

A black and white image of a city skyline, including skyscrapers and a bridge, oriented upside down at the top of the page.

MATTHEW

The Upside umog Kingdom

Matthew 19-20

The first shall be last and the last shall be first



Matthew 19:1-12

Divorce is not to be taken lightly



Divorce is not to be taken lightly

- Jesus challenged a Jewish tradition of divorce that had been abused to become unfair to women.
- Roman law at the time permitted either party to divorce the other.
- But Jewish law allowed only the husband to divorce the wife.



Divorce is not to be taken lightly

- Deuteronomy 24:1 - “he has found some indecency in her.”
- The school of Shammai put the focus on the word “indecency” and interpreted it to mean only if she had committed adultery.
- The school of Hillel focused on the word “some” indecency and interpreted it to mean that a man could divorce wife for anything that caused her to “find no favor in his eyes.”



Divorce is not to be taken lightly

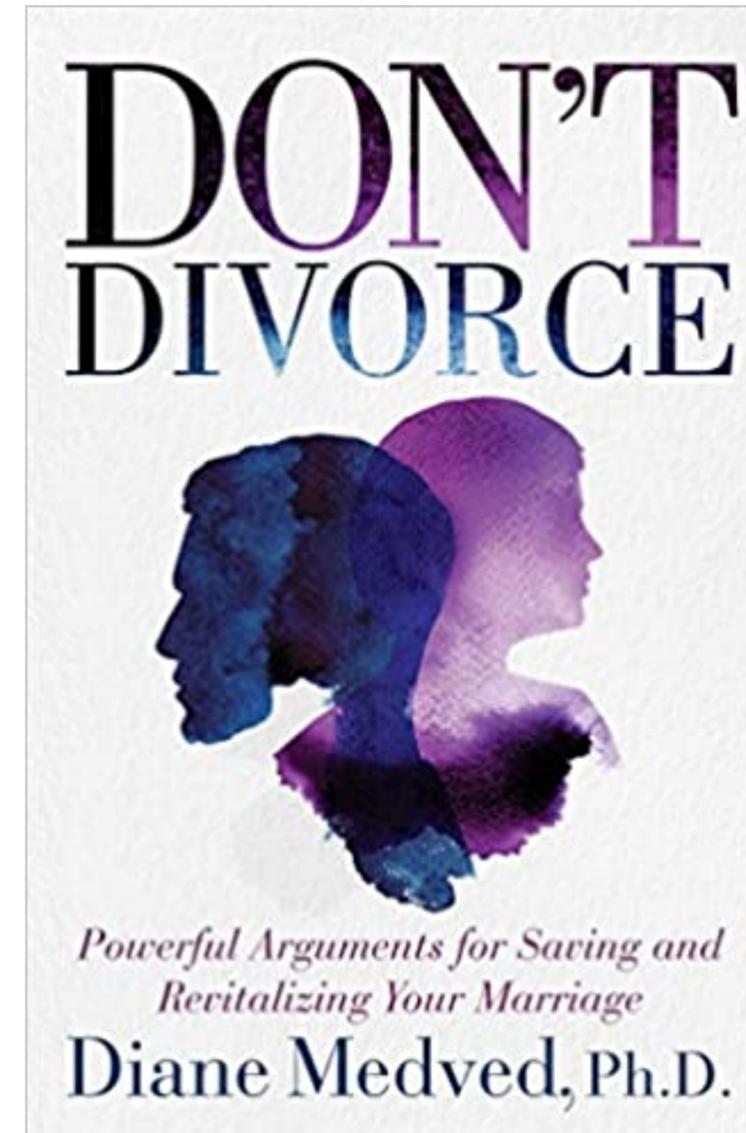
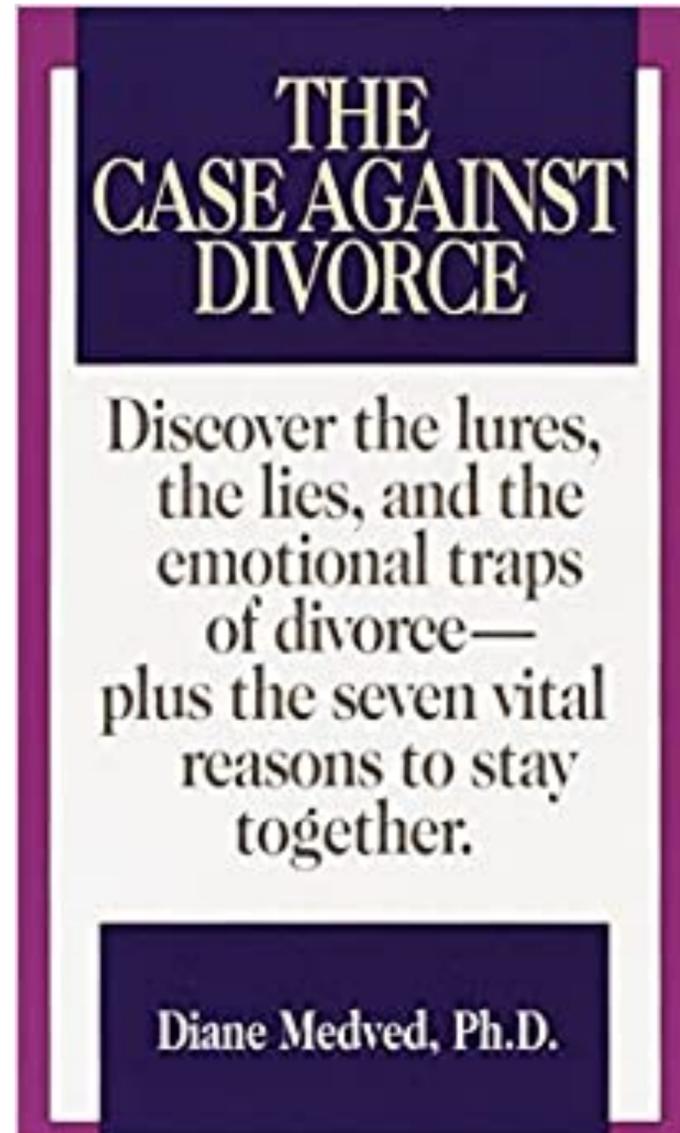
- Jesus went right past Deuteronomy and went back to Genesis.
- It wasn't about not honoring God's law in Deuteronomy.
- He wanted them to change the way they even thought about the question.
- They shouldn't be concerned about their "right" to divorce but instead about how to love.



