

Fulton County Gospel News

Good News About Christ And His Church For All Of The World

“... Christ is the head of the church: and He is the Savior of the body.” - Ephesians 5:23

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POLYGAMY AND THE BIBLE

by Barry O'Dell

On the origin of marriage the Bible records, “And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made He a woman, and brought her unto the man. And Adam 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. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:21-24). God’s design for marriage is one man and one woman, regardless of what the Supreme Court of the United States has ruled. However, we should not be surprised at the changes that man has made to this divine institution. Lamech, who was a descendant of Cain, “. . . took unto him two wives . . .” (Gen. 4:19). Genesis 28:9 reveals that Esau had multiple wives. Elkanah, the father of Samuel, had two wives (1 Sam. 1:1-2). King David had many wives (1 Chr. 3:1-9). For most people, Solomon is probably the most well-known polygamist in the Bible (1 Kgs. 11:1-3). Some have attempted to use Exodus 21:10 to justify the practice of polygamy. To use it for that purpose is to misunderstand and abuse the context. Hebrew slavery was being addressed in the immediate context

(Exo. 21:2). It was sometimes the case that a Hebrew woman would be sold to a wealthier Hebrew with the intent of her getting married in the future. Exodus 21:7-11 actually provided protection in an instance of deceit on the part of the man (Exo. 21:8). The “maidservant” who found herself in this position was to be treated as a daughter by the one who bought her (Exo. 21:9). This passage does not condone polygamy as some have claimed.

First, we must understand that just because God’s word records an event does not mean that God approves of the activity. The Bible records the adultery between David and Bathsheba (2 Sam. 11:1-5), but we know that adultery is a sin. The Bible records instances of murder (Gen. 4), but we know that God condemns murder (Exo. 20:13). The Bible records the history of the creation of man and man’s rebellion against God’s revealed will (Gen. 3). God’s word tells us all about sin and the fact that man can be saved from sin through the blood of Christ. Just because the Old Testament records instances of polygamy does not mean that God approves of such behavior.

Second, all men are amenable to the New Testament of Christ

(Acts 17:30-31). Part of the teachings of the New Testament include the teaching of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 19:1-9. When teaching on divorce and remarriage Jesus used the term “whosoever,” which lets us know that His teaching on that subject applies to everyone, not just Christians (Matt. 19:9). Jesus emphasized that God’s marriage law has always stated that marriage is to be between one man and one woman (Matt. 19:8). There is not one accountable individual in the world who is not subject to God’s law on marriage.

Third, God’s way is better and higher than man’s way (Isa. 55:8-9). There are religions and doctrines of men that allow polygamy. Islam permits a Muslim man to have up to four wives at a time (Surah 4:3-4). Brigham Young’s Journal of Discourses and the Mormon Doctrine and Covenants permit and encourage polygamy, even though their Scripture, the Book of Mormon, condemns it (Jacob 1:15; 2:24)! By inspiration of the Holy Spirit Paul wrote, “. . . let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (1 Cor. 7:2). God’s plan for marriage and the home is the only right plan.

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When Marriages Fail*by Jeff O'Dell*

Marriage was created for man's happiness. Solomon wrote, "rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Pro. 5: 18). A good marriage can be a little taste of heaven here on earth. Little girls often dream of being Cinderella who one day will find her Prince Charming. That day finally comes and the "Princess," having found her "Prince," begins her life-journey with him. Understanding that God's plan from the beginning was one man for one woman for a lifetime, they begin their most important earthly relationship together. This is not an impossible dream. This writer knew one couple who celebrated sixty-six happy years together and another who have been married sixty-two years!

Even though marriage was not designed to fail, in America, the catastrophe of divorce strikes in as many as forty to fifty percent of

marriages. The destruction from this tragedy is not limited to only the couple, it has a far reaching impact on many lives.

First, the husband and wife are hurt. A common result of a failed marriage is depression which can lead to both physical and mental problems. Some have said that the grief caused by a failed marriage is more difficult than losing a loved one to death! Disappointment is another difficulty faced by the couple. The dreams that once were cherished by both are now crushed. The eyes which once sparkled for their mate now may have a dagger-like stare. The heart which once fluttered at the sound of the other's voice is now stone cold. Financially, both are hurt often for years. The husband's prayers can be hindered when a marriage is failing. Concerning this aspect, Peter wrote, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; **that your prayers be not hindered**" (1 Pet. 3:7). The wife's influence is also damaged: "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear..." (1 Pet. 3:1-3). Most importantly, souls are at stake. Where is the forgiveness? Jesus said, "But if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses" (Matt. 6:14-15). Often, those who have been divorced enter into a new marriage which is unscriptural, placing two souls in danger. The teaching of Christ on divorce and remarriage is very clear. He said, "And I say unto

you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery" (Matt. 19:9). According to Christ, when a spouse has been "put away" because of fornication, he/she will be living in adultery if they remarry. This is a terrible problem that has a far reaching impact, not only on the individuals involved, but also on the Lord's church.

