

Marriage Approved of God

by J. T. Smith

When God created the heavens and the earth and all things therein, He saw that it was not good for man to be alone. (All italicized words in the Scriptures are mine for emphasis — jts). “And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; *but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him* (Genesis 2:20). In Genesis 2:21-24 we read, (21) “And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof; (22) And the rib, which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. (23) 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. (24) Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” Thus God made woman as one who would be suitable for man.

When the Pharisees came to Jesus to discuss the subject of “putting away,” they asked Him a question. Matthew 19:3-8 (3) “The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?”

(4) And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made {them} at the beginning made them male and female, (5) And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? (6) Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

(7) They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorce-ment, and to put her away? (8) 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.*” It was always God’s intention that there be one **man for one woman for life**. This is set forth by the following passages. Romans 7:2-3 (2) “For the woman which hath an husband is *bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth*; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of {her} husband. (3) So then if, while {her} husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.” According to these passages, God has determined that there is to be one man, for one woman, for life. Now then, let’s look at the Scriptures and see just who, according to God’s Law, is eligible to be married. Notice the following chart.

Who Is Eligible to Marry?

- 1. One Who Has Never Been Married**
I Corinthians 7:36
One Whom God Has Loosed:
- 2. The Innocent Party Who Has Put His/Her Spouse Away for Fornication**
Matthew 5:32; 19:9
- 3. One Whose Wife/Husband Has Died**
Romans 7:2-3

God is the one who does the joining. In fact in Matthew 19:6 we read, “Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath *joined* together, let not man put asunder.” This word “join” is an interesting word. It is from the original word *sunzeugnumi* which means, “to yoke together (*sun*, with, *zugos*, a yoke), and is used metaphorically of union in wedlock, in Matthew 19:6; Mark 10:9” (W. E. Vine’s Dictionary of New Testament Words, Volume 2, Page 276). (*The charts on the next page depict this definition.*)

Now as we can see, three parties are involved in a marriage approved of God. There is the man, the woman and God. This is clearly shown from the following chart.

“Scriptural Marriage”

Marriage consists of a covenant between a man and woman, an agreement, a commitment to fulfill the duties and obligations enjoined upon them by their covenant to each other. Consequently, having taken the above mentioned “vows” and having having obeyed civil law, they are joined, (bound - yoked) by God having formed a relationship that is to last as long as they both shall live.

God’s Law

“Joins (Yokes Together)”

Matthew 19:4-6

There are at least four purposes for marriage set forth in the Scriptures. They are (1) sociological, (2) biological, (3) pro-creative, (4) religious.

God’s Purpose For Marriage

1. Sociological

Genesis 2:18

2. Biological

I Corinthians 7:2-5; I Timothy 5:14

3. Precreation of the Race

Genesis 1:28; I Timothy 5:14

4. Religious

Galatians 5:19; Hebrews 13:4

First, as we notice on the above chart, we want to examine the *sociological* aspect of marriage. Companionship is one of the primary purposes for which God instituted marriage. We read, for example in Genesis 2:18 “And the Lord God said, {It is} not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.” Thus God set forth the abiding value in marriage.

Secondly, we observe that there is a *biological* reason for marriage. For every desire

that God has placed within man, He has also provided a lawful, Scriptural way to fulfill that desire. We read in I Corinthians 7:2-5 (2) “Nevertheless, {to avoid} fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. (3) Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. (4) The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. (5) Defraud ye not one the other, except {it be} with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.” God’s lawful means of fulfilling the sexual desire that He has placed within man is that every man have his own wife and every woman her own husband. (You will notice that He said every man is to have *his own wife*, not someone else’s wife). However, it is not enough to know the solution. Paul continues by telling every wife and husband to “render their due” to each other. Oftimes when there is a “break-up” in the marriage, it comes about as a result of one person committing adultery. I wonder, however, just how often adultery is committed because the husband or wife did not “render their due” to their mate as Paul instructed. Paul said if we do not “render our spouse their due,” the spouse may be tempted by Satan because of his/her incontinence. (The word “incontinency” means, “want of power, want of self-control” W. E. Vine, Page 594). As you can see, this is a serious matter. It is a matter that involves one’s lack of obedience to God which results in another being tempted.

Just here let me deviate from the above chart and present another chart. We have been discussing God’s provision for a lawful means to fulfill the sexual desire that He has placed within us. But God has also warned against our fulfilling these desires by *unlawful* means.

Unlawful Means

1. Homosexuality

Leviticus 18:22; 20:13

Romans 1:26-27; I Corinthians 6:9

2. Bestiality

Genesis 2:20; Exodus 22:19

Deuteronomy 27:21

3. Polygamy

Romans 7:2-3

Notice on this chart that there are a number of *unlawful means* by which we can fulfill this lawful desire.

First of all, there is the matter of *homosexuality*. God “spelled it out” in the Old Testament, even telling Moses what ought to be done with those who were engaging in such ungodly practices. “Thou shalt not lie with mankind, as with womankind: it {is} abomination” (Leviticus 18:22). “If a man also lie with mankind, as he lieth with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination: they shall surely be put to death; their blood {shall be} upon them” (Leviticus 20:13). Then in the New Testament Paul said, “For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature: And likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust one toward another; men with

men working that which is unseemly, and receiving in themselves that recompense of their error which was meet” (Romans 1:26-27). “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind.” (I Corinthians 6:9).

Secondly, God also warns against *bestiality*. God pointed out in the very beginning that no beast was suitable for man. “And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him” (Genesis 2:20). He also pointed out just what was to happen to those who tried to fulfill their desires in that way. “Whosoever lieth with a beast shall surely be put to death (Exodus 22:19). “Cursed {be} he that lieth with any manner of beast. And all the people shall say, Amen” (Deuteronomy 27:21).

Third, there is the matter of *polygamy*. This too is sinful. God only authorized one man for one woman in His Word. In Romans 7:2-3 we read (2) “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to {her} husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of {her} husband. (3) So then if, while {her} husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.” This, of course, would include one who is married to a person who has no scriptural right to be married, or one who has a number of living wives.

The third point on the chart, God’s Purpose For Marriage is, *Procreation of the Race*. Genesis 1:28 (28) “And God blessed them, and God said unto them, 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.” “I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house, give none occasion to the adversary to speak reproachfully” (I Timothy 5:14). Some have thought that this is the *only* reason for marriage. Obviously, from the above material, this is not true.

Finally, one of the purposes for marriage is a *religious purpose*. As Paul said, “Nevertheless, {to avoid} fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband” (I Corinthians 7:2). Since fornication is a “work of the flesh,” (Galatians 5:19), it is therefore sin. The Hebrew writer said, “Marriage {is} honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge” (Hebrews 13:4).

Conclusion

Thus marriage was instituted by God that man might have companionship, fulfill his lawful sexual desires, multiply and replenish the earth and that he might avoid the sin of fornication. ¶