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**Divorce and its effects on Children: Biblical perspectives on Divorce**

**Grace Ifeoma Otubah**  
**Department of Religion and Human Relations**  
**Nnamdi Azikiwe University**  
**Awka, Nigeria**  
Phone: +2348037540485  
Email: gi.otubah@unizik.edu.ng

**Abstract**

Divorce has been an order of the day. Several cases of divorce appear in our newspaper and social media. There are unimaginable recordings of divorce in our community. A month can hardly pass without one or more cases of divorce. Even in the church, couples who call themselves Christians get divorced. This is becoming worry some. Divorce is never the will of God. As we can see in the book of Matthew 19:6 “since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together” (NLT). The dissolution of a marriage can have far-reaching consequences, such as: emotional trauma, financial instability and stigmatization. There are numerous causes of divorce such as lack of communication and infidelity. Oral interview and bible text were major method used. It was discovered that most of the couples were not well informed and groomed about marriage. The research was able to find out the causes and effects of divorce especially on children. This research aims to provide a comprehensive overview of divorce and proffered solutions to divorce and recommends that couples be groomed before entering into marriage.

**Keywords:** Divorce, Children, Biblical Perspectives

## INTRODUCTION

Divorce is not an intended event in a family's life. It is something that can affect each individual of the family differently and at different times. Divorce rate increases on weekly basis. This is much higher than it has ever been recorded. One out of 10 marriages ends in divorce. Literature shows that children from divorced families experience difficult adjustments such as social, academic, and behavioral compared to children of peaceful families (Doherty & Needle, 1991). Woosley et al, (2009), also concluded that children from non-intact families tend to have lower psychological well-being as compared to those from peaceful families. This can be likened to the fact that people are not well informed about marriage, its benefits and bitterness. People go into marriages bearing in mind to see only the good aspect of it. The first institution that God established was marriage. God instituted marriage as we can see in the book of Genesis 2:18 "Then the Lord God said, 'it is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him'" (NLT). Also in the book of Matthew 19:6 "since they are no longer two but one, let no one split apart what God has joined together" (NLT). Since God began

the whole concept of marriage, it applies that the guide and rules of God concerning marriage, must apply and the couples should be accustomed to the rules. Such marriage rules can be seen in the following verses of the bible: Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church: his body, of which he is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies.

He who loves his wife loves himself. No one ever hated his own body, but has feed and care for his body. "For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh" (Genesis 2:24). Marriage is the union of two different people from different background who have come to live together. As the years go by, it is not unusual for problems to arise—even in the best of

marriages. There is no marriage without a problem. In any successful marriage, a patient and accommodating person is there. The way you handle your marriage problem, determines how well it will be.

### **MEANING OF DIVORCE**

A divorce is a formal ending of a marriage. Divorce can also be used more broadly to describe any major separation. Divorce involves a legal process. Divorce (also known as dissolution of marriage) is the process of terminating a marriage or marital union (Encyclopedia Britannica, Retrieved March, 20, 2024). Divorce can also be said to be a legal dissolution of a marriage by a court or other competent body. Umoh, Umoh (2020), defined divorce as “a legal process of ending a marriage” (p. 10). Divorce laws vary across the world. Divorce requires the sanction of a court or other authority in a legal process, which may involve issues of distribution of property, child custody, alimony (spousal support), child visitation/access, parenting time, child support, and division of debt. (Family law Encyclopedia Britannica, Retrieved 20 March, 2024).

Divorce is a legal dissolving, termination, and ending of a legally valid marriage. A divorce ends a legal marriage and declares

the spouses to be single again. In most divorce cases, marital assets are divided and debts are settled. If the marriage has produced children, a divorce proceeding determines custody of the children, visitation rights and spousal and child support issues.

### **MEANING OF ANNULMENT**

Annulment is a legal procedure within secular and religious legal systems for declaring a marriage null and void. Annulment according to English dictionary is a legal (notably judicial) declaration that a marriage is invalid. Annulment is a legal ruling that erases a marriage by declaring the marriage null and void and that the union was never legally valid. When a marriage has been annulled, the couple becomes single again as if they have never married before. An annulment case can be initiated by either party in a marriage. The party initiating the annulment must prove that he or she has the reasons to do so. If the reasons are confirmed, the marriage will be considered null and void by the court.

#### **Causes of annulment**

- **Bigamy:** This is the crime of marrying someone while still legally married to someone else.

