own. Nothing in this article is meant to chastise these good brethren who are doing the best they can to serve the Lord as He has commanded. Rather, I just wanted to point out that we Christians are getting way too comfortable with the “d” word.

One of the greatest ways to obey God’s word regarding the permanence of marriage is to follow this advice. Don’t even talk about divorce (unless you are in an unlawful marriage). Never even voice it as an option. The moment you do is the moment you start talking about it and the moment you start thinking about it.

The next thing you know you start thinking your case is an exception to what you know Jesus clearly stated. Then you start thinking it is really not so bad because you know other people who have done it. The next thing you know you are talking to the elders or the preacher about why you are getting a divorce and there is nothing they can do about it, hoping they will say it is ok.

In **Matthew 19:4-6**, the Pharisees asked if it was ok to divorce for any reason. Jesus responded very clearly. “What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (ESV). Jesus makes it clear that divorce is a sin (with one exception—**Matthew 19:9**).

We must not think we are free to divorce as long as we don’t remarry. We must recognize that marriage is forever. We are to be committed to our spouse and to our God to whom we made our vows. Therefore, we should not even mention the “d” word.

Perhaps if we follow this advice we can maintain our love and stay together until parted by death, just like we promised.

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