

LGBT and Political Correctness

Everything about the subject of LGBT (lesbian/gay/bisexual/transgender) identity and sexuality is colored in some way by political correctness. PC thinking embraces all beliefs and positions (except orthodox Christianity), and seeks to validate any and all self-expression (as long as it differs from biblical morals). One of the most amazing demonstrations of PC thought is this video, in which a short Caucasian male asks students at the University of Washington how they would respond if he told them he was a 6'5" Asian woman. The students were more committed to his right to be whatever he said he wanted to be, no matter how silly it sounded, than what was objectively true:

So much of PC thought in our culture today reminds me of the Hans Christian Andersen tale of a vain emperor who cares about nothing except wearing and showing off his luxurious clothes. He hires two weavers—two scammers—who promise him the finest, best suit of clothes made from a magic fabric that is invisible to anyone who is hopelessly stupid or unfit for his position.

Neither the emperor nor his ministers can see the fabric themselves, but they pretend that they can for fear of appearing unfit for their positions. Finally the weavers report that the suit is finished. They mime dressing him, and the emperor marches in procession before his subjects.

The townsfolk, who of course cannot see the (imaginary) fabric, play along with the pretense, not wanting to appear

stupid or unfit for their positions. Then a child in the crowd, too young to understand what was going on, blurts out the truth for all to hear: "The emperor's not wearing any clothes!" The townspeople try to hush him up, even though what he's saying is the truth.

Political correctness is often about maintaining an illusion and hushing up the people who speak the truth. Those who speak out the truth, like the little boy, are shamed with the intention of silencing them. This certainly happens in the arena of sexuality and identity, where the illusion is that sex is the highest pleasure and the most important aspect of life, and everyone has a right to express their sexual feelings however they want.

In order to think rightly about political correctness, we need to know what's really going on—what is fueling the illusion. (Which is why it's so important to understand worldview!) Recently I was privileged to address a Christian high school chapel on this topic, and I told the students that they were born into a cultural brine that is shaping and pickling their thoughts about sexuality and identity, just like the college students on the video. They needed to know how our culture got to the place it is today so they have a chance to refuse the pickling process.

In 1989, Marshall Kirk and Hunter Madsen wrote a manifesto for normalizing homosexuality, *After the Ball: How America Will Conquer Its Fear and Hatred of Gays in the 90s*. Their very specific, very achievable goals now describe American culture. (Please note, the bolded words are Kirk and Madsen's words, not mine):

1. **Talk about gays and gayness as loudly and often as possible.** This would desensitize people to the issue of homosexuality so it would become an always-present, no-big-deal aspect of American culture.
2. **Portray gays as victims and not as aggressive challengers.**

Two main ways to achieve this: propagate the “born that way” mythology, and portray homosexuals as victims in an anti-gay society.

3. **Give protectors a just cause.** Fighting discrimination, or what is portrayed as discrimination, makes people feel good about themselves as they defend the underdog.

4. **Make gays look good.** Particularly in media such as TV and movies, make the gay characters as good-looking, charming, smart, witty and winsome as possible.

5. **Make the victimizers look bad.** Make the “anti-gays” look so nasty that average Americans will want to dissociate themselves from such types.

Every one of these goals has been attained, and this is the culture we now live in. In order to be aware of the PC thought that shapes how most people think, we need to be aware that the entire society has been manipulated.

What earned Probe Ministries a spot on the Southern Poverty Law Center’s list of hate groups is our website content about homosexuality, which agrees with the biblically orthodox position that same-gender sexual behavior, like every other violation of God’s intention for sex to be limited to the marriage bed of one man and one woman, is wrong. As [my pastor](#) says, “Truth sounds like hate to those who hate the truth.” There are so many cultural lies about God’s design for sex and identity that when we proclaim God’s truth in a culture that embraces lies, we get called hateful and discriminatory.

In order to think biblically, we need to know the difference between the culture’s lies (politically correct thought) and God’s truth:

CULTURE’S LIE: Who I am is a sexual being. Whether it’s a culture or an individual, when God is left out of the equation, sex is elevated to the #1 most important spot because it’s so powerful and a source of such intense pleasure (or can be). So people define themselves by their sexuality.