- **Forced consent:** This is in a situation where one of the spouses was forced and threatened into marriage.
- **Fraud:** This is in a situation where one of the spouses agreed to the marriage based on the lies of the other.
- **Marriage prohibited by law:** This is the marriage involving sex between two people in a family who are very closely related.
- **Mental illness:** This is in a situation where either spouse was mentally ill or emotionally disturbed at the time of the marriage.
- **Mental Incapacity.** This is in a situation where either spouse was under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the marriage and was unable to make informed consent.
- **Inability to consummate marriage:** This is in a situation where either spouse was physically incapable of having sexual relations or impotent during the marriage.
- **Underage marriage:** This is in a situation where either spouse was too young to enter into marriage without parental consent or court approval.

## Separation

This is a situation where spouses are experiencing marital problems but are not ready to file for divorce. This will allow them to take some time to live separately, consider the issues that have caused them to drift apart, and decide whether their marriage is worth saving or if they intend to proceed with a divorce. There are four types of separation:

1. **Trial separation:** During a trial separation, spouses are still married but live separately. This may mean living in the same house or living apart on a trial basis. It does not change their legal rights and responsibilities towards each other and their children. For a trial separation to be as productive as possible, it is a good idea to work out a separation agreement that addresses the following issues:
2. **Living apart:** This is when spouses no longer live in the same residence.
3. **Permanent separation:** A separation becomes permanent when spouses decide to split up for good. Any property, assets, or debts acquired during a permanent

separation will likely become separate property.

4. **Legal separation:** A legal separation is similar to a divorce and is an option for couples who may not want to file for divorce for financial or religious reasons but do not want to continue living together as a married couple. The couple will need to file a separation agreement and go to family court, where a judge will issue orders on things like the division of property, custody, child support, family time, spousal support, and protection orders in cases where domestic violence is an issue.

## **DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A SEPARATION, DIVORCE AND AN ANNULMENT**

An annulment views the marriage as if it never existed. Once the annulment has been finalized, both parties can remarry or enter into a domestic partnership with another person. A legal separation is similar to a divorce in many ways, although the couple remains legally married. This means both parties cannot remarry or enter a domestic partnership until they finalize a divorce agreement. When people get divorced,

society still recognizes them as having been married. When a couple gets an annulment, society treats them as if the marriage never existed. The union wasn't a legitimate or legal marriage. Both dissolve the marriage.

## **DIFFERENT THEORIES OF DIVORCE**

There are five distinct theories of law out of which all grounds of divorce can be traced. All five of these theories have their merits and criticisms. This research limits its work on only 3 theories that are most relevant to the research. The 3 divorce theories are:

### **Divorce at Will Theory**

Under the divorce at will theory, a person can essentially divorce their spouse whenever and under whatever circumstances they please (Smt. K. Sudhamani, 2017).

### **Fault/Offence/Guilt Theory**

Under the fault theory of divorce, if one party's behavior results in a marital offense, the other party is entitled to seek dissolution of marriage from the delinquent spouse (Smt. K. Sudhamani, 2017). Under this theory, a divorce can only be granted based on specific grounds such as cruelty, rape, sodomy, desertion, etc.

### **Frustration of Marriage**

Under this theory of divorce, there is no guilty party. There is no marital offence that has been committing. However, there are certain cases, such as unsoundness of mind, disease etc. wherein the other party is entitled to seek a divorce (Smt. K. Sudhamani, 2017). Such cases as: Incurably of unsound mind, virulent and incurable leprosy, communicable venereal disease and renunciation of the world by entering a religious order.

### **BIBLICAL PERSPECTIVE ON DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

The Bible teaches that marriage is a sacred union between a man and woman, and that divorce is only permitted in certain circumstances. Here are some Biblical reasons for divorce:

#### **Adultery (Matthew 5:32, 19:9).**

Jesus teaches that divorce is permissible when one spouse commits adultery. As it is written, “You have heard the law that says, ‘A man can divorce his wife by merely giving her a written notice of divorce’. 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 also commits adultery” (Matthew 5:31-32 NLT). Adultery is voluntary sexual intercourse between a married person and a person of opposite sex. Adultery is a ground for divorce under all personal laws. It is a serious matrimonial relapse and it is viewed as extremely damaging to a harmonious marital relationship.

#### **Sexual Immorality (Matthew 5:32)**

Jesus includes sexual immorality as a reason for divorce. “But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (KJV).

