
The Danger of Unscriptural Marriage

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INTRODUCTION

Marriage from the point of view of the Bible is the union between a man and a woman, instituted and ordained by God as a life relationship. The arrangement is that of one man or husband and one woman as wife.

God Himself established this institution as can be verified from His Holy Book, the Bible - **Genesis 2:21-24** ²¹ *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place.* ²² *Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to 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 a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*

GOD'S DESIGN FOR MARRIAGE

Eden was the scene of the first marriage ordained by God Himself and constitutes the standard by which all subsequent marriages are defined. The passage of the Scripture gives several points for understanding God's design for marriage.

First, marriage involves two eligible persons, a man and a woman. The Hebrew word for **wife** is gender specific; it cannot mean any other thing other than **a woman**.

On June 2016, 2015, the United States Supreme Court issued a ruling legalizing **Gay Marriage**. Across the Atlantic, in Mid-July 2013, the Queen of England signed the **Marriage Bill** which allows same sex couples to marry legally.

Around the world, at least fifteen (15) other nations have legalized marriage between same-sex partners. *Obviously, the societal definition of marriage is changing.* Even in some African communities, women are free to marry other women as their wives.

The second principle from **Genesis 2** about God's design is that marriage is intended to be for a lifetime. **Genesis 2:24** says *the two shall become one flesh.* Eve was taken from Adam's side, so literally one flesh with Adam. Her every substance was formed from Adam instead of from the ground.

Every marriage therefore is intended to reflect the unity shared by Adam and Eve because their bond was **in the flesh**, they were together forever. There

was no escape clause written into the first marriage that allowed for the two to separate, that is to say that God designed marriage for life.

The third principle from the passage about God's design for marriage is **monogamy**. The Hebrew words for **man and wife** are singular and do not allow multiple wives. Even though some people in the Scriptures did marry multiple wives – this evil practice is traceable to the lineage of Cain - **Genesis 4:19** ¹⁹ *Then Lamech took for himself two wives: the name of one was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah.*

It is clear from creation account that God's design for marriage was **one man – one wife**. Jesus emphasized this principle when He referred to the Genesis account to counter the idea of easy divorce - **Matthew 19:4-6** ⁴ *And He answered and said to them, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?" ⁶ So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate."*

It should not come as a surprise that the world desire to change what God has instituted - **Romans 8:7** ⁷ *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be.*

Though the world is attempting to provide their own definitions for what they call marriage, **the Bible still stands**.

These divine principles discussed above are expected to guide humanity in conduct of marriage. However, God allowed some variations from culture to culture which must be complied with as long as they are consistent with the laws of God. The initiation of marriage should follow societal norms as much as possible. If the governmental validation is required it should be sought; if a ceremony and witnesses of some sort are required they should be performed. In other words, cultural norms that do not violate the instructions of God should be followed as closely as possible.

In summary, marriage can be said to be scriptural if it complies with the laws of God and societal norms as long as they are not inconsistent with laws of God.

The next questions to address is - **Are There Unscriptural Marriages?** The answer is emphatic **Yes**.

In **Mark 6:17-18**, John the Baptist declared the marriage of Herod and Herodias unscriptural (*For Herod himself had sent and laid hold of John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife; for he had married her.* ¹⁸ *Because John had said to Herod, "It is not lawful for you to have your brother's wife").* It was unscriptural because it was not in keeping with the Jewish custom. He married his brother's wife - **Leviticus 18:16** ¹⁶ *You shall not uncover the nakedness of your brother's wife; it is your brother's nakedness.*

The encounter of Jesus with the Samaritan woman is yet another unscriptural relationship - **John 4:17-18** ¹⁷ *The woman answered and said, "I have no husband."* Jesus said to her, "You have well said, 'I have no husband,' ¹⁸ for you

have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly." This is a case of co-habitation. There is prevalence of unscriptural marriages in every time even in the church.

The concept of scripturalness of marriage appears simple on the surface but when applied to practical realities, we have issues. There have been a lot disagreement between brethren and congregations on what constitute scriptural marriage. I have been privileged to participate where such issues are to be resolved and they ended up with divided opinions. Most times, issues of bride price and moral values play out.

THE ISSUE OF REMARRIAGE

In **Matthew 19:9**, Jesus said *whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery.*"

It is clear that the only one who is free to remarry after a divorce is the one who put away his mate upon the ground of fornication - **Matthew 5:31-32** ³¹ *Furthermore it has been said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.'* ³² *But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.* **Mark 10:2-11** ...¹¹ *So He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her.*

A married woman is bound by law as long as her husband lives. If she is married to another man while her first husband is alive, she is guilty of adultery. She is free to re-marry without guilt only if her husband is dead and the new husband is a Christian (cf. 1 Corinthians 7:39)

It is important to know that this law applies to both widows and widowers.

PARENTAL CONSENT

Another variant of unscriptural marriage is that entered into without the consent of parents or guardians. This is also common in the society today.

REPENTANCE

Can A Person Become A Christian While Remaining In Their Former Sin (Adultery)? *Certainly not! How shall we who died to sin live any longer in it? (Romans 6:2)*

In order to become a Christian, one doesn't simply get baptized. The word of God tells us that there are several things that must be done such as

- Hearing the word, believe, repent of our sins - **Acts 2:38** ³⁸ *Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. Acts 17:30* ³⁰ *Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent.*

- Confess Jesus as the Son of God - **Romans 10:9-10** ⁹ *that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. ¹⁰ For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

If a person is living in fornication or adultery, that person must show genuine repentance, which includes ceasing that ongoing sin or relationship [**Colossians 3:5** ⁵ *Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.*]

Getting out of his or her adulterous marriage shows the fruits of repentance before he or she can be baptized.

CONCLUSION

When a man and a woman marry, having the scriptural right to do so, a union is formed and God intends for it to continue as long as both shall live.

Marriage is a creation of God (**Genesis 2:18-24**). It is of divine creation and symbolizes the union that exists between Christ and His church - **Ephesians 5:31-32** ³¹ *“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.”* ³² *This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*

This holy relationship must be respected by man and therefore is not to be looked upon lightly. Being of divine origin and being a holy relationship, it is therefore regulated by the laws of God. A Scriptural Marriage is one which conforms with God’s laws governing marriage while an unscriptural marriage is one which does not conform to His laws.