GOD'S TRUTH: Who I am is God's beloved creation. Made in the image of God, created for intimacy and fellowship with Him, my worth proven by what the Son was willing to pay for me: His very life.

CULTURE'S LIE: Sex is a need and a right for everyone to experience. Many people believe it is on the same level of necessity as food, water and sleep.

GOD'S TRUTH: Sex is so powerful it is to be contained only within marriage between one man and one woman. The mingling of bodies and souls through sex is deeply spiritual as well as physical. God's prohibitions against sex outside of marriage are His gift to us, meant for our protection from the painful consequences of sexual sin. They are like guard rails on a treacherous mountain road, intended to keep us from going off the cliff to pain and destruction.

CULTURE'S LIE: I create my own identity depending on what I feel. Untethered from a connection to God as Creator, people live out the sad, repeated description of Israel in the book of Judges, where "all the people did whatever seemed right in their own eyes." (Judges 17:6, for one).

GOD'S TRUTH: My identity is who my Creator says I am. All of us exist because God wanted us and hand-crafted each of us (Psalm 139). Feelings are real but they're not reliable. Jeremiah 17:9 instructs us on why our feelings can't be trusted: "The heart is more deceitful than all else and is desperately sick; who can understand it?"

CULTURE'S LIE: Gender is whatever we want it to be. Biological sex has been separated from gender (how one feels about maleness and femaleness). (Personally, this strikes me as illegitimate as proclaiming that the white keys on a piano are bad and the black keys are good.) Facebook currently offers 58 choices of gender.

GOD'S TRUTH: God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; *male and female* He created them. (Gen. 1:27) The first words in the room when a baby is born are

still, “It’s a girl!” or “It’s a boy!” Gender is still binary because God still creates male and female.



CULTURE’S LIE: I can create my own reality. For example, recently a man abandoned his wife and seven children, announcing his chosen identity of a 6-year-old girl.

Another man, deciding his identity is a female dragon, cut off his ears and nose, dyed his eyes, and inserted horns in his forehead.



GOD’S TRUTH: There is objective truth and objective reality because God is real and true. We do not have the freedom to dismiss what is objectively true and real; $2 + 2$ will always be 4, not 7 or 200, and gravity will always be operational on the planet. These things are real and true because a real and true God rooted His creation in His own nature.

CULTURE’S LIE: “Born this way.” This lie has so much traction because it’s repeated so often people assume it to be true.

GOD’S TRUTH: No Evidence. There is actually no scientific evidence of a gay gene or any other determiner of same-sex attraction. **Identical Twins Studies:** In identical twins (who share the same DNA), when one identifies as gay or lesbian, the other one only identifies as gay or lesbian about 11% of

the time. If homosexuality were a genetic issue, the correspondence would be 100%.

American culture continues to pump out the illusion—the fantasy, the myth—that sexuality is the most important thing about life and about us, and that sexual identity and expression is where life is found.

Beware: *the emperor has no clothes!*

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Future Husbands and Cheerleaders: A Review of OMI's Cheerleader and Meghan Trainor's "Dear Future Husband"

Meghan Trainor's song "[Dear Future Husband](#)" and OMI's song "[Cheerleader](#)" have striking similarities. Musically they are both fun and upbeat songs. Both songs engage with the idea of marriage and outline what they expect and value in their potential spouse. However, the two songs offer conflicting ideas of what a good husband and wife look like. It is almost comical that "Cheerleader," from a man's perspective, describes the potential wife as a mere cheerleader and "Dear

Future Husband,” from the woman’s perspective even if only satirically, {1} describes the potential husband as a mere servant. That brings me to the final comparison: both songs expect the spouse to be an aid in providing whatever the artist desires.

However, there are some truths hidden in these songs about the role of husband and wife in marriage that can best be understood and even celebrated through a biblical understanding of marriage.

Marriage as a Deal

Meghan Trainor’s song “Dear Future Husband” is basically a list of criteria that a man must accomplish or agree to before he is allowed to marry her. The song introduces the list by remarking “Here’s a few things you’ll need to know if you wanna be my one and only all my life.” Trainor spells out examples of what she expects from her husband including taking her on dates, telling her she is beautiful, not correcting her, apologizing, buying her a ring, opening doors for her, and even letting her sleep on the left side of the bed. Then of course she adds the the catch-all requests such as “be a classy guy,” “treat me like a lady,” and “love me right.”

