

The Perils of Divorce

I am getting more and more children who are products of divorce. Over the years I see cultural stress (pornography, economics) breaking up families. This is what I think about all of this:

Dear Know-it-all,

I am at a cross roads in my life. I believe the decision I make about my marriage in the next 3 months is going to be paramount in the life of my children in the next 30. My mate, spouse, husband, center of the universe for me has betrayed me, hurt me, crushed me. I trusted him because I believed he was Gods wonderful husband. Something terrible has brought me to the desire to divorce him. I love him, I have forgiven him and I will always love him. I have been praying for this man since I was 14. I knew he was gregarious, fun loving, fearless and loyal. He was a Marine. He loved Jesus. He had a plan. I was ready and we began . . . Sure I knew he was a sinner – we all are, but I never believed he was so hateful – the enemy to my soul. He really could be full of himself sometimes, the only child of a divorced mom. He acts like he is the center of the universe. He could play different characters well. But I believed that I was precious to him. His beloved. Like Jesus and I, he was my lover, husband, and papa to my kids and was becoming my caretaker; tending and keeping our household for a future.

In my support group of women who have been abused I feel stronger. I have every Biblical right to divorce him yet many Christians I love and trust tell me to wait. He is an angry and sorry man. I cannot talk to him without feeling crushed. I can survive by staying the course of divorce. He has not lived in our home for over 7 months and my children are doing okay. The baby has her older brother and sister to distract her. The older ones (7 & 5) are doing better in some ways, worse in others. When there was yelling and tension, they would wet the bed, now that he is gone, they have nightmares. I would worry about what they were learning from this household.

I feel better as I think about divorcing him because I feel more in control and there is no tension in the house. I wish that I could change him but I know that I am the only one I can change. I don't want to talk to him or discuss our relationship until after the divorce. Talking is too hard. If he doesn't try to reconcile or pursue me when we are divorced then I know

the marriage wasn't worth saving. Do you agree?

Sincerely,
Determined to be Single Again

Dear Determined,

I know the pain you are experiencing right now is more than you have ever endured. The loss of trust in a trusted mate. The physical sensation is no less than all of the words that describe hurt in the Thesaurus. Cramp, squeeze, cut, bruise, tear, torment, afflict, kick, puncture, do violence to, slap, abuse, flog, whip, torture, gnaw, stab, pierce, maul, cut up, harm, injure, wound, lacerate, sting, bite, inflict pain, burn, crucify, tweak, thrash, punch, pinch, spank, punish, trounce, scourge, lash, cane, switch, wallop, slug.

The life changing events that cause pain occur sometimes too rapidly and sometimes too slowly. Let me help you understand what might happen in the future. If you are prepared you may be able to help yourself and your children.

When the divorce happens the peace you are feeling now because you have regained order and control in your household will turn to loneliness. Your children will become your friends and your confidants. The line between openness and emotional incest is very fuzzy.

The confidence you feel now when you discipline and instruct your children and make everyday decisions will become less because you will have no other adult to support you who loves your children as much as you do.

Your children will always worry about the fragility of relationship. If you can dump daddy, when will you dump me? Issues of trust will be issues for them forever. If one half of themselves cannot coexist with the other half of themselves how will they ever be whole?

The couples who are your friends and invite you over for dinner and picnics will grow fewer. When you are with other couples you will begin to feel 'less'.

You will spend more time with single mothers. Some will whine, some will support and soon many will be bitter, not better. Men think with one brain cell at a time. They are designed by God to pursue and have dominion over, to tend and keep and to bear fruit and multiply. If they cannot do that with the mother of their children they will move on. Many women believe their husbands abandoned them when in reality the husband had no choice in leaving.

The economy will not rally. In spite of the fact that he never gave you enough to feed the kids and buy diapers and spent too much in bars, you will have to leave your precious children with strangers more often than you want. You have no control over what they are exposed to when they are out of your sight. You will have to try to earn a meager living doing a job that is not your gift but you will be grateful for a job.

You will still wonder: when will he see the children, how will it go for them? When will he pay child support? What is causing the change in my child's (children's) behavior? Why are my child's ear's infected? Did she eat something she was allergic to? Where is he now?

Eventually you may find a new and better relationship. He will have wonderful courting behavior and your children will like him as he treats you with kindness and respect. You will have to decide if he is for real and hope he has not staged all of this to get your daughters. You will also have to watch your children torn between father and stepfather.

Some days you will wish that your 'ex' would never return or that he would die. Or you will wish that your 'ex' would spend more time with the kids because they love him so.

But he will be your 'ex' because he is not going to become the Christian husband you have prayed for when you divorce him.

I have not been inside your marriage so I cannot agree or disagree with your decision. I do however believe in a God of miracles, One who allows sin to surface so restoration and repentance can glorify Himself. He will restore your love for each other if you each walk toward Him until you are together again. Good counseling costs far less than divorce. If you

are disobedient in your motive for divorce (because it is easier for you than staying married) God may deal with your sin. The word marriage is about two becoming one. Separating that out is impossible. Divorce is a tool Satan uses in our world to destroy. He is the enemy. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Begin by using words in counsel with your husband and someone you trust perhaps your pastor or trusted friend.

Sincerely,

Know it all.