Divorce is not to be taken lightly

- Both Pharisaic schools saw the world before the Fall, before sin entered the world, as God's ideal.
- Later, Scripture sometimes allowed things that were less than this ideal as a result of people's "hardness of heart" (verse 8).
- Jesus didn't contradict the heart of Moses' law; He upheld it.

Divorce





Matthew 19-20

The first shall be last and the last shall be first

MATTHEW
The Upside umog Kingdom



The first shall be last and the last shall be first

- Jesus expressed the value of children in God's eyes, challenged the rich young man to give his wealth to the poor, and told a parable of the vineyard workers who received the same payment.
- These narratives, though very different, all make the same point,
- In God's kingdom, the first shall be last and the last shall be first.



The first shall be last and the last shall be first

- It was common for parents to bring them to prominent prophets or religious leaders like Jesus for a blessing for their futures.
- Jesus taught that children had value in God's kingdom even now.
- In order to enter the kingdom, we have to "become like children" (for example, give up worldly honor and status).



The first shall be last and the last shall be first

- Just after this public statement about value in the kingdom, a rich young man asked Jesus what he must DO to inherit eternal life.
- Jesus was quick to point out that no matter what “good deeds” we do, only God alone is good.
- None of us can earn entrance into the kingdom through good deeds, no matter how many we do.



The first shall be last and the last shall be first

- This encounter provides a clear contrast, a clear choice to be made.
- Jesus offered the man the opportunity to exchange his worldly treasures for treasures in heaven.
- He chose to keep his treasures on earth.



The first shall be last and the last shall be first

- The disciples were shocked at His words.
- So many in their culture believed wealth was a blessing from God, that it showed God's favor on your life.
- If it were impossible for the rich, how much more impossible would it be for them (verse 25)?



The first shall be last and the last shall be first

- Jesus promised the kingdom to all who follow Him: rich or poor, sick or healthy, Jew or Gentile.
- Worldly status doesn't matter.
- The only thing that matters is surrendering your life to Jesus.
- Those who sacrifice now and become "least" in this age will inherit a place of honor in the age to come.



Matthew 20:17-34

Greatness is found in sacrifice and humility

MATTHEW
The Upside down Kingdom



Greatness is found in sacrifice and humility

- Jesus had already chastised them for asking who was “greatest” in the kingdom, showing them a child as their answer (Matthew 18).
- He had just finished telling them the first would be last and the last would be first (Matthew 19–20).
- And yet, James and John’s mother still came to ask that her sons be allowed to sit on His right and His left in His kingdom.



