



THE PRAYER CLOSET

*Transforming Lives Through Intercessory
Prayer And Fasting*

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE PRAYER CLOSET MINISTRIES, INC.

VOLUME III

MAY, 2000

ISSUE 4

PRAYER AND DIVORCE

Marriage is ordained for the benefit and happiness of humankind. Wedding vows express the responsibilities of a man and woman that desire to enjoy that happiness and those benefits. A committed man, a committed woman, and a committed Lord make a marriage work. A wedding doesn't make a marriage work—a wedding is simply a beautiful way to begin a marriage. It takes hard work and faithful dependence on the Lord Jesus Christ in order to make a marriage work.

Nowhere in Scripture is divorce treated as a part of God's plan for marriage. Nowhere in the wedding vows is there a clause that allows for divorce. The Lord Jesus Christ declares that Moses wrote in the clause on divorce because of human weakness, disobedience, and rebellion (**Mark 10:5**). Divorce is always an offense to God and a sign of failure. It is breaking the marriage covenant that is made before Him and to Him.

Nobody really wins in a divorce. Actually everyone loses in divorce: the couple, their kids, their family, their friends, and even society. The gains derived from a divorce do not compensate for the greater loss of God's ideal—which is one man married to one woman until death parts them. It is a tragic event that wounds and destroys. Every divorce is tragic and regrettable. It causes widespread pain.

However, divorce does exist. It is a reality that confronts us on a daily basis. As the divorce rate continues to climb, the church of Jesus Christ is being confronted more and more with divorced people and broken families.

This issue of *The Prayer Closet* will focus on praying for those who are divorced. Through prayer, divorced people can be helped, healed, and strengthened. It is a powerful tool in helping those whose lives have been torn apart by divorce. This issue will also provide insights on how to pray for the children of divorce. Divorce is traumatic for children; they need intercession as much as the parents who are divorcing do. There are also suggestions on how to pray for the parents of children who divorce. This is often a forgotten group in this situation. The parents of children who are divorcing often suffer in silence. They need help and healing also. A powerful way to minister to these individuals is to intercede for them.

ISSUE 4 - HIGHLIGHTS

PRAYER AND DIVORCE

The Christian Response to Divorce
Praying for Those Who are Divorced
Praying for the Children of Divorce
Praying for the Parents of Divorce
When a Marriage is in Trouble
Praying for the Families in Your Church
The Keywords of Powerful Praying

Dr. Kevin Meador, 595 Stratton Road, Decatur, MS 39327 (601) 635-2180

EMAIL: prayercloset_1998@yahoo.com WEB PAGE - www.prayerclosetministries.org

The Christian Response To Divorce

In this age of an ever-growing divorce rate, how should Christians respond? *Christians should respond first and foremost with prayer.* Too many times Christians often want to gossip about those that are having marriage problems or who are divorced. Christians want to take sides and blame the other spouse for the problems in the marriage or for the divorce. In fact, Christians want to lament and complain about the divorce rate and the tragedy of broken families. Yet, how many Christians want to humble themselves before God and cry out for a change in these matters? Rather than gossiping and taking sides, Christians should be standing in the gap and pleading for marriages and for those who are divorced. Rather than complaining and lamenting the sad state of affairs in marriages and families, Christians should be standing in faith and prayer against divorce and the breakdown of families. Through prayer, the power of God can be released into lives and marriages. Change and healing can take place through the power of God that is released through prayer. Yet, we do not pray about these matters and then we are surprised when marriages end and families breakup. If we want to stem the tide of divorce and family breakups, then we must pray! If we want to see divorced people and children healed and help, we must pray!

Christians should respond with a message of repentance and hope. Divorce is a deviation from God's standard. The church must stand firm in this truth. The church must call for repentance when a marriage ends. Yet, at the same time, the church is to offer the message of hope to those who are divorced. We must proclaim that God is a God of mercy, compassion, and hope. He can and will enable a person to heal and put his or her life back together again. He can forgive and restore. God does not abandon or throw away those who are divorced. He is a God who forgives, heals, and blesses. The church must declare this message to those who are divorced.

