

Alternatives to Divorce for Christians

Divorce for everyone is a long and painful process. Divorce does not only affect one aspect of your life, it affects all of them. In some situations, there is apparently no option other than divorce but religious or moral beliefs may prevent abused or maltreated spouses from seeking legal counsel. This is especially true for the Memphis lawyer who serves a fairly conservative community. The legal alternatives to divorce come mainly from the period before the easy availability of modern divorce. They maintain basic duties of support and the status of man and wife but relieve the spouses of the duty to live together and serve to separate property interests. In Tennessee, remember, in case of a divorce, all property acquired up to the time a divorce is filed is usually considered marital property.

The first option for those trying to avoid divorce is marriage counseling. While not a legal option, it should be your first step if nothing else to ensure a clean conscience. You may have considered this before, but simply concluded it would not make a difference. Marriage counseling is effective because it makes all the underlying issues of your marriage come to the forefront. For counseling to work, you must evaluate your marriage for improvement. You cannot realistically expect for a one time 30 minute counseling session to save your marriage. Instead, it will take time, hard work, and dedication from each spouse to commit to changing their lives for your marriage. Marriage counseling can come from your pastor, family, friends, therapist, or other counseling service dedicated to saving marriages.

The second option is annulment. Traditionally, certain acts such as co-habitation, setting up households, or being able to bear children were requirements before a marriage ceremony created a valid marriage. So if you've realized you made a bad decision, but are unable to seek a divorce for a religious or moral reason, then immediately seek legal advice. A divorce may not be necessary.

A third option is separation or divorce from bed and board. The legal duties of fidelity remain. A legal separation for two years without minor children gives the other party grounds for divorce and a court may sua sponte order the parties divorce, but if you cannot ask for a divorce, then this may be the only option available to you. The legal issues of child custody, support, and property can all be dealt with accordingly. A separation order can be temporary or permanent.

A fourth option is an order of protection. Unfortunately, in Memphis these are granted in the inferior general sessions criminal court unless a divorce or perhaps a legal separation is concurrently sought. This means support and custody issues frequently are not dealt with at this stage. This is an effective way to keep an abusive spouse away from the home without seeking a formal divorce.

The important thing is to contact a Memphis lawyer or a lawyer in the appropriate area who usually works with family law issues. Most lawyers aren't just divorce lawyers but work with custody, adoption, and other family law issues. A good family lawyer will always be willing to discuss alternatives keeping your religious and moral preferences in mind.

About the Author

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