Greatness is found in sacrifice and humility

- They heard “12 thrones” and “Israel” and still thought He would take the throne of David back from the Romans.
- Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking.”
- They were asking for power and glory, but in Jesus’ kingdom, greatness isn’t wealth, status, power or glory. It is suffering, sacrifice, humility and surrender.



Greatness is found in sacrifice and humility

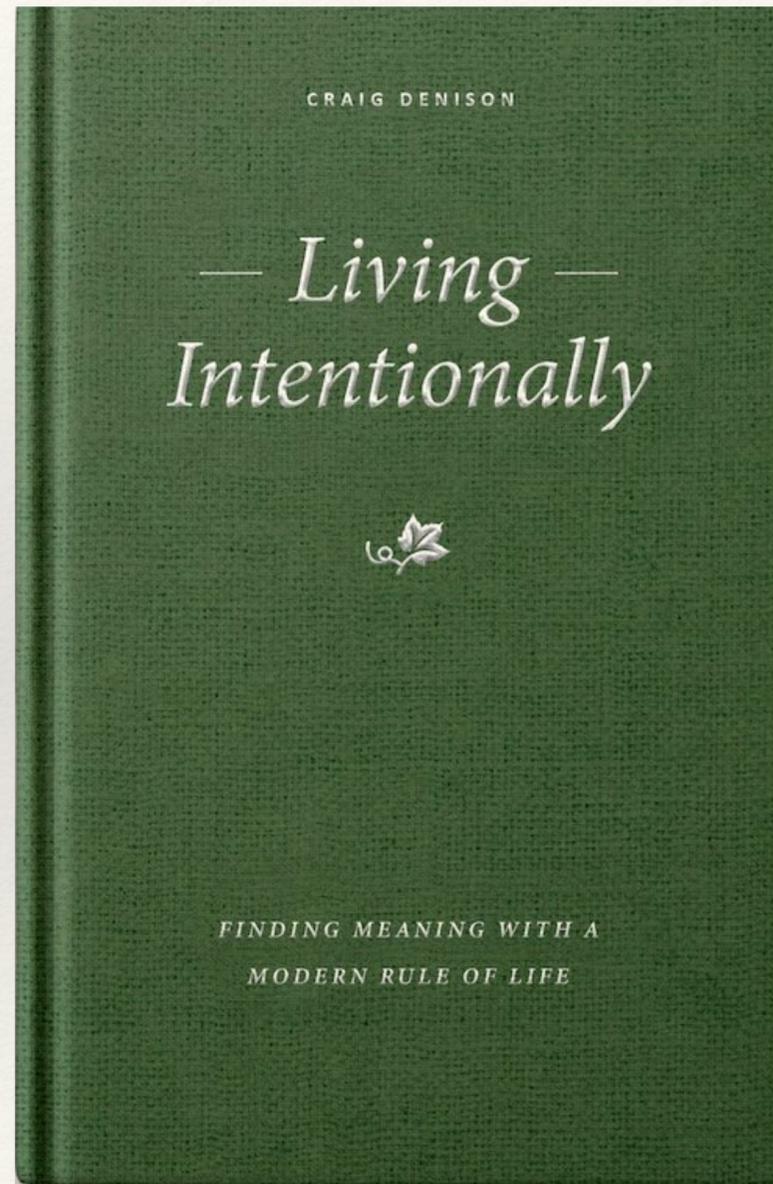
- Jesus asked if they were able to drink from the cup He would drink (the same language He used in the Garden of Gethsemane)
- Those who suffer with Jesus will reign with Him (Romans 8:17 and 2 Timothy 2:12).
- They said they were able, but they did not know what they were agreeing to (verse 22).



Greatness is found in sacrifice and humility

- The final story of the two blind men seems out of place.
- While Jesus was saddened by the rich young man walking away and frustrated with the disciples' asking for glory and honor, He was moved with compassion for these two men and immediately healed them.
- Instead of focusing on the gift, they focused on the Giver.

Living Intentionally



Unintentional Consequences

- Busyness - busyness has become a badge of honor
- Distraction - there have never been more opportunities for distraction

Ephesians 5:11, 16-17 - “Don’t waste your time on useless work, mere busywork, the barren pursuit of darkness. Expose these things for the sham they are . . . Don’t live carelessly, unthinkingly. Make sure you understand what the Master wants.”

Rule of Life

- Pete Scanzerro's book, *Emotionally Health Spirituality*
- The Rule of Life has its roots as early as the fourth century but most notably was used by St. Benedict in the sixth century - practices and vows.
- He encouraged the practices of “prayer, work, study, hospitality, and renewal” within the vows of “stability, conversion, and obedience.”