The church must respond with love and forgiveness. Too many times divorced people feel as if they are judged and condemned by the church

if they are divorced. They are made to feel as if they are inferior to the others in the church. The church cannot compromise God's standard for marriage. His standard is one man-one wife for life. Yet, when divorce does take place, the church must offer love and forgiveness to the person. The divorced person must receive ministry, acceptance, and love from the body of Christ. After all, isn't that what the church stands for in this world? The church is to be a "hospital" for the wounded and broken. When the church accepts the wounded and broken, it becomes God's hands and voice, transforming people and situations. When the church does not do this, it forfeits the opportunity to be salt and light in a world that desperately needs the mercy, forgiveness, and healing of our God (**Matthew 5:14-16**). A divorced person must receive love, forgiveness, and ministry if he or she is going to be healed and then move on from this tragic event.

The church must respond to divorce with mourning. This may sound like an unusual response to divorce. Yet, we, the body of Christ, have become hardened to the fact of divorce. Divorce is so commonplace in our society that we no longer experience grief and mourning over it. In a sense, we are accustomed to divorce. We may express surprise and shock. Unfortunately, many people love to know the "juicy" details of what happened to the marriage. They often love to gossip about what happened in the marriage and who is at fault. But, we no longer mourn. Our hearts are no longer broken. Why should the church mourn? We should mourn because God's standard for marriage has been defied. We should mourn because this couple is losing the marital blessings and happiness that God has ordained for marriage. We should mourn because the child or children will not have both natural parents at home to create an environment of stability, love, discipline, guidance, and material provision. We should mourn because a child or children will face the turmoil of divorce and of a broken home. We should mourn because society is receiving a message that divorce is acceptable even among Christians. We should mourn because when a marriage dies, a dream also dies—a dream for a happy marriage, a dream for a happy family life, and a dream for two parents who love each other to share that love together with their children.

The fact that we do not mourn is closely connected to our first response to divorce. As stated earlier, our first response to divorce is to pray for those involved. Yet, we will not do this as fervently and consistently as we should unless we mourn over this. In fact, we do not stand in the gap for marriage and family because we do not hate the sin of divorce. If you want to be a powerful and effective intercessor, you need to develop a hatred of divorce and the breakup of families. Our complacency in these matters has made us lazy in interceding for marriages and families.

Will you ask God to remove your complacency concerning this? Will you ask God to create in you a hatred of divorce and the breakup of the family? God hates divorce (**Malachi 2:16**). Pray for God to create in you the same hatred that He has for divorce and the breakup of families. Pray also that He will give you a compassionate and forgiving spirit for those who are divorced.

Father, I praise You for Your wisdom in creating marriage and family. You are such a good and gracious God. These are precious gifts. Father, create in me a hatred for divorce. Cause me to feel the same way about divorce as You do. Deliver me from gossip, faultfinding, and complacency. Cause me to stand in the gap and battle for marriages and families. Empower me to make a difference in marriages and families through my intercession. Amen.

Praying For Those Who Are Divorced

The following are suggestions on ways that you can intercede for those who are divorced. These are suggestions that you can use in order to pray for them. You can use these prayer requests to pray for yourself if you are divorced. If you feel led to, you can develop your own from them. At the same time, you need to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading as you pray. He can grant you insight in how to pray for each particular situation. Your strategy for intercession can be built on prayer requests developed from the Word of God and the Holy Spirit's particular insight.

God (John 3:16; Acts 4:12; Matthew 11:28; Psalm 63:1, 73:25-26). Pray that God would use the pain and the difficulty of divorce to draw this person to Himself. If the divorced person is lost, pray that God would use this situation to bring him or her into a right relationship with Himself. If the divorced person is saved, pray that God would deepen his or her intimacy with Himself. Ask God to use this time as an opportunity to draw the person into a closer, more unique relationship with Himself. God is the only hope and refuge of this person, whether the person is lost or saved. Pray that God will use the pain and the difficulty to show this person this life-changing truth.

- (2) *Pray that God would give this person a spirit of repentance (Acts 5:31; 1 John 1:9). In *Divorce and the Gospel of Grace*, L. Woodson writes, "Even though a divorce may be the best of all solutions to a hopelessly shattered relationship, there is still a sense of guilt. Divorce was just never meant to be." Divorce is rebellion against God's standard. It is something that God hates. Pray that this person will turn to God in true confession and repentance concerning this sin. Ask God to create true conviction in this person so that he or she will truly turn to God with this failure.*
- (3) *Ask God to deliver this person from false, subjective guilt (Romans 8:1; Philippians 4:6). There is a guilt that leads a person to turn to God in confession and repentance. There is also a guilt that leads a person to despair and hopelessness. Failure is not final with the child of God. Every day the Christian is enabled to begin again. He or she fails at many points. Yet, God forgives and restores. Divorce is not the unpardonable sin. God does forgive the sin of divorce! There is no need for any person to exist under the weight of guilt when God forgives and accepts. There is no "magic wand" that a person can use to remove the guilt that a divorced person may experience. Yet, you need to pray that God will deliver this person from false guilt. Ask Him to cause this person to bring all the feelings of guilt that he or she may be feeling to Him.*
- (4) *Pray that this person will pour out his or her*