Second, children are hurt and are often the ones to suffer the most damage. The emotional, mental, and physical health of children with divorced parents are often affected. Innocent children will be forced to divide time between parents, and are frequently used as pawns by the parents. The two people they love the most, are fighting, breaking their hearts. The example they see is one that, if they follow it, will lead to a lifetime of trouble. What opinion of marriage will they hold? What will they consider to be a normal life-style? Will they imitate their parents when they are grown?

Third, grandparents are hurt as they watch their children and grandchildren suffer heartache. They see them going through difficult times. Often, in the case of a bitter dispute, the grandparents and grandchildren rarely see one another.

Broken families are a threat to the stability of any society. Society can only be as strong as the families upon which it is built. As we consider the fact that nearly fifty percent of marriages fail, it is obvious that the foundation of our society has been damaged.

Jeff preaches for the Ridgely church of Christ in Ridgely, TN.

The Design of Marriage

by Barry Grider

With the recent Supreme Court decision allowing same gender marriage throughout all fifty states, it is imperative that Bible believing Christians and those who uphold biblical values and morality stand in unison in opposition to the high court's ruling, which threw the Bible and the United States Constitution in the trash can. God established the marriage relationship in the beginning of time and He alone can define what marriage is. "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). Consider how God designed the marriage relationship. What was its purpose?

When a person marries he/she should have some idea of "what he is getting himself into." Marriage is the oldest institution ordained by God, and therefore serves a very worthwhile purpose. Marriage is wonderful because it provides abiding companionship. "And the Lord God said, it is not good that the man should be alone: I will make him a help meet for him" (Gen. 2:18). Though there are a few who would rather remain unmarried, most people will finally choose a mate. Life does not seem to be complete or fulfilled until this moment comes. Therefore, Solomon wrote, "Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favor of the Lord" (Prov. 18:22).

Certainly, when a man finds someone with whom he can rejoice during happy moments, find comfort during difficult hours, or share his most intimate feelings, he

is a blessed man. Again Solomon wrote, "rejoice with the wife of thy youth" (Prov. 5:18).

Marriage is also designed to bring about the addition of children into the world. Though not as important as companionship, it is still part of God's divine plan. Even the physical bodies of the male and female show God's design for procreation. Speaking to man, God said, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth" (Gen. 1:28). Children are the precious product of marriage. They were never to be brought into the world outside of this holy union. These little ones help make a home complete and bring much reward and satisfaction (cf. Psalm 127:35). It is therefore the purpose of parents to rear their children according to God's standard. "And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

God ordained marriage also to promote an atmosphere of Christianity. The home is where the most spirituality can be gained, because it is the place where we spend so much time. It is therefore imperative that faithful Christians marry faithful Christians. One should understand that it does not take two, but rather three, to build a happy home. Christ must be included. It should be the desire of every Christian couple to help each other go to heaven. "Likewise, ye

husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life: that your prayers be not hindered" (1Pet. 3:7).

Those who are married or those about to be married should keep in mind that it is God who brings two people together in this holy estate and therefore marriage serves a distinct and divine purpose. It was created and crafted according to God's own design and, therefore, no man can improve what God has done.

Barry preaches for the Forest Hill church of Christ in Memphis, TN

GOD'S PLAN OF SALVATION

1. Hearing the word of God. (Romans 10:17; Acts 16:32).
2. Believing what is taught (Mark 16:16; Hebrews 11:6).
3. Repentance (Acts 2:38; Luke 13:3; Acts 17:30).
4. Confession (Romans 10:9, 10; Acts 8:37).
5. Baptism (Acts 2:38; Mark 16:16; I Peter 3:21; Romans 6:3, 4).
6. After the above five steps, faithful Christian Living (I Peter 2:11, 12; Revelation 2:10).

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

1. The Bible is its only guide (Romans 1:16; I Thess. 2:13).
2. Wears a Biblical Name (Romans 16:16).
3. Established at the right place (Isaiah 2:2, 3; Acts 2).
4. Established at the right time (Joel 2:28-32; Acts 2).
5. Established on the right person (Matthew 16:18; Acts 2:36).
6. Saved are in it (Ephesians 5:23; Acts 2:47).
7. Its members are enrolled in heaven (Hebrews 12:23).
8. Membership in it is obtained by obedience to God's commands including baptism (Acts 2:41-47; I Corinthians 12:13).

Thank You!

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Our goal is to get good, sound material into the hands of brethren around the world. We want people to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Pet. 3:18) and to understand what the will of the Lord is (Eph. 5:17). Thank you, again, for all that you do in helping us with this great work!

Barry O'Dell



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