Finding Your Way

- Your wiring - you are a by-product of your genetics, your family of origin, of your geography, of your relationships, and of who God has uniquely wired you.
- Your calling - you have a unique calling all to your own, Ephesians 2:10 - “we are His workmanship.”
- Your environment - we are raised in a specific environment, but we can grow and mature from the environment and not be indoctrinated into it.

Spirituality

- Matthew 6:21 - “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”
- John 15:4 - “Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me.”
- Focus your heart and mind on the availability of God’s presence.
- Surrender your whole being to the pursuit of God.

Health

- Biblical health - “If a man is to live, he must be all alive, body, soul, mind, heart, spirit” - Thomas Merton
- Physical health - activity, nutrition, sleep
- Emotional health
- Mental health

Relationships

- God
- Marriage
- Children
- Community

Media Consumption

- A brief history of Media Criticism
- A criticism of Modern Media - documentary *The Social Dilemma*
- Cites various studies that show that social media addiction is having a profoundly negative impact on our well-being.
- Take time to research your current media consumption.
- In what ways does your media consumption feel intentional already?

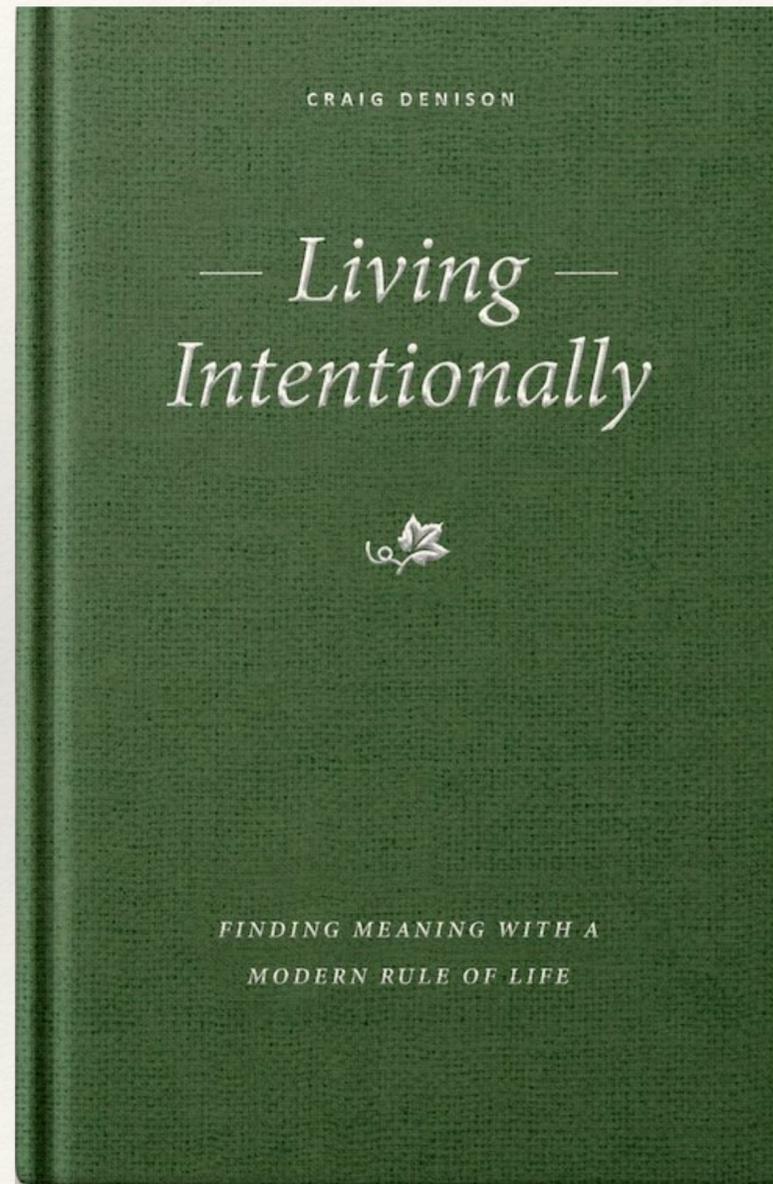
Conclusion

- He also has concluding chapters on activity and generosity.

“Almighty God, give me wisdom to perceive You, intelligence to understand You, diligence to seek You, patience to wait for You, eyes to behold You, a heart to meditate upon you, and life to proclaim You, through the power of the Spirit of our Life Jesus Christ. Amen.”

Benedict of Nursia

Living Intentionally



Point of View

