

A Biblical Perspective on Marriage —

Marriage Is a Lifelong Covenant Between One Man and One Woman

Geoffrey R. Kirkland

Christ Fellowship Bible Church

INTRODUCTION

Much confusion exists concerning how to define marriage in our culture. Some people have their opinion. Others have their perspective. The homosexual movement has actively, aggressively and intentionally fronted their agenda in recent times. The homosexual movement that speaks often about equal rights has risen to such prominence and popularity that even the Supreme Court is involved.

Churches, Christians, and organizations that bear the name of Christ need to understand that the Bible is not *unclear* concerning marriage. In fact, the Bible could not be clearer concerning the definition of marriage. It is not a perspective, or an option, or an opinion. Rather, it is God's, divine, already-established, revealed truth about the glorious institution of marriage.

DEFINITION

God defines marriage as a divine-instituted covenant only between one man and one woman. There are no loopholes. There are no exceptions. In fact, any other kind of union *other* than one man and one woman is not, by its very definition, marriage.

Genesis 2:24 *For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*

SUPPORT

I want to provide a number of reasons why the divinely-ordained institution of marriage can *only* be defined between one man and one woman.

I. God Created Marriage & He Has the Authority to Define It.

God made marriage so God can define it the way He determines. If a person created marriage, then he could define it according to his liking. But no man created marriage; God did. God created men and women from the beginning and so when a man leaves father and mother and is joined to his wife, they become one flesh in the marital union. What God joins together, let no man separate.

Matthew 19:3-6 *3 Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" 4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, 5 and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH ' 6 "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."*

2. Before Sin Entered the World, God Created the First Institution of Society — Marriage.

Sin entered the world in Genesis chapter 3. Before Genesis chapter 3 comes Genesis chapter 2 where the only two people alive on the planet join together in the covenant of marriage. One man, Adam, and one woman, Eve are brought together in the covenant bond of marriage (Gen 2:18-25). Sin had not entered the world yet. Everything God created was “good” (Gen 1:31). The very first institution God ever created was not education, politics, psychology, parenting, business, or the arts. Rather, the first institution God sovereignly ordained was that of marriage between one man and one woman. The only two people on the planet (and the first two people who had ever existed on the planet!) wed themselves together in a lifelong covenant of marriage.

Genesis 2:18-24 *18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." 19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. 22 The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. 23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." 24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*

3. Before Sin Entered the World, Marriage Only Consisted of the Covenant Between One Man and One Woman.

No one can state that marriage is a result of the fall. No one can state that homosexual relations occurred before sin entered the world. Before sin entered the world, only two people existed — Adam and Eve. So pre-fall, pre-sin, pre-evil, marriage was *only* between one man and one woman. As a result, we could say that any deviation from the God-ordained pattern for marriage is sinful and a violation of God’s right and sovereign decrees. Homosexuality is sinful and was never God’s design for marriage — especially before sin entered the world.

4. It is Only a Monogamous, Heterosexual Marriage that Allows for Procreation — One of the Purposes of Marriage.

God tells Adam to be fruitful and fill the earth (Gen 1:27-28). It is an utter impossibility for a homosexual couple to reproduce offspring in their union and thus it violates one of the purposes of marriage. A purpose of marriage is to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” (Gen 1:28; cp. Gen 9:7). Children are a blessing from the Lord and the fruit of a womb is a reward (Ps 127:3). This cannot happen in a homosexual relationship. Thus, in order to fulfill one of the divinely given purposes of the marriage union, marriage must only be defined as the union between one man and one woman.

Genesis 4:1 Now the man had relations with his wife Eve, and she conceived and gave birth to Cain, and she said, "I have gotten a manchild with the help of the LORD."

5. Only a Heterosexual Marriage Between One Man and One Woman Exemplifies the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ Appropriately.