#### **Desertion (1 Corinthians 7:15)**

The second reason for permitting a divorce is in cases where an unbelieving mate does not desire to live with his or her believing spouse. “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God called us to peace” (1 Corinthians 7:15 KJV). When an

unbeliever desires to leave, trying to keep him or her in the marriage may only create greater tension and conflict. In other words, if an unbelieving spouse leaves the marriage, the believing spouse is not bound to the marriage.

Living together is the essence of marriage, living apart is its negation. When one spouse leaves the other in a manner which is not justifiable, the deserted spouse has a remedy by way of matrimonial reliefs. Desertion is defined as abandonment of one spouse by the other one without any reasonable cause and without the consent of the other.

#### **Death (Romans 7:2-3)**

The Bible teaches that a surviving spouse is free to remarry after the death of their partner, (although, this is not exactly a reason for divorce). “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So, if her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man”. (KJV)

## **BRIEF OVERVIEW OF SOME RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVE ON DIVORCE**

Biblical teachings on divorce are often interpreted and applied differently among various Christian traditions and Communities. Religious views on divorce vary across different faiths and denominations. Here is a brief overview of some religions perspective on divorce:

1. Christianity:
  - Catholic Church: Divorce is not recognized; annulment is possible in some cases.
  - Eastern Orthodox Church: Divorce is permitted in certain circumstances.
  - Protestant Churches: Views vary; some allow divorce, while others discourage it.
2. Islam:
  - Divorce (Talaq) is permitted, but discouraged. Men can initiate divorce, while Women need to go through a judicial process.
3. Judaism:
  - Divorce is permitted, but only through a religious court (BETH Din).
4. Hinduism:

- Divorce is not explicitly mentioned in Hindu scriptures, but it is accepted in some cases.

5. Buddhism:

- Divorce is not prohibited, as Buddhism focuses on individual spiritual growth rather than strict rules.

Cultural and societal influences can shape attitudes towards divorce within religious communities.

### **JESUS EXPLANATION ON DIVORCE AND REMARRYING**

And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one’s wife for any cause?” He answered, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together let not man separate.” They said to him, “Why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce and to send her away?” He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning

it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery” (Matthew 19:3–9 ESV).

Jesus teaches clearly in the book of Matthew 9: 3-9 that divorce is an accommodation to man’s sin that violates God’s original purpose for the intimate unity and permanence of the marriage bond. This can be seen in book of Matthew 19: 3 where the Pharisees came and tried to trap him with this question: “should a man be allowed to divorce his wife for just any reason?” (NLT) Jesus taught that God’s law allowed divorce only because of **hardness of heart**. Jesus replied, “Moses permitted divorce only as a concession to your hard hearts, but it was not what God had originally intended” (Matt. 19:8). Although Jesus did say that divorce is permitted in some situations, we must remember that His primary point in this discourse is to correct the Jews’ idea that they could divorce one another **for any cause at all** (Matt. 19:3), and to show them the gravity of pursuing a sinful divorce. This explains why “a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one” (Gen. 2:24 NLT). Based on these, a faithful spouse should never

consider divorce except in specific circumstances.

## **SOME CAUSES OF DIVORCE**

### **1. Constant Conflict/Argument**

Constant argument and constant conflict bring about unhealthy marriage. How you handle conflict determine whether your marriage will survive or not. In a normal situation, couples are partners, they shelter each other from the storms of life, and they support each other when they are down. In a high-conflict marriage, spouses are as emotionally dangerous. This negative experience will continue to exist until the only option left is divorce.

### **2. Lack of Commitment**

**It requires commitment from both spouses for a happy and healthy marriage. A spouse with a lack of commitment to the relationship can doom the marriage. Where a partner do not fully committed to the other partner, the marriage is bound to suffer. This lack of commitment may lead to a very serious divorce.**

### **3. Infidelity / Extramarital Affairs**

Being cheated on by the person who vowed to remain faithful to you forever is very hard

a kernel to chew. It is always painful seeing your life partner cheating on you. However, infidelity does not always lead to divorce, but it can destroy how you view your relationship. Infidelity leads to betrayal and lack of trust. Unable to handle this properly can lead to divorce.

### **4. Lack of Emotional and Physical Intimacy**

A smooth-running relationship is cemented with emotional and physical intimacy. Lack of this, can bring serious relationship problem. Lack of intimacy can bring about communication breakdown, anger, resentment, sadness, loneliness, and infidelity, which can bring irreparably damage in a relationship and can make way to divorce. When emotional intimacy is low or non-existent, spouse sex life is affected.

