

# Matthew 19:8

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

## Analysis

---

Jesus explains that Moses permitted divorce 'because of the hardness of your hearts,' but 'from the beginning it was not so.' Divorce represents concession to sin, not God's ideal. The phrase 'hardness of hearts' (Greek 'sklerokardia'—hardness, stubbornness) indicates sinful rebellion requiring legal regulation. Reformed theology distinguishes God's perfect will (permanent marriage) from His permissive will (allowing divorce in fallen world). This verse shows that not every biblical permission reflects God's best but sometimes His accommodation to human sin.

## Historical Context

---

Deuteronomy 24:1-4 regulated divorce but didn't command it. Mosaic Law protected women from arbitrary divorce by requiring written certificate and preventing remarriage to first husband after intervening marriage. Jesus clarifies this was regulatory, not prescriptive—managing sin's consequences, not endorsing divorce. 'From the beginning' appeals to pre-fall creation as normative standard.

## Related Passages

---

**Psalm 19:1** — Heavens declare God's glory

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

---

1. How do you distinguish God's ideal from His accommodation to human sin?
2. What 'hardness of heart' in yourself needs confronting?
3. How should the church balance biblical ideals with pastoral care for broken marriages?

## Interlinear Text

---

λέγει    αὐτοῖς    ὅτι    Μωσῆς    πρὸς    τὴν    σκληροκαρδίαν  
**He saith**    **unto them**    G3754    **Moses**    **because of**    G3588    **hearts**  
G3004    G846    G3475    G4314    G4641

ὕμῶν    ἐπέτρεψεν    ὑμῖν    ἀπολῦσαι    τὰς    γυναῖκας    ὑμῶν    ἀπ'  
**of your**    **suffered**    **you**    **to put away**    G3588    **wives**    **of your**    **from**  
G5216    G2010    G5213    G630    G1135    G5216    G575

ἀρχῆς    δὲ    οὐ    γέγονεν    οὕτως  
**the beginning**    **but**    **not**    **it was**    **so**  
G746    G1161    G3756    G1096    G3779

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Genesis 2:24** (Parallel theme): Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.

---