The gospel of Jesus Christ is most gloriously illustrated in the marriage relationship. In fact, marriage was created by God to be an ultimate pointer to a greater marriage union between Jesus Christ, the Bridegroom, and His Church, the Bride (Eph 5:31). Israel was called by God as His “bride” (Isa 62:5; Jer 2:32) and also in the New Testament we find the Church of Jesus Christ — the elect of God — are called the “bride” of Christ as well (Rev 19:7; 21:9; 22:17). Jesus Christ, the bridegroom never redeems another ‘bridegroom’. Nor is God ever called a bride who saves another bride. The Scriptures speak of Jesus Christ the bridegroom sovereignly calling, rescuing, drawing, and securing His bride, the Church, which He purchased with His own blood.

Ephesians 5:28-32 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH. 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

6. A Marriage Between One Man and One Woman Accurately Portrays the Divinely Instituted Gender Distinction and Complementary Roles That Each Person Has.

God created man in his image and in the image of God He made them. He made them *male* and *female* (Gen 1:27). The first people that God ever made were a man and a woman. God created woman from the man (Gen 2:21-22). God made the woman to be a helper suitable for the man (Gen 2:20). Man is incomplete without his helpmate, completer, and companion. God did not give man a dog to suit this need. God did not create another man. God made a *woman* and He made her *from* the rib of the man and God brought the woman *to* the man to help him and serve him and submit to him (Gen 2:22-24; 3:16; Eph 5:22-24). From the earliest chapters in the Bible, God created mankind with gender distinctions — both male and female — each with different roles within the marriage covenant. Man was called to lead (Gen 2:22) and the woman is called to help, support, and submit (Gen 2:20; 3:16). The divine institution of marriage consists, then, of different roles within marriage that do not relate to importance but to function. They do not speak of preeminence but of roles. Both are equal before God in terms of importance and significance (as image bearers). But there are different roles *within* the covenant that God has decreed. God has chosen the man to lead and the woman to submit. God has determined that man lead his wife by serving her and the woman to submit to her husband by serving him. This idea of complementary roles within the union of marriage is meant to illustrate the complementary roles within the Trinity. All are equal. All are important. None are more important than or more significant than another. But there is a difference in role and function.

And so it is in the bond of marriage between one man and one woman. And only a heterosexual marriage properly exemplifies this.

Genesis 2:18-23 18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." 19 Out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. 21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. 22 The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. 23 The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man."

7. The Marriage Relationship Between One Man and One Woman Exemplifies the Glory of God Magnificently!

Toward the conclusion of this era, we will be called upon to rejoice and give glory to God for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready (Rev 19:7). The glory of God cannot be separated from the union of marriage. The glory of God accurately pictured in the gospel of Jesus Christ reveals itself in the glorious bond of marriage between a man and a woman. God created mankind after His glory (Isa 43:7) and the marriage institution was intended by God, from its very inception, to be a picture of Jesus Christ and His redeeming relationship with the Church (Eph 5:30-31). When this is altered, blurred, or confused, the glory of God in its fullest magnificence is diminished. God's goal in redemption was for Jesus to sacrifice Himself in the place of His bride, to sanctify her, so that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory on the final day — spotless and blameless (Eph 5:25-27).

Ephesians 5:25-32 25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 **FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.** 32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

CONCLUSION

This paper has briefly and biblically supported the divinely-ordained institution of marriage as being created by God Himself and being defined by God Himself as the union between one man and one woman. Homosexuality is a sin, a corruption of God's plan for marriage, and homosexuals do not enter the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor 6:9). There is, to the glory of God, hope for the homosexual, however! God in His amazing power, grace, and mercy offers

forgiveness, mercy, and a new way of life to those who recognize their sin, see their plight before the almighty holiness of God, and fall before God and plead for His mercy! They can be “washed, sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor 6:11).

Let us not shrink back from the biblical truth concerning marriage. God created it. And God has defined it. Let us stand on the authority of the Word of God alone, regardless of the persecution, oppression, and hostility that may befall us. Let us cling to the glorious institution of marriage between one man and one woman confidently and boldly because this, after all, is the only way the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is accurately pictured. To God be the glory in His Church and in Christ Jesus. Amen.