



The Sermon on the Mount Study
Bible Study Session 7
Matthew 5:31-32

Study By
Lorin L Cranford
 cranfordville.com

Greek NT

5.31 Ἐρρέθη δέ, Ὅς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ, δότω αὐτῇ ἀποστάσιον. 5.32 ἐγὼ δὲ λέγω ὑμῖν ὅτι πᾶς ὁ ἀπολύων τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ παρεκτὸς λόγου πορνείας ποιεῖ αὐτὴν μοιχευθῆναι, καὶ ὃς ἐὰν ἀπολελυμένην γαμήσῃ μοιχᾶται.

La Biblia de las Américas

31 También se dijo: “CUALQUIERA QUE REPUDIÉ A SU MUJER, QUE LE DE CARTA DE DIVORCIO.” 32 Pero yo os digo que todo el que repudia a su mujer, a no ser por causa de infidelidad, la hace cometer adulterio; y cualquiera que se casa con una mujer repudiada, comete adulterio.

NRSV

31 It was also said, “Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.” 32 But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

NLT

31 You have heard that the law of Moses says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a letter of divorce.’ 32 But I say that a man who divorces his wife, unless she has been unfaithful, causes her to commit adultery. And anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

The Outline of the Text:¹

You have heard it said...

But I say to you...

I. Thesis: Divorce permitted, v. 31

OT Text: Deut. 24:1-4

1 Suppose a man enters into marriage with a woman, but she does not please him because he finds something objectionable about her, and so **he writes her a certificate of divorce**, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house; she then leaves his house 2 and goes off to become another man’s wife. 3 Then suppose the second man dislikes her, **writes her a bill of divorce**, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house (or the second man who married her dies); 4 her first husband, who sent her away, is not permitted to take her again to be his wife after she has been defiled; for that would be abhorrent to the Lord, and you shall not bring guilt on the land that the Lord your God is giving you as a possession.

(Deut. 24:1, Ἐὰν δέ τις λάβῃ γυναῖκα καὶ συνοικήσῃ αὐτῇ, καὶ ἔσται ἐὰν μὴ εὕρῃ χάριν ἐναντίον αὐτοῦ, ὅτι εὗρεν ἐν αὐτῇ ἄσχημον πρᾶγμα, καὶ **γράψῃ αὐτῇ βιβλίον ἀποστασίου**....)

Marriage, divorce, and re-marriage in the Ancient World:

Greco-Roman Traditions:

Jewish Traditions:

II. Antithesis: Divorce discouraged, v. 32

Jesus’ warning:

- 1) “anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery”
- 2) “whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery”

Supplementary Texts:

Matthew 19:3-12 (Mark 10:2-12 // Luke 16:18)

¹Serious study of the biblical text must look at the ‘then’ meaning, i.e., the historical meaning, and the ‘now’ meaning, i.e., the contemporary application, of the scripture text. In considering the historical meaning, both elements of literary design and historical aspects must be considered. In each study we will attempt a summary overview of these procedures in the interpretation of the scripture text.

(NRSV): 3 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?" 4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' 5 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'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." 7 "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" 8 Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. 9 I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." 10 The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." 11 Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given. 12 For some are eunuchs because they were born that way; others were made that way by men; and others have renounced marriage because of the kingdom of heaven. The one who can accept this should accept it." (λέγω δὲ ὑμῖν ὅτι ὁς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ μὴ ἐπὶ πορνείᾳ καὶ γαμήσῃ ἄλλην μοιχᾶται).

Mark 10:2-12

(NRSV): 2 Some Pharisees came, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?" 3 He answered them, "What did Moses command you?" 4 They said, "Moses allowed a man to write a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her." 5 But Jesus said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart he wrote this commandment for you. 6 But from the beginning of creation, "God made them male and female.' 7 "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 8 and the two shall become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." 10 Then in the house the disciples asked him again about this matter. 11 He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her; 12 and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery. (καὶ λέγει αὐτοῖς, Ὅς ἂν ἀπολύσῃ τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ γαμήσῃ ἄλλην μοιχᾶται ἐπ' αὐτήν· καὶ ἐὰν αὐτὴ ἀπολύσασα τὸν ἄνδρα αὐτῆς γαμήσῃ ἄλλον μοιχᾶται).

Luke 16:18

"Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and whoever marries a woman divorced from her husband commits adultery" (Πᾶς ὁ ἀπολύων τὴν γυναῖκα αὐτοῦ καὶ γαμῶν ἑτέραν μοιχεύει, καὶ ὁ ἀπολελυμένην ἀπὸ ἀνδρὸς γαμῶν μοιχεύει).

