

God's Ideal in Marriage

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Genesis 2:18-25 is a record of the first marriage and the creation of the first home. In the beginning it was just as God planned it-perfect in every way. It was not long before marriage lost its pristine beauty.

Genesis 4:19 records the first case of bigamy. There followed a shameful degradation of the marriage bond and the abuse of a divine gift. By the time of Moses, men were divorcing their wives for any reason. In Deuteronomy 24:1-4 this abuse was because of the hardness of their hearts. God made it plain before the close of the Old Testament that he hated divorcing (Mal. 2:16).

In answer to the question, "Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?" Jesus answered an implicit, "No." There is only one scriptural cause for putting away, and that is fornication (Matt. 19:3, Matt. 19:9). Divorce is not God's ideal in marriage.

Modern enemies of the home are wrecking God's ideal marriage. Divorce destroys marriages and is available for almost any frivolous excuse. It has not helped society to make divorce readily available, as its advocates have insisted it would. It has left us with more homeless and one-parent children than ever before in the history of this nation. We have over 47,000 in Alabama alone. The social consumption of alcoholic beverages contributes to over half the fatal accidents on our highways each year. It is the culprit in nearly as many divorces. The use of alcohol socially contributes to immorality, which in turn breaks up homes and marriages. Humanism teaches atheism and Godless agnosticism, which denies a moral standard higher than human wisdom. The result is the

contamination of the home that leads to its destruction.

We need to ask what is God's ideal regarding marriage and then get back to it. No philosopher or marriage counselor is going to help us if we leave God, who created marriage and the home, out of its restoration.

What do we find when we examine what the Bible says is God's ideal in marriage?

Marriage is for the comfort, pleasure, and happiness of the Creator's people. In Proverbs 13:22 the inspired record states that the man who finds a wife finds a good thing. She is good for him because she was created that way.

Marriage is for the comfort, training, and security of children. In the home children are to be trained "in the chastening and admonition of the Lord" (Eph. 6:4).

Marriage is to fulfill the sexual desires of men and women. It is honored around the world in every civilized society as an undefiled institution (Heb. 13:4).

Marriage is to perpetuate the human race. The idea of surrogate mothers would destroy the home if carried to its logical implications.

God's ideal home and marriage involve one man and one woman. The creation of only one of each sex implies this. This teaches against the marriage of two women, two men, one woman to two or more men, one man to two or more women, group marriages, and communal marriages. When God made Adam a "helpmeet" as one preacher put it, "He made Eve, not Steve." Homosexuality and lesbianism are abominations to God (Lev. 18:22). This is a nauseating sin. For it God severely reprimanded the Gentiles (Rom. 1:27). It is among the sins of which the unredeemed are guilty, but of which they must repent to inherit the kingdom of God (I Cor. 6:9).

God's ideal for marriage is one "helpmeet" for life. This word *helpmeet* means "an exact design for the needs of man." God designed woman for man. This also means he is designed for her. Together they fit the needs of each other. Other considerations regarding marriage matches involve personalities and personal traits. Two people go through a dating period to discover the presence or absence of matching characteristics. When we find the one who best fills those needs and more nearly matches (is compatible with) our own personality, we marry. In that union we become "one flesh." It is the "coolest" union of a physical nature that humans know. Although it has nothing to do with marriage, Ruth 1:16-17 describes the kind of union involved in scriptural marriages. It has to do with staying close to the one with whom we are united until he or she dies (Rom. 7:1-2). Death is the only honorable means of ending a marriage. This will be the case in every marriage if we follow God's ideal.

When God created woman, he did not take her from man's head that she should rule over him; or from his foot that he should walk over her; but he took her from man's side, to be a companion, from under his arm, to be protected, and from near his heart to be loved.

God's ideal for marriage is one head. I Corinthians 11:1-3 explains the man is the head of the woman. No matter how many women's liberation movements we have, that is God's law. Women who acknowledge it are happy and well-adjusted.

It is much easier for the wife to be dutifully obedient and submissive when the husband follows the instructions of Ephesians 5:23-24 to love his wife as himself.

Paul says in I Timothy 2:12-14 that the woman may not usurp authority over a man and that this is not simply a church ordinance but is so because from the first God made it so.

In the marriage bond there must be a unity of values and

goals. This is God's ideal. Marriages will suffer if the significant goals and values are different. Of these goals, none is more important than going to heaven. Although there will be no marriage in heaven, it is a valid idea for couples to seek to go to heaven together where the relationships will be superior to marriage.

When we get back to God's ideal in marriage, we will restore the home as God would have it, and the world's problem of broken homes and lost souls because of them will disappear. May God hasten the day.