

### Article Summary

The institution of marriage is under attack from every avenue. The godless & humanistic culture we live attempts to redefine what marriage is. This includes same-sex marriage, polygamous, & other non-traditional unions. Beyond redefining what God has already ordained, other threats abound such as adultery, pornography & divorce. All of these erode the foundational understanding of marriage & demean the meaning of what it means for a man & woman to become one flesh. Somewhat less vexing (but no less perilous) are husbands who abandon their role of leading & loving their wives in order to follow leisure, laziness, or simple selfishness. Women, similarly have their own vices that can be harmful to a healthy marriage relationship. For the Christian, a biblical view of marriage is an absolute essential. It is our starting point, our foundation. So, how do we think biblically about marriage? Let's turn to the sacred text to see.

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 **JEREMIAH 20:9**  
MINISTRIES

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**Biblical Marriage**

## THE GOSPEL IS PORTRAYED IN MARRIAGE

- ✚ Almost certainly the most significant biblical principle in relation to the institution of marriage is that it is designed & intended to present something beyond itself, to be exact, the gospel of Jesus Christ. **Ephesians 5:31-32**, “For this reason a man shall leave his father & mother and shall be joined to his wife & the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ & the church.”
- ✚ This radical truth shows that from its inception marriage was intended to convey the relationship that Christ has with the people of God, the Church. The man leads, loves & serves his wife because that is how Christ gives himself to his bride. The wife respects, submits to & helps her husband, because that is how the Church of God follows the risen Lord Jesus.
- ✚ When marriage is done God’s way, a lost world sees the gospel on display, even as it also hears the gospel coming from our lips. In both ways, the glory of God in his redeeming work through Christ is presented beautifully & attractively.

## GOD ORDAINED MARRIAGE

- ✚ Marriage is God’s idea. Alas, many in our culture see marriage as an obstacle to self-fulfillment. Many view it as an outdated cultural creation that has served its purpose but now only impedes progress. While marriage is not the central topic of the Scriptures, God does commend & ordain it for his purposes.
- ✚ **It was created for the welfare & happiness of mankind.** “Then the Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.” (**Gen 2:18**)
- ✚ **Marriage is honorable for all people** (**Heb 13:4**)
- ✚ **Marriage is not to be forbidden** (**1 Tim 4:1-3**).
- ✚ **There is a physical nature to the marriage relationship:**
  - God created sexual intimacy (**1 Cor 7:3-5**)
  - This intimacy is to be enjoyed (**Prov 5:18-19**)
  - Improper intimacy undermining marriage is forbidden (**Heb 13:4**)
- ✚ Marriage is God’s thing. We should celebrate & encourage marriage as a good gift to be enjoyed. Far from being a cultural convenience, it is a loving & thoughtful blessing from our Creator.

## JESUS BLESSED AND HONORED MARRIAGE

- ✚ **Jesus Endorsed Marriage as a Divine Institution.** In **Matthew 19:3-6**, Jesus had the opportunity to either redefine or undermine marriage & does neither. If the Lord desired to depose the cultural burden of marriage, this was his chance. But instead he honored it. He reaffirms the good design of God. So he goes back to the

beginning, to **Genesis 1–2**. Just as in the beginning the Creator God gave the good gift of marriage to the man & the woman, so here God the Son reaffirms & endorses that original design.

- ✚ **Jesus Blessed Marriage by His Presence at the Wedding in Cana.** **John 2:1-11** displays the unique power & divinity of the Lord Jesus, that all might believe in him. Implied in this story is the honor Jesus conveys to marriage as an institution by his mere presence. Jesus first chose to reveal his glory at a wedding. Jesus loves marriage, as he (as God’s Son) designed it. Jesus revealed his high regard for marriage in his earthly ministry. How will you let what Jesus thinks about marriage shape your views?

## GOD’S COMMANDMENTS REGULATE MARRIAGE

- ✚ Despite the culture’s distaste for rules of any kind on marriage, it makes perfect sense that God would provide guidelines for how his beloved image-bearers practice the relationship he ordained.
  - ✚ **Marriage Is To Be Permanent.** God hates divorce. “but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for *the* reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; & whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery (**Mt 5:32**).” “What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (**Mk 10:9**), (see also **Malachi 2:16**; **Romans 7:2**). Taken together, we can easily determine that one regulation God puts on the marriage relationship is that it should only be dissolved by death. Scripture, however, is not unaware of the complexities of living in a fallen world. God gives provision for a marriage affected by grievous sin. Specifically, Jesus identified adultery (infidelity) as the one evil that may dissolve the marriage bond (**1 Corinthians 7:10**). With certainty, we can surely state that reconciliation is always God’s desire.
  - ✚ **Husbands & Wives Have Mutual Duties.** Scripture make clear that marriage is not a passive enterprise. Successful marriages done God’s way will not simply happen. Rather, they require work from both the man & the woman (**1 Cor 7:5**; **Eph 5:21, 22, 25-28, 33**).
  - ✚ **Marriage Must Be “In the Lord.”** Although marriage is something that is given to all who are made in God’s image, Christians have an added regulation - namely, they are to marry someone else who is also a believer (**1 Cor 7:39**; see also **2 Cor 6:14**).
- The God of the Bible is infinitely wise & loving. He knows that no two people are exactly alike & thus there is infinite variety in how two married people might relate to one another. But he also knows what’s best for this indispensable institution. Consequently he lovingly gives certain regulations to foster human flourishing. As his creatures, we can best honor & love him by receiving & abiding by these guidelines.