

RESOURCES FOR BIBLICAL LIVING

DIVORCE

BEFORE YOU SAY "I DON'T"



LOU PRIOLO

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Lou Priolo, series editor

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P U B L I S H I N G

P.O. BOX 817 • PHILLIPSBURG • NEW JERSEY 08865-0817

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Italics within Scripture quotations indicate emphasis added.

Some material in this booklet has been adapted from chapter 14 of *The Complete Husband* (P&R, 2017).

The material in the appendix has been adapted from *Picking Up the Pieces* (P&R, 2012), pages 207–212.

Box graphic © www.istockphoto.com

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Priolo, Lou.

Divorce : before you say “I don’t” / Lou Priolo.

p. cm. — (Resources for biblical living)

ISBN-13: 978-1-59638-078-3 (pbk.)

1. Divorce—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Divorce—Biblical teaching. I. Title.

BT707.P75 2007

248.8’46—dc22

2007029746

Marriage is a very difficult thing to get out of without sinning. And the fact is, sin has its consequence—misery.

Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. (Gal. 6:7–9)

The purpose of this booklet is twofold: first, to help inform you of the misery associated with initiating an unbiblical divorce; and second, to persuade you not to “lose heart in doing” what is “good” for your family (and what will most glorify God).

Now, perhaps your mind is made up, and there is little I can do to persuade you to reevaluate your course of action. But please, at least be willing to hear me out so that before you squeeze the trigger, you will be certain of what you are in for. Besides, it will take me only a few short pages to make my case. Your future happiness is certainly worth a small investment of your time.

Now, I know that my manner of writing is very direct. All right, it’s downright “in your face.” But you see, as a biblical counselor with over twenty-three years’ experience in trying to save marriages, I know all too well the misery you will be facing if you pursue a divorce on less than biblical grounds. In all my years of counseling, I do not recall even one Christian who has not suffered tremendously for making the decision you are contemplating. Most of them have come back in one way or another and acknowledged that the suffering they experienced

was much greater than they had initially thought it would be. More significantly, they invariably told me that if they had to do it over again, they wouldn't. So please be tolerant of my desperate plea to keep you from falling off a very high cliff.

If you haven't yet closed the book (or thrown it against the wall), thank you.

"You're welcome. But what of all this misery you promised me?"

I can't cover in this booklet *all* the consequences you are likely to experience, but I will do what I can in the allotted time. Let's be clear about one thing, though: I'm not the one promising the consequences—God is!

To begin with, if you initiate an unbiblical divorce, *you will be confirming to all your brothers and sisters in Christ that you have a hard heart.*

Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to give her a certificate of divorce and send her away?" He said to them, "*Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.*" (Matt. 19:3–9)

When a Christian initiates an unbiblical divorce, it's *always* because he has hardened his heart against God.¹

1. And I daresay that it is *always* because someone is influencing him to do so. Chances are excellent that someone in your life is influencing your thinking in this area in one way or another. Have you considered the extent to which such a person is

Some time ago, I was in my office, trying to convince a woman that she didn't have biblical justification for the divorce she was seeking. No matter how hard I tried to get her to look at what the Scriptures teach, she wouldn't be persuaded. As I began pressing home the Scriptures, trying to convict her with them, she seemed to be impervious to them. Although I was throwing everything in the Book at her, she seemed impenetrable. I couldn't get the truth of God's Word around the roadblocks she had set up in her heart. Finally, she tried to justify her sinful plans by saying, "You don't know my heart. Only God does, and He understands." To which I responded, "You are right about that. God *does* know your heart, and He understands that it's *hard!*"

And hardness of heart is a very serious thing. To be hard-hearted is to willfully and stubbornly refuse to do what God tells you to do. Like Pharaoh, who was determined to do things his way, a hard-hearted person will not listen to God. And as He did with Pharaoh, God will see to it that He is not mocked.

Next, there is the fact that *you will bring shame to the name of Christ* by your divorce. Rather than glorifying God by learning how to suffer for righteousness (let alone learning how to turn your difficult marriage around), you will do exactly the opposite—you will bring reproach to His name. As Nathan the prophet explained to David after David had committed adultery with Bathsheba and tried to cover it up by having her husband Uriah the Hittite killed, "by this deed you have given occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme" (2 Sam. 12:14; see Rom. 2:24). Your divorce will be a public testimony to the fact that Jesus Christ and the Word of God do not have what it takes to help people solve their problems without sinning.

You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God? For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you," just as it is written. (Rom. 2:23–24)

giving you biblical advice?