



## “Lord Of The Rings”

Matthew 19

Small Group Plan

Landon Saunders, of Heartbeat Ministries, writes:

*Failure doesn't disqualify you from the human race. If it did, we would all be disqualified. The danger is failing at failure. You could actually get an “F” in a relationship, yet, because of the way you responded to your failure, earn an “A” in your recovery.*

### OPEN IT / INTRODUCE IT ...

- How do you apply Landon's quote to failure in marriage?
- Whose marriage do you most admire? Why?
- What is the best pre-marital advice you were given?
- Why do you think divorce has become a common problem today?

### LOOK AT IT / STUDY IT ...

— Matthew 19:1-3 —

<sup>1</sup>When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went into the region of Judea to the other side of the Jordan. <sup>2</sup>Large crowds followed him, and he healed them there. <sup>3</sup>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?”

- Rabbi Shammai taught that divorce was permitted only in extreme cases. Rabbi Hillel taught that it was permitted for any and every reason. How does this help us understand the Pharisee's question (v. 3)?
- Is their question genuine or is their motive more sinister? Explain.

— Matthew 19:4-6 —

<sup>4</sup> “Haven’t you read,” he replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’<sup>5</sup> 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?’<sup>6</sup> So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate.”

- Why does Jesus immediately point back to God’s original intent?
- Does this reveal Jesus’ feelings about Rabbi Shammai and Rabbi Hillel?
- For all the support an extended family can be to a new marriage, why is it important to “leave ... father and mother” (v. 5)?
- If God “joins” and man “separates” (v. 6), then who is really supplying divorce with its plan, its purpose, and its power? Explain.

— Matthew 19:7-9 —

<sup>7</sup> “Why then,” they asked, “did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?”<sup>8</sup> Jesus replied, “Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.<sup>9</sup> I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery.”

- In the beginning, did God command or tolerate divorce? Explain.
- How might divorce reveal the hardness of our hearts?
- How can we effectively communicate God’s plan “from the beginning” (v. 8)?

**USE IT / APPLY IT ...**

- How does the previous passage regarding **forgiveness** (18:21-35) affect this passage on **marriage**?
- What are the most damaging effects of divorce ...
  - ... on the husband & wife?
  - ... on the children?
- What habits can each partner develop that will strengthen their marriage?
- How can a church respond with grace to those wounded by divorce?
- Ask God for His mercy for those whose relationships are hurting and in trouble?