- (1) *Pray that God would use this time to draw the person into a more intimate relationship with*

heart to the Lord (1 Peter 5:7). The divorced person will have to face many frustrations and pain. This person is going to experience a wide range of emotions. The emotional pain of divorce is real, so real that some people try to ignore or deny its existence. Imagine that a person has a physical wound—a deep gash or a fractured bone. Imagine what could happen if the person decided to ignore the pain and go about life as if nothing were wrong. The deep cut would become infected. The broken bone might cut off the supply of blood to vital organs, causing death. If the break were not fatal, it would most likely heal in a crooked manner, permanently impairing the individual's movement. In short, ignoring wounds usually causes further problems. This person must turn to the Lord, casting all his or her burdens and fears on the Lord. Ignoring, denying, or attempting to handle these things by oneself will only lead to more frustration and pain. This person needs to learn the discipline of pouring out one's heart to the Lord. When I say the "discipline" of pouring out one's heart to the Lord, the believer needs to develop the ability to bring his or her frustrations and pain to the Lord (**Philippians 4:6-7**). There are some negative ways to handle this pain: ignoring its reality, denying its reality, striving to handle this by oneself, or turning one's pain on others through anger and rejection. Pray that this person will bring every problem, frustration, pain, and fear to the Lord. Ask Him to move this person to run to the Lord with all of his or her struggles, especially those connected to the divorce (**Proverbs 18:10**). Call on Him to reveal Himself to this person as his or her Refuge.

- (5) *Ask God to grant emotional healing to this person (Psalm 147:3)*. There are some emotional wounds that only the Lord can heal. Call on God to release His love and grace into this person's life so that he or she can be made whole emotionally.
- (6) *Pray that this person will have a forgiving spirit (Ephesians 4:31-32)*. Forgiveness is not easy but is essential to healing and growth after a divorce. Those involved in a divorce must forgive. It needs to be remembered that forgiving is not forgetting. When we choose to forgive, we still retain the memories of pain, anger, fear, and sadness that require forgiveness

in the first place. At the same time, forgiveness does not release a person from their responsibility. When a person forgives another, it does not mean that he or she is released from the responsibility for what has been done. Pray that this person will understand these truths. Pray also that this person would forgive his or her spouse every time he or she remembers the pain connected to the marriage and divorce. Forgiveness is not a one-time act but a daily discipline. Christ does not place a limit on forgiveness. In **Matthew 18**, Christ teaches that forgiveness may take hundreds of times to accomplish (**Matthew 18:21-22**). Plead that this person will develop a forgiving spirit and that he or she will not rationalize hatred or bitterness.

- (7) *Ask God to protect this person from bitterness, worry, and despair (Philippians 4:6-7; Ephesians 4:31-32; Matthew 6:25-34)*. These are common problems for a divorced person. Pray that these things will not gain ground in this person's life. Satan would love nothing more than to place strongholds in this person's life through these sins (**Ephesians 4:27**). Pray for the Holy Spirit to immediately and deeply convict this person of these things so that he or she can confess them and turn from them. Ask God to provide a shield of protection for this person from the attacks of Satan in this area.
- (8) *Plead with God to grant this person loving friends who will speak the truth to him or her (Proverbs 17:17; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; Ephesians 4:15)*. The divorced person needs faithful friends who will support, love, and pray for him or her. These friends need to be wise and compassionate. They need to have the ability to love this person, but, at the same time, tell this person the truth. Pray that God would raise up friends who will have this wisdom and love. If you are a friend to this person, ask God to create a deeper love in your heart for this person. Ask Him to help you share the truth in love with this person.
- (9) *Pray that this person will maintain a healthy relationship with the divorced spouse if that is possible (Romans 12:17-19)*. In **Romans 12:18**, the apostle Paul calls on believers to live at peace with all men if that is possible. Paul is declaring that we are to maintain peace with those around us if this is possible. This