### **5. Lack of Communication between Partners**

Lack of communication is one of the most causes of divorce. Couples who do not communicate well cannot resolve issues together and there is tendency to suffer more misunderstandings and hurt feelings. Inability to communicate can turn problem-solving sessions into shouting matches, which will eventually kill love, intimacy, and respect in relationship. A good

communication requires both physical as well as verbal communication. A good communication is required for almost everything in a good relationship which includes sex, a couple's finances, whether or not to have children, areas of disagreement, and other sensitive topics unhappy couples deem too dangerous to discuss. Through good communication, marriage especially this hard and tough time, couples must be willing and able to talk about what's wrong and what's not working in their marriage and decide how to resolve those issues together.

#### **6. Domestic Violence and Physical/Emotional Abuse**

Domestic violence or abuse can be threatened abuse, verbal, physical, sexual, emotional, and economic abuse. In this type of relationship, a partner who seems superior and powerful can exercise his or her power over the partner through a pattern of abusive behaviour. This abuse can also be extended to the children of the marriage.

#### **7. Opposing Values or Morals**

There are sometimes literal wars over differences in race, religion, nationality, and culture plus gender, sexuality, and even which political party someone supports. When two spouses have opposing values

and opposing morals, and is not willing to see things from their spouse's point of view, the marriage is likely to end in divorce. When spouses are in love, they tend to overlook their core values and morals which are too different for a healthy relationship, but when the love of the marriage becomes cold, those differences make it difficult or impossible to sustain a happy marriage. They fell in love despite their religious difference, but later, those differences will begin to tear them apart even when they have children.

#### **8. Addiction**

There are different types and degrees of addiction, like gambling, alcoholism, commercial sex etc, which most addicts are able to hide. Their spouses may not be aware of their addiction life style. No matter how they hide, the truth must surface; it will lead to shattering of the relationship. The survival of such a marriage depends on several factors which include the addict's willingness and ability to take responsibility for his or her addiction, a genuine desire to seek treatment, and a lifelong commitment to recovery.

#### **9. Absence of Romantic Love**

Love withers like a plant without water or sunshine. In other words, love need to be

watered and maintained. Romantic love is not self-sustaining. Without creating quality time for intimacy and fun as a couple, the love of the marriage will fade, and it can lead to divorce. Remember doing what you loved doing while you were dating, and start doing those things again and again for a healthy marriage.

### **10. One Spouse Carrying the Weight in the Marriage alone**

Where both spouses were full-time workers and only one person takes responsibility for grocery shopping and cooking, household chores, and child-rearing, the marriage could spiral down into divorce. To avoid divorce, spouse, should sit down and list everything that needs to be done to keep the household running smoothly, and divide the chores fairly. Children should be involved in house chores like washing plates, sweeping the house, and scrubbing the house. When one partner is the only one making romantic gestures, arranging date nights, or initiating sex, that could bring problem in the marriage which may lead to divorce.

### **11. Financial Problems and Debt**

Finance has been a problem to many couples. Arguments about money can become nasty and dangerous. When couples lack the communication skills to discuss

their financial problems calmly and rationally, it could lead to divorce. Financial problems are not limited to owing massive debt, but also involved unable to cover necessities. The way spouses think about money and debt can also cause the breakdown of a marriage.

### **12. Early marriage**

The perfect age to marry from my own point of view is 25 year upwards. This is because many who marry young are not rooted in marriage. This could be a reason why a lot of young married couples get divorced.

### **13. Religious Differences**

Religious differences can lead to marital problem. Religious beliefs and practices play an important role in shaping an individual's worldview, values, and daily rituals. When two partners come from different religious backgrounds, it can sometimes lead to disagreements on fundamental life choices, which could include child-rearing practices. Many couples from different religious background find ways to blend their beliefs and traditions, but for others, the differences can become a source of recurring conflict. In most cases, external pressures from family can heighten religious differences. These religious differences can lead to divorce.

