

GOSPEL PEARLS

No joking at all

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Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason? "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your

hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others—and there are those who choose to live like eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it." (Matthew 19: 3-12)

Jesus proves to be far more demanding than Moses in respecting fidelity in marriage so much so that the disciples comment on His words stating that it is not good to get married. It is never allowed for any reason to separate what God has joined together. This is because love is not a feeling but, first and foremost, an act of will that must be guided and enlightened by the truth. With human strength alone, it is difficult to remain faithful to our marriage vows for a lifetime. However, with the indispensable assistance of Grace and by entrusting ourselves to Jesus who loved us first, we can succeed where humanly we would be prone to fall. Do you understand that without God's help you can do no good? And are you convinced that when Jesus said that divorce is never, ever permissible he was serious?