

A Summary of what the Bible Says about Marriage

In matters of faith and practice, the church turns to Scripture to hear the testimony of the Holy Spirit, so that we might follow the Word of God incarnate in our changing world. So, in addressing the recent questions in our denomination as to what is marriage, we go to Scripture for our answer. From the opening pages of Genesis, God's design for marriage is revealed. At the apex of God's creation comes humanity, created in God's image (Genesis 1:26-27). God says,

It is not good for man to be alone. (Genesis 2:18)

A woman is made who completes Adam, and the two of them become one flesh (Genesis 2:24). The one-flesh relationship includes physical, emotional, and spiritual bond that occurs through sexual intercourse. In sex, a couple reflects something of the image of God, for it points to a oneness of two which mirrors the oneness of the Triune Godhead. Therefore the union of the relationship between a husband and a wife is a reflection of the relationship between members of the God head, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in whose image human beings are made.

As philosopher Peter Kreeft puts it,

No animal falls in love, writes profound romantic poetry, or sees sex as a symbol of the ultimate meaning of life, because no animal is made in the image of God. Human sexuality is that image, and human sexuality is a foretaste of that self-giving ... that is the heart of the life and joy of the Trinity."¹

God's gracious intent for our sexuality is that we would find the one who completes us. Our bodies are carefully designed by the Creator to belong to the one created for us.

From the dual creation of male and female come other givens:

1. The potential of procreation (Genesis 1:28)
2. The significance of sexual intercourse (Genesis 2:24)
3. Marriage as the context in which intercourse and procreation are to take place (Genesis 2:18, 21-22, 24-25).²

¹ Peter Kreeft, *Everything You Wanted to Know About Heaven, But Never Dreamed of Asking* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990), page 132.

These too are affirmed by Jesus as givens in Matthew 19:

Haven't you read...that at the beginning the creator 'made them male and female', and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore, what God has joined together, let man not separate."
(Matthew 19:4-6)

By Jesus quoting this part of Genesis as the basis for the marriage relationship he understands this account to be prescriptive rather than merely descriptive. In other words, that it is a truth intended for all humanity for all time and not merely a story intended for a specific people during a specific time in history. In this definition, Jesus wipes away generations of misused tradition (divorce, polygamy), and brings humankind back to God's design in Genesis 2:24.

Every reference found in Scripture affirms the sexual bond is between a man and a woman – without exception. There is no evidence in the Bible that same-sex union or marriage is in accordance with God's will and design.