#### **14. Parenting Differences**

Parenting, if not well handled can lead to divorce. Parenting is one of the most challenging and rewarding responsibilities a couple can undertake together. Differences in parenting styles, which comes from individual upbringings, personal beliefs, or cultural backgrounds, can bring about unhealthy source of tension in a marriage. In a situation where a partner advocates for a more disciplined approach, and the other advocates a lenient and nurturing approach, there is bound to be conflict. These disparities can lead to disagreements, ranging from education choices to setting boundaries and disciplinary actions. As children grow and approach different life stages, these differences can become more pronounced, especially if not addressed early. Effective co-parenting requires open communication, compromise, and a unified front. Without these, parenting differences can strain the marital relationship, leading to deeper misunderstandings and conflicts which may lead to divorce proper.

#### **15. External Family interference**

There is a saying that when one marries, he marries both the wife and his in-laws. Marriage often means merging two families, bringing along a mix of expectations and

traditions. External pressures from in-laws, cultural differences, or unsolicited advice can strain a marriage. Balancing the couple's needs with extended family demands is crucial. Without clear boundaries and open communication, these pressures can lead to resentment, potentially pushing a couple toward divorce.

#### **16. Unrealistic Expectations**

Each couple enters marriage with a set of expectations, which is often shaped by personal experiences, and societal norms. When these expectations are not met, disappointment and conflict will set in. Whether it's about roles in the household, financial achievements, or emotional support, when reality doesn't align with these lofty ideals, it can lead to feelings of inadequacy and resentment. For a marriage to stand, it is very important for partners to adjust to their expectations, and understand that perfection is unattainable. If unrealistic expectations are not checked, can it can lead to marital problem.

#### **17. Lack of Trust**

Trust is the bedrock of any strong relationship, and its absence can create a deep problem in the foundation of a marriage. Lack of trust can manifest from past betrayals, misunderstandings, or

personal insecurities. It could be doubts about fidelity, financial decisions, or daily matters. Lack of trust can lead to constant suspicion. This suspicion can bring communication and intimacy problem. If lack of trust is not properly handled, it can remove the bond between partners, making reconciliation difficult.

### **18. Supporting Each Other's Goals**

In a marriage, individual aspirations don't disappear; they intertwine with shared dreams. Supporting each other's goals is the centre for mutual growth and fulfillment. When a partner feels undervalued, it could lead to feelings of resentment and stagnation. Supporting and acknowledging partner's aspirations, strengthens the marital bond. However, neglecting a partner's goals can create a problem which makes the spouse feel unsupported or isolated.

**19. Lack of compatibility:** When a person is motivated to marry by a specific desire that goes unfulfilled, this increases the chances the union will fail. Most couples who married for companionship, financial security, convenience, medical insurance, legal reasons or a desire to start a family blamed a lack of compatibility for their divorce. It's not surprising that those who marry because they want a companion are

more likely to end a union if they don't get what they wanted. People, who are motivated by factors other than love, may find they are not compatible with the partner they chose.

### **SOLUTION TO CAUSES OF DIVORCE**

1. This can be rectified through marriage counseling or therapy.
2. For a marriage to overcome lack of trust, it requires open dialogue, understanding, and sometimes professional counseling.
3. If financial problems are your main issue, consider hiring an expert specializing in financial divorce issues. They could save money by recommending the most efficient property division, tax, and support strategies.
4. Emotional and physical intimacy is like super-glue to strengthen your love and marriage bonds. Always remember why you fell in love with your spouse. Always think about what you used to love doing together and create out time to do those things together again. Spending quality time doing something you both enjoy can help rebuild emotional intimacy, leading to physical intimacy.

5. To rescue marital relationships, couples will forgive each other. The offended partner will have to make a genuine apology and commit to acting to end his or her cheating for good.
6. Having a better understanding of commitment prior to marrying could stop their union from collapsing.
7. Better understanding of their spouse's morals and values.
8. Waiting longer to start a family.
9. Waiting longer to get married.
- 10.** How you handle conflict determine whether your marriage will survive.
11. In a good marriage, your spouse is your partner, your shelter from the storm, and your number-one cheerleader when you're down.

## **EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON THE SOCIETY**

1. Increased poverty and economic instability: Divorce often leads to financial challenges, and single-parent households often face financial difficulties. (American Community Survey, 2019).
2. Negative impact on children: Children of divorced parents may experience emotional trauma, behavioural problems, and decreased academic achievement. ("effects of divorce on children" by the American Psychological Association, 2020).
3. Family breakdown and fragmentation: Divorce can lead to a decline family cohesion and an increase in family fragmentation. (state of the family in America, by the Heritage Foundation, 2020).
4. Increased crime and delinquency: There is a link between divorce and increased crime rates, particularly among youths.
5. Mental health concerns: Divorce can contribute to anxiety, and substance abuse in individuals and families.
6. Decreased social capital and community engagement: Divorce can lead to a decline in social connections and community involvement.
7. Changes in family structure and dynamics: Divorce can lead to an increase in single-parent households, blended families, and non-traditional family structure.
8. Impact on education and healthcare: Divorce can affect access to

education and healthcare, particularly for children.

