

Community Groups are used extensively as the primary vehicle for discipleship at The Gathering and run on a quarter system. There is one in the fall, one in the winter and one in the spring. During the summer weeks we don't meet in Community Groups but we still offer the Growth Guides as a tool to help you grow personally. The Growth Guides are designed to help you dig deeper into the weekly sermon on your own or with your family and are available each week along with the note sheets at church as well as online.

**COMMUNITY GROUPS ARE BETTER WHEN MEMBERS COME PREPARED. THIS GUIDE HAS BEEN PROVIDED AS A TOOL FOR THAT.**

## Consider...

Use the summary and discussion below to review and apply this week's message:

### Message Summary

In our "Wait What" series, we're taking 6 weeks to work through the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> chapters of Luke and to talk about some difficult subjects because Jesus talked about them. In Week 1, we looked at Luke 16:1-15 and read about Jesus and money. This week, we read Luke 16:16-18 – a passage where Jesus brings up the subject of divorce. Here are 3 things that we can takeaway from what Jesus said:

1. **It's always about the heart.** Our Big Idea says, "the Law leads to loopholes, but the Spirit leads to life." Jesus didn't bring up divorce in order to isolate people who had sinned, but to highlight the hard, religious hearts of the Pharisees that wanted to set, keep, and bend rules in their own favor. In fact, when we read Matthew 19:8, we find that the very reason divorce was allowed to begin with was the hardness of men's hearts. When we dig even deeper, we find that the reason God hates divorce is because sinful men were using divorce to abuse women who had no recourse (Malachi 2:16). God hates divorce because divorce hurts people and God loves people!
2. **When is divorce allowed?** What if we have honestly done the hard work of the soul and have stopped looking for loopholes to leave a covenant? Are there times that divorce is permitted in the Bible? We find 3 occasions that could be grounds for divorce: adultery (sexual immorality), abandonment, and abuse. Of course, divorce is never a command, and as believers, our heart should always be that the grounds we may have for divorce could become grounds for healing, reconciliation and restoration.

### Discuss

Use the following questions to review and apply the points learned in the message.

- What have been some of your personal "wait, what" moments in your faith? What truths in the Bible have surprised you? How does knowing that Jesus talked about the hard things we face give us hope when we face them?
- Read Matthew 19:3-10. Why does verse 3 say the religious leaders asked the question about divorce in the first place? Some versions say that they were trying to trap Jesus. How is divorce used to trap us?
- Instead of talking about divorce, Jesus talks in verses 4-6 about marriage. Why do you think He did that?
- Compare and contrast Jesus' response in verse 9 with the Pharisee's question in verse 3. Why do you think the disciples said what they did in verse 10?
- Paul shared 2 interesting findings in the message. First, that attending church together, having a shared belief system, and an active faith in the home can reduce the divorce rate by 50%. The second was that two-thirds of unhappy marriages will become happy marriage within 5 years if people stay married and don't divorce. How do you respond to these?
- Malachi 2:16 is clear that God hates divorce, but He doesn't hate divorced people. In fact, He hates divorce because divorce hurts people and God loves people. Take the time to close your group in prayer for people who have felt the pain of divorce and for people seeking to honor the Lord in marriage. Thank Him for the promise of His constant love for us (Romans 8:39) and for the life that the Spirit gives us that destroys the power of condemnation (Romans 8:1-2).