

THE QUESTION OF THE WEEK

“The Pharisees approached Jesus and asked: ‘Is it lawful for a husband to divorce his wife or not?’

They were testing him.”

Mark 10:2

Knowing what you know—about life, about love, about men and women, about permanency, about commitment, about faithfulness, about children, about what it takes to live in this world—knowing all that, if you were the One who created men and women and endowed them with the capacity to procreate and co-create, sharing in the very divine power of making new life, what would be your best design for the most significant relationship a man and a woman can have and maintain in this life. Big question.

God describes this relationship as marriage. A man and a woman. Each endowed with a whole host of gifts, talents, abilities, capacities. Each man is comprised of billions of cells each one of which has 46 chromosomes. Except in each man there is one type of cell that has only 23 chromosomes. A sperm cell. And each woman is comprised of billions of cells each of which has 46 chromosomes except one. That would be the egg cell. The egg cell has only 23 chromosomes. Two sperm cells cannot meet, open to each other and form a new cell of 46 chromosomes. No two egg cells can meet, unite and form a new cell of 46 chromosomes. BUT. Each sperm cell and each egg cell is made in such a way that when it encounters the corresponding 23 chromosome cell it can open to or enter into and forge a new cell with a complete chromosome count. In that instant new life results.

What would you (as the creator) deem most important for the survival, growth and blossoming of this new human cell? Stability, care, nurturing, fidelity and authentic, undying love for the one with whom the new human was conceived. Those qualities and characteristics make sense and are held as valuable and even essential in a relationship that is to be life-giving. And that, my friends, is why Jesus taught about marriage what he did. It’s about what the couple needs and what the family needs that leads to the divine design of marriage. We human beings, in our arrogance, sometimes think that we can make marriage whatever we want it to be. Where is the humility on that? Where is the submission to the deeper truth that is truly of God? It is so facile for us to criticize what God has designed because we do not always measure up to it. But there is nothing flawed in the design. Only in the practical application. And that says more about us than it does about the God who give. Does it not? The question of the week.