## **EFFECTS OF DIVORCE ON CHILDREN**

Divorce can affect both the people getting divorced and their children. Lucas, R (2007) was of the opinion that after a divorce, the couple often experiences effects including decreased levels of happiness, a change in economic status, and emotional problems". Divorced effects on children include: academic, behavioral, and psychological problems. Studies suggest that children with divorced parents are more likely to exhibit such behavioral issues than those with non-divorced parents (Miller, 2003). It was found that divorced mothers have less affection and communication with their children. Family conflict also was found to be the most significant mediating variable in the effects of divorce on children.

### **1. Development and behaviour**

A child affected by divorce at an early age will have its effects later in life. Children can be affected socially; they may seem to become defiant in certain aspects. It was discovered that children become isolated after experiencing their parents' divorce. Children according to Shanahan, M. J.

(2000), "may make premature transitions to adulthood, such as leaving home or parenting their own child early". Jacquet, S. E.; Surra, C. A. (2001), in collaboration to this stated that "parental divorce leads a child to have lower trust in future relationships". According to Amato, P. R.; Booth, A. (1999), "children of divorced parents have more positive attitudes towards divorce" while according to Jennings, A. M.; Salts, C. J.; Smith, T. A. Jr (1992). "children of divorced parents have less favorable attitudes towards marriage". Divorce is a lengthy and stressful process which often results in long term emotional and psychological damage to children (Koel, Clark, Straus, Whitney, & Hauser, 1994). Long and Forehand (1987) suggest that the incidence of maladaptive behavior among children from divorced families is high. Shaw (1991), points out that those children whose parents separated before they were age six had more adjustment problems than those who were older at the time of separation. Kalter (1987) pointed out that aggressiveness and anti-social behavior is collation among children of divorce. Shaw (1991) asserts these children show increased aggression towards peers and defiance towards teachers, and Wallerstein (1985) adds that they exhibit more absenteeism.

## 2. Mental health

Children of divorced parents are more likely to suffer abuse than children from non-divorced families ( Fagan, P. F. & Rector, R. E. (2000). Parental continuous conflict can cause problems for the child and become harmful to them. Because of these conflicts, the parents could not meet the child's needs, which result to hurting the child's overall well-being and mental health. Spigelman et. al (1994), Cebollero, Cruise, and Stollack (1985), and Oppawsky (1991) assert that children from Divorced family experience pain, anger, sadness, depression, anguish, sorrow, fear, crying, grief, and deterioration in their overall functioning in comparison to children of intact families. They have a fear of abandonment and fears of impending disaster, and are suspicious, hyper-alert, and emotionally constricted (Wallerstein, 1980).

## 3. Physical health

Children of divorced parents are likely to have higher rates of alcoholism and other substance abuse compared to those who have never been divorced. Children of divorced or separated parents have higher rates of clinical depression, family disruption, and low socioeconomic status in early childhood, increasing the long-term risk for major depression. Children of

divorced or separated parents are at higher rates of psychiatric and are more likely to die by suicide, acute infectious diseases, digestive illnesses, parasitic diseases, respiratory illnesses, and severe injuries, as well as cancer, strokes, heart problems, rheumatoid arthritis, and osteoarthritis.

## 4. Academic and socioeconomic effect

According to Wolchik, S. A.; et al. (2002), “children who have experienced a parental divorce have lower academic achievement than children from non-divorced families” It was noted according to Rodgers, Kathleen B, and Rose, Hillary A. (2001) that “a child from a divorced family is two times more likely to drop out of high school than a child from a non-divorced family. These children from divorced families may also be less likely to attend college, resulting in the end of their academic career”. A divorce may result in the parent and children moving to an area with a higher poverty rate and a poor education system, because of the financial difficulties of a single parent. (Santrock, John W 2000)

P. R., Amato; Sobolewski, J. M. (2001) was of the opinion that children of divorced parents achieve lower levels of

socioeconomic status, income, and wealth accumulation than children of parents who remain married, which was as a result of lower educational achievement.

