

Dear Sandy,

Thank you for writing us at Christian Questions Radio. You asked if it was ever acceptable for a woman to leave her husband.

Genesis 2:24 states, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Jesus adds in Matthew 19:6, "So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." The sacredness of marriage is clearly and unmistakably revealed from these texts. The man and the woman are to become one flesh – inseparable – their earthly lives bound together as one life in fulfillment of their sacred covenant made before God. Because marriage is a covenant made before God, it is not meant to be broken.

Nevertheless, the Bible also states that the act of fornication on the part of one or both partners is a legitimate ground for divorce. Matthew 19:9 says, "I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, **except for marital unfaithfulness**, and marries another woman commits adultery." (See also Matthew 5:32.) These scriptures are very clear that the only acceptable reason for divorce between two Christians is marital unfaithfulness (adultery). Therefore, it is our view that divorce is an option that is scripturally supported if adultery has been committed and there is no repentance.

However, we also believe that if you or your children are suffering under physical or emotional abuse, a separation may be the best course of action. If both you and your husband are Christians, the Apostle Paul gives this advice. "To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife." (1 Corinthians 7:10-11) Here the Bible definitely encourages the Christian couple to remain single while working on reconciliation.

If, on the other hand, your husband is an unbeliever, the Apostle gives this advice. "And if a woman has a husband who is not a believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified by his wife. . . . Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances." (1 Corinthians 7:13-15)

Is it ever acceptable for a woman to be divorced from her husband? Yes, if the reason is unrepentant adultery or if he is an unbeliever and divorces you. Is it ever acceptable for a woman to live separately from her husband? Yes, if the circumstances of abuse mentioned above exist.

Divorce is NOT pleasing to God. It breaks the most sacred earthly covenant made between two people and should only be broken in the most dire of scripturally based

circumstances. Not being happy is not a reason to divorce. Not being fulfilled is not a reason to divorce. Not feeling equally yoked is not a reason to divorce. We must approach divorce with the highest spiritual insight possible and only see it through when there has been fornication AND there is NO possibility of reconciliation.

We hope we have answered your question. Please write us again.

Sincerely,
Christian Questions Radio