

# A BIBLICAL THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE

A Paper

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## THE PROBLEM WITH MARRIAGE TODAY

We have a huge problem today within our American culture. This country was founded on Judeo-Christian Biblical principles yet in our country today we have been straying further and further from those very same principles. As stated in God, Marriage, & Family, “the West’s Judeo-Christian heritage and foundation have been largely supplanted by the libertarian ideology that elevates human freedom and self-determination as the supreme principles for human relationships.”<sup>1</sup> The real problem though isn’t in just the following of those Biblical principles, but in the fearing the God behind those principles. What is at stake is the normative procreational nature of the family unit, as God intended, and how that family, when honoring God and His ways, will lead us back onto the right track of what we were designed and purposed by God.

It is in the Word of God, the Holy Bible, that we find the true purpose of God in creating man and woman as His Word states, ““Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24) To go along with the message from God that man and woman were to marry and become one, the other part of God’s purpose for them is stated at the beginning of His creation as well as after the flood in the days of Noah. God spoke to Noah saying, “And as for you, be fruitful and multiply; Bring forth abundantly in the earth And multiply in it.” (Genesis 9:7) There we have the plan and purpose of God’s creation, as He is building His kingdom, for a man and woman to marry, and then to multiply, in other words, to make babies. There is obviously more to what God intends for us as His people, of His creation, yet His purpose and will for mankind is for us to acknowledge and honor God our Creator & the sanctity of marriage and family. That has to be our starting point.

## THE WORD AS OUR GUIDE

The Holy Bible, as it is called God’s instruction manual for His people, and also referred to as His personal love letter to all those who will honor Him and obey Him, gives us a multitude of examples of how to live as a society and individually as according to God’s created purpose. After King Solomon had built and dedicated the temple in Jerusalem, God spoke to Solomon

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1 Andreas J. Kostenberger, God, Marriage, and Family, pg. 16. (Wheaton: Crossway, 2010)

saying that if His people began to stray from Him, to which He would cause it to no longer rain, and plagues begin to take over, God told Solomon, “if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14) What God was saying to them then, He continues to say to us even today, that He is not just calling His people back into following a bunch of laws and principles, He is calling His people back to honoring and obeying Him, just as He says “I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last.” (Revelation 1:8) What God was speaking to the Israelites was not just about having rain for the crops and not having pestilence or plagues. It is because “His way is perfect; The word of the Lord is proven; He is a shield to all who trust in Him” (2 Samuel 22:31) and as God also said to the Israelites, “that you may love the Lord your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days.” (Deuteronomy 30:20)

While it must be understood that at this time in history that we are not under the ceremonial laws and tribal laws that were put on the Israelites, as for a couple of examples, we are not supposed to take people out and stone them to death for committing adultery and we aren't intended to sacrifice sheep or oxen for the covering of our sins. Jesus took care of that. As no message should be without the gospel of Jesus Christ, we're getting to that. We'll address that more fully later on as we look at the grace of God that has been revealed to us in Christ Jesus and then how that makes a load of difference in our own personal lives, the welfare of our families and then the condition of our society. But God is no longer leading the nations of Israel or Judah as He was. Nevertheless, God is still our Creator and the Sustainer of our lives and He still reigns Sovereign over all of His creation and His Word will never pass away. (Matthew 24:35)

## CREATION AS IT PERTAINS TO US

In Genesis, the first book of the Bible, we have the creation story of how “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1) The story then goes into more detail about what was created in the first six days, which included the heavens and the earth, the birds of the air,

the creatures in the seas and all of the creatures that creep on the ground and walk on the land. Most specifically to us then was on day six when God created man in His own image. “God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” (Genesis 1:26) To clarify for us though that He didn’t just create “man” the narrative continues, “[s]o God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.” (Genesis 1:27)

From the beginning of creation mankind has questioned the Word and authority of God. It even started with the first man Adam and his wife Eve in the garden of Eden. God had told them that they could eat of every tree in the garden except for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, that in the day they eat of it they would surely die. The serpent also known as Satan, the devil, came to Eve and said, ““Has God indeed said, ‘You shall not eat of every tree of the garden’?” After Eve’s reply that yes, God did indeed say that, Satan responded, ““You will not surely die. For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” (Genesis 3:1-4) So Eve ate of the forbidden fruit and then gave some to Adam. That was the beginning of the trouble for mankind as sin entered the world to which every one, including Adam and Eve, fell under the curse of God to have, even at birth, a sin nature, and yes they did die a physical death. Not only have we been warned about the consequences of rebelling against God’s Word from the poor choice of Adam and Eve, as well as scores of examples in His Word, what we are presently seeing as a society how that works out when we question God’s word and just live according to our own selfish desires. A world without absolutes leads to absolute lawlessness in the end. That is what brought about the flood in Noah’s day, right? In can be no surprise then that Jesus spoke of the last of days, where “lawlessness will abound, [and] the love of many will grow cold.” (Matthew 24:12)