According to Cherlin, AJ (1992). “Children between the ages of 11 and 16 who had experienced the divorce of their parents were likely to parent a child before marriage”.

Divorce according to Arkes, Jeremy (2014), “often leads to worsened academic achievement in children ages 6–15. These negative effects tend to persist, and even escalate after the divorce or separation occurs”. Cherlin et. al (1991) stated that children from divorced experience more emotional and behavioral problems and fare less well in school than children of intact families. Runyon and Jackson (1988) indicate that divorce may disrupt a child's ability to freely participate in the learning process, as evidenced by a decline in academic achievement, less time on task, an inability to concentrate, and increased distractibility.

### **5. Psychological Effect**

P. R., Amato; Sobolewski, J. M. (2001), revealed that “Divorce is associated with diminished psychological well-being in children which includes unhappiness, less

satisfaction with life, weaker sense of personal control, anxiety, depression, and greater use of mental health services”. According to Scotsman (2015), “Children living with just one parent after divorce suffer from more problems such as headaches, stomach aches, feelings of tension and sadness than those whose parents share custody”. P. R., Amato; Sobolewski, J. M. (2001), further stated that children of divorced parents “are more likely to experience conflict in their own marriages, and are more likely to experience divorce themselves. They are also more likely to be involved in short-term cohabiting relationships, which often dissolve before marriage”. Emery, Robert (2013) said that “Inherited biological tendencies or genetic conditions may predispose a child to divorce as well as the "model of marriage" presented by the child's parents”.

As a result of conflict between parents, children according to Nichols, Allison M. (2014), “can experience varying forms of psychological distress”. Children have negative consequences as a result of exposure to marital conflict and instability. Several mechanisms are likely to be responsible. According to Dennison, R. P.; Koerner, S. S. (2006), “observing overt

conflict between parents is a direct stressor for children”. It was observed that children react to inter-parental conflict with fear, anger, or the inhibition of normal behaviour. Conflict between parents also tends to spill over and negatively affect the quality of parents' interactions with their children.

Anger and sadness were also observed as common feelings in adolescents who had experienced parental divorce (Rappaport, Sol R (2013). Children of divorced or separated parents exhibit marital conflicts that endanger their child's social competence. For many according to E. Eyo, Ubong (2018), “struggling with social understanding and concepts of abuse or a lack of love in the home, drug abuse and general misconduct or violence are some of the indulgences that these children may be involved in”. Children growing up in single-parent households according to Amato, P. R. and Irving, S. (2005), may have persistent negative consequences.

Divorce damages society. It consumes social and human capital. Divorce diminishes children's future competence in the family, school, religion, marketplace and government. According to Amato, P. R. “Divorce leads to “disruptions in the parent-child relationship, continuing discord between former spouses, loss of emotional

support, economic hardship, and an increase in the number of other negative life events.” In religious practice, Bastaits, K. and Mortelmans, D. (2016), Was of the opinion that “divorce diminishes the frequency of worship of God and recourse to Him in prayer”. Beckmeyer J. J., Coleman, M. and Ganong, L. H. (2014), summarily stated: “divorce effects are both numerous and serious such as: diminishes children's learning capacity and educational attainment. Reduces household income and deeply cuts individual earning capacity, Increases crime, abuse and neglect, and drug use, Weakens children's health and longevity, Increases behavioral, emotional, and psychiatric risks, including suicide”.

## CONCLUSION

The family is the building block of society, and marriage is its foundation. Divorce has pervasive weakening effects on children and on all of the five major institutions of society, the family, the church, the school, the marketplace, and government itself. However, this foundation is growing weaker as fewer adults marry, more adults divorce, and more adults choose single parenthood or cohabitation. Society's major institutions (family, church, school, marketplace and government) all have a great interest in reducing divorce to almost zero, for it

weakens each institution by weakening the human capacities of each laborer, citizen, worshiper, and student that it touches. Leaders of these institutions must shoulder their responsibility to end the culture of rejection. Policymakers, pastors, and academics all bear the responsibility to motivate them in that direction. It is necessary to know reality and the facts in order that we see and understand the whole bleak picture and are moved to set about the task of rebuilding a culture of families based on marriage, a culture of love and belonging, with all the societal props and protections necessary to make this familial norm normal once again. Each and every child deserves it. The nation needs it.

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