

# What Indulging in Celebrity Gossip Does to Our Hearts

**“It’s the biggest divorce in Hollywood history.”**

That’s what all the entertainment tabloids are saying about Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie’s divorce. Hollywood’s cameras capture—and we devour—every marriage, relationship and every single public display of affection by the celebrity elite, so they must know what they’re talking about.

**Hollywood’s “It” couple is calling it quits. And we are shocked. Rightly so.**

With their beauty, success and wealth, they looked like the prototypical Hollywood power couple. But “Brangelina” showed us they also had depth of character, working together to bring awareness to a variety of global causes, including international adoption. We have come to expect nothing but great things from these two. Still, these superheroes couldn’t make their marriage work.

**Now, we have a front-row seat to what happens next.**

The same entertainment TV shows, magazines and websites that marketed Pitt and Jolie’s love story for profit will now seek an audience by sensationalizing their divorce. It will not be pretty. But culture will be certain to tune in.

I can’t help think that this is what it must have felt like a few thousand years ago to watch gladiators in the Roman Coliseum. Sure, it’s tragic, but most people can’t muster the strength to look away.

As commentators, experts and “unnamed sources” search for the reasons for Brad and Angelina’s split, the reality is that we

may never know. While public opinion will eventually cast blame on someone, none of us is privy to what really happens in the private lives of others.

And ultimately, does it really matter?

**When something like this happens to a celebrity, what wins out in our hearts and minds: curiosity or compassion?**

What we do know is that there are two people who committed to being one. They may have gotten there by an indirect route, but they did enter a covenant marriage. And now it is falling apart. As with any other divorce, there is likely anger, hurt and plenty of grief. Pitt and Jolie are likely drowning in a lifetime's worth of brokenness.

The idea of a "good divorce" is a myth. It's always hard on kids and they take the wounds into adulthood. We should hurt for them.

We know that a celebrity divorce likely gives one more reason for millions of impressionable young people to believe that marriage is impractical in our modern culture. After all, if rich, beautiful, compassionate movie stars can't make it work, what chance do the rest of us have?

**Hollywood divorces are a tragedy ... just like every other divorce.**

We witness all these brutal dimensions of celebrity divorce in our never-ending entertainment news cycle. But they are the common experiences of any couple who sees their marriage come to an end. We must offer compassion to those who are walking through it. We must do so without condemnation, all while desperately clinging to God's standard of marriage.

# **If you are married, fight for what you have.**

Never give up, even if you feel like you have nothing left. Even if your spouse has checked out emotionally. If you are considering divorce, move very slowly. Give God time to work. He is still in the business of redeeming broken people, even those who have hurt you time and time again.

If you know someone whose relationship is struggling (or who has recently divorced), maybe you need to reach out to them. Just as we can become spectators to a celebrity divorce, we can also sit idly by as our loved ones suffer. Neither should be the case. You may not be able to fix anything, but you can be present. You might even be able to help them to more clearly see God and His best during a time when their vision might be a bit blurry.

Finally, if you are a person who can't get enough of Brad and Angelina's divorce, maybe it's time for a heart check. It's tempting to laugh at all the late night monologues and one-liners, but it's not funny.

## **It's not funny at all.**

Broken relationships are always a tragedy, never a spectacle. When families fall apart, particularly in a public way, we need to stop watching and start praying. We must be active conduits of grace and love instead of consumers of the pain of others.

In our voyeuristic culture where we hear almost daily about the relational failures of famous people, we must never forget that their pain is real. Their kids feel the consequences. And their painful stories are not too different from the painful stories of those we know.

*Adapted from , a ministry founded by **Barrett and Jenifer***

**Johnson.** After serving in the local church for 25 years, Barrett and Jenifer launched INFO for Families as a ministry designed to encourage people through speaking, personal coaching and resource development. Barrett served for 15 years in youth ministry before serving for eight years as the Family Minister at Johnson Ferry Baptist Church in Atlanta, one of the largest churches in the South. He has degrees from Texas A&M University and Southwestern Seminary, but he and Jenifer have received their best education through the no-holds-barred nature of everyday family life.