#### THE FOUNDATION TO A BIBLICAL MARRIAGE

Every single person on this earth was created for God’s pleasure and according to His purpose. As it says in Revelation 4:11, “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power;

For You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.” Whether someone wants to acknowledge that fact or not, we were all created by God for His purpose. Similarly, Isaiah 43:7 quotes God as saying, “Everyone who is called by My name, whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.” One more Scripture, of which there are many, that speaks of the Sovereignty of God is Psalm 24:1 that states, “The earth is the Lord’s, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell therein.” There are two issues that come up in quoting those verses from what we call the Bible or the Holy Bible. In today’s society, of which to a degree I am generalizing, it claims that there is no absolute truth or authority other than what is in the heart of each individual person. There is indeed nothing new under the sun with societies or civilizations that have come and gone.

#### THE WORD BECAME FLESH

As Genesis starts off with, “In the beginning God...” we find that the word used for God is Elohim “which is plural in form but is singular in meaning.”<sup>2</sup> That says to us that God is one God but as we know from elsewhere in Scripture that there are three persons that comprise the Godhead. “For there are three that bear witness in heaven: the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.” (1 John 5:8) To corroborate the presence of the Word with God in creation and beyond we read in John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” That is speaking of God the Father with the Word, in the beginning. “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14) The Word that John speaks of is Jesus. “And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace.” (John 1:16) Jesus came to earth for the purpose of what John states as being the purpose behind the writing of his gospel, saying, “that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.” (John 20:30) With each of us we are called to believe on Christ and then to receive Him, that is, to be born again, which is to be born of the Spirit to where Christ works in us His Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, & Redemption. (1 Cor. 1:30)

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2 C. I. Scofield, Scofield Study Bible, The (NKJV), pg. 2, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002)

## CHRIST IN THE MARRIAGE AND FAMILY

As the Word of God tells us, that if one part of the body of Christ suffers, the whole body suffers. (1 Corinrhians 12:26) So it is in marriage and with a family. If each of the members in the family are following after the example of Christ and being led by the Spirit of God as is intended by God (Romans 8:14) the family may not operate perfectly as we are all human but it will be as intended by Jesus, to live our lives in Him. We have been given the perfect example of how we are to be living in humility and longsuffering with one another and in our family as well as the family of God as we are called to “with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all.” (Galatians 4:2-6)

## EFFECTS OF SIN ON THE MARRIAGE

According to statistics quoted in Biblical Counseling, “almost half (46 percent) from the Baby Boomer generation have undergone a marital split, and millions more are expected to divorce in the next ten years.”<sup>3</sup> With the following generations it isn’t looking better. “It is estimated that somewhere between 40 and 50 percent of marriages that begin this year will end in divorce. “ That was written in 2009. Since then, there has been a huge push in the media and social media towards self identifying one’s own gender, homosexual marriage, and transexual lifestyles to the extent of even pushing their agendas on elementary age children in the classrooms. Yes, we have a very dangerous problem in our country as we stray further and further from the will and ways of God. The second thing that is questioned is on whether the Bible applies then to someone that isn’t specifically “called by [God’s] name” or who exactly should be obeying God and honoring God. God is our Sovereign Creator and it is His Word. As God spoke, “I AM that I AM.” Nothing can change God or His Word and that applies to everyone.

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<sup>3</sup> Dr. Tim Clinton & Dr. Ron Hawkins, Quick Reference Guide to Biblical Counseling, The, pg. 85, (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, 2009)

## DIVORCE AND THE CONSEQUENCES

As the institution of marriage has been ordained by God, it should not really come as a shock that God hates divorce. As stated in Malachi 2:16, ““For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce, For it covers one’s garment with violence,” Says the Lord of hosts. “Therefore take heed to your spirit, That you do not deal treacherously.” In a study of men and women that had divorced in Second Chances, “the men, women, and children interviewed were still deeply affected by the divorce ten and fifteen years later.”<sup>4</sup> In fact, “half of [those interviewed] were still alive with raw feelings and strong longings. These people were angry, bitter, and mired in conflict even fifteen years after the breakup.” That’s pretty much what the Word of God tells us will happen with divorce. Marriage is to be considered a covenant agreement as it is a man and woman joining together to be as one, under the Sovereignty of God.

## CONCLUSION

God, Marriage, and Family concludes saying, “On the whole, both Old and New Testaments present a coherent body of teachings pertaining to marriage and the family. From the garden of Eden, to Israel, to Jesus, to the early church, to Paul, all uphold a very high standard in this crucial area of life.” We can also then look at specific declarations to the husbands and then to the wives in Ephesians 5 and also Colossians 3, in how we have to begin in managing our lives and our households according to God’s perfect plan although it can be summed up in the great commandment to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength, and mind, and to also do as Jesus said, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.” If we honor and obey God in those two principles we will part of the solution for our families and our communities.

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4 Judith S. Wallerstein & Sandra Blakeslee, Second Chances, pg. Xiii, (Boston: Huffton Mifflin Company, 1996)

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