1 Cor. 7:10-17 (1-20, 25-40)

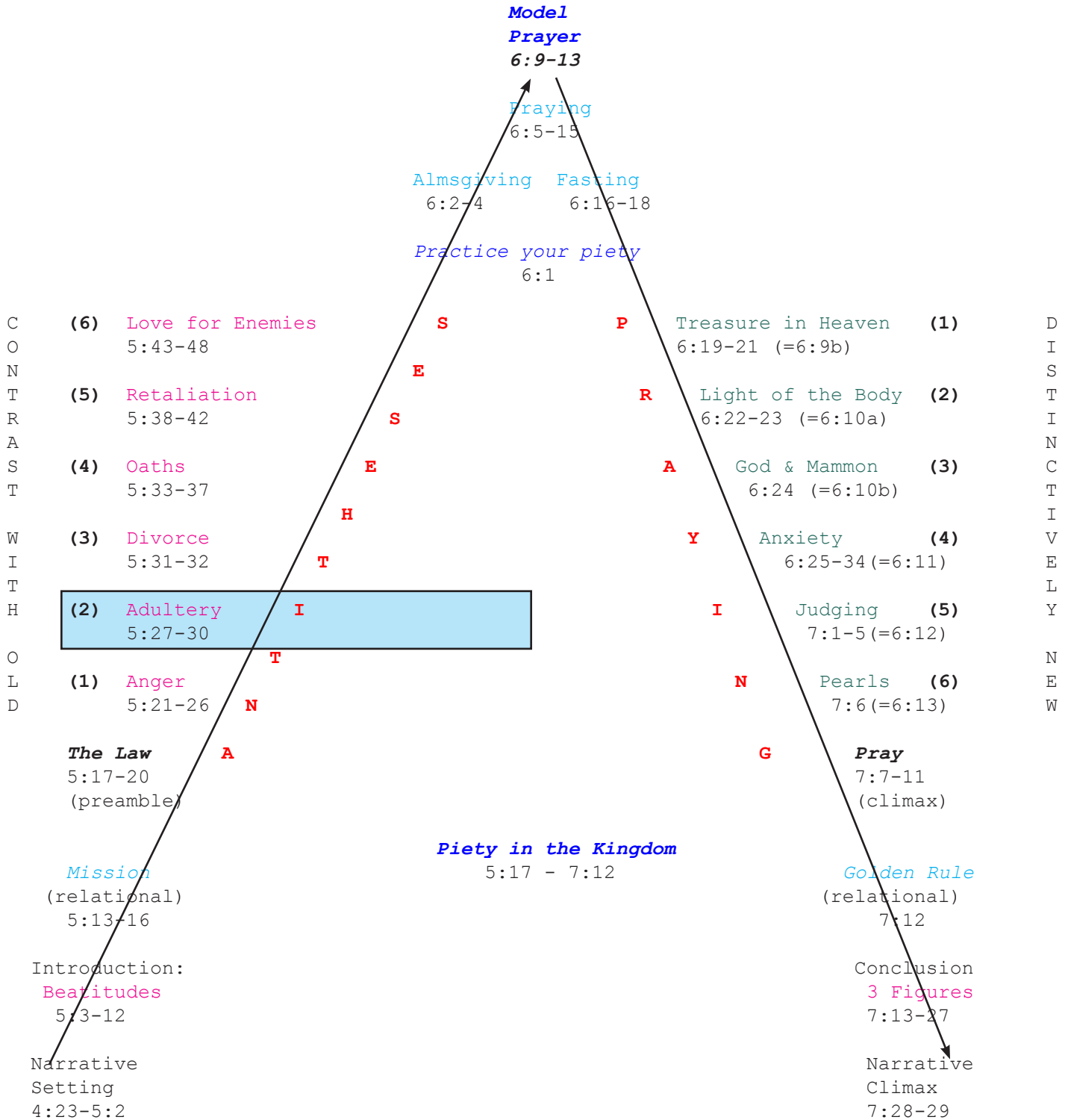
10 To the married I give this command — not I but the Lord — that the wife should not separate from her husband 11 (but if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife. 12 To the rest I say — I and not the Lord — that if any believer has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13 And if any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy through her husband. Otherwise, your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so; in such a case the brother or sister is not bound. It is to peace that God has called you. 16 Wife, for all you know, you might save your husband. Husband, for all you know, you might save your wife. 17 However that may be, let each of you lead the life that the Lord has assigned, to which God called you. This is my rule in all the churches.

**Diagram of the Sermon on the Mount
Mt. 5:31-32**

5:31 And
46 **It was said,**
Whoever would divorce his wife
let him give her a certificate
of divorce.
5:32 But
47 **I say to you that**
everyone divorcing his wife
apart from immorality
causes her
to commit adultery,
and
whoever marries a divorced woman
commits adultery.

The Literary Structure of the Sermon on the Mount

Matthew 4:23-7:29



Source: Lorin L. Cranford, *Study Manual of the Sermon on the Mount: Greek Text* (Fort Worth: Scripta Publishing Inc., 1988), 320. Adapted from Gunter Bornkamm, "Der Aufbau der Bergpredigt," *New Testament Studies* 24 (1977-78): 419-432.