The song also outlines what he will get in return as a reward if he does everything right. She will only “be the perfect wife,” buy groceries, give “some kisses,” be his “one and only all [her] life,” give “that special loving” if he does exactly what she asks of him. Additionally, he will have to expect that she will be crazy (at least some of the time), she will correct but not be corrected, she will not cook, and they will favor her extended family over his. What a deal! And unfortunately that is exactly what marriage is conflated into—a deal, an exchange.

Most of these actions are pretty standard ways men show love to their wives. However, men should not and likely do not

perform the acts because of a contractual agreement or because of expectations. How can this man show true unconditional and sacrificial love to his wife if he does these actions out of duty or hope of reward?

This marred picture of marriage is so faulty because it offers a picture of marriage that is a one-sided willingness to be served by her husband and then only serve him as a response. Even though the song lists loving actions in marriage, this picture of marriage is ultimately selfish, conditional, manipulative, and loveless.

Marriage as a Cheerleader

Looking to “Cheerleader,” the song offers a more hopeful and less distorted picture of marriage—however, we are still left wanting. The future wife in OMI’s song is a woman characterized by her support, affection, strength, physical beauty, readiness to serve, and faithfulness. All these attributes are biblically commendable and should even be sought after. Yet, what does OMI, as the future husband, offer to her? Fidelity and sex. In contrast to Trainor’s song, here the husband remains rightly faithful and offers sex because he values his wife so much, especially her ability to support him. [\[2\]](#)

However, again the picture seems woefully incomplete. The song portrays a limited picture of women by reducing his future wife to only a handful of attributes that benefit him. His wife should be more than a mere cheerleader. She is simply a tool he can pull out whenever he wants or needs her. The song further reduces—and in some ways even dehumanizes—her by focusing on the services she can offer him. As a result, she is not represented as her own person with her own needs and desires.

Marriage as a Picture of Unity



Ultimately marriage is a picture of Christ and the Church—a picture both songs catch a small glimpse of. When Trainor in “Dear Future Husband” desires (albeit via demand) for her husband to show her love by serving her and

affirming her, she desires something that is biblical. Husbands are called to nourish, cherish, honor, embrace, protect, and love their wives.[{3}](#) Having biblical standards in what to expect in a husband is what God wants, but not through demands and deals.

OMI also desires legitimate attributes in his wife. He values a wife who will support and affirm him. In Genesis God created woman with Adam’s need for companionship and assistance in mind.[{4}](#) Proverbs 31 describes an excellent wife as a woman who is strong, trustworthy and praiseworthy.[{5}](#) However, Proverbs 31 does not just define an excellent wife in those terms; the excellent wife is generous, wise, skilled, dignified, and uses her time buying, selling, trading, and providing for her entire household. So when OMI seeks an excellent wife, he gets a cheerleader—but if he were to look for a biblically defined wife of excellence then the proverb would ring true, that “he who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.”[{6}](#)

But neither artist has the full picture. Marriage is not an exchange of services—yes, spouses should serve each other; not out of duty but out of a thankful and loving heart. The element that is missing from both songs is the true and complete needs and desires of the opposite spouse. However, both songs together offer a fuller picture of what each spouse needs and desires. Ephesians 5 commands husbands to love their

wives, something Trainor focused on, and for wives to respect their husbands, as OMI touched on through valuing affirmation from his wife.[{7}](#)

Genesis describes marriage as becoming one flesh, and following that theme Paul in Ephesians calls husbands to “love his wife as himself.”[{8}](#) By being one flesh, spouses should see their separate wills as one unified will and their separate body as one body. Paul writes that concerning this idea of unity, “For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.”[{9}](#) This picture of marriage is strikingly different from the deal-making, manipulating, and self-serving marriage according to Trainor and OMI.

The true beauty and blessing in marriage for the Christian, is ultimately that marriage is a picture of the relationship between Christ and the Church. Again in Ephesians, Paul refers to marriage by writing, “This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”[{10}](#) When a man and a woman marry, they symbolize unity that is fully complete between Christ and His people.[{11}](#)

However, because of our sin we were incapable of being united with Christ. In order for Christ to marry his Church he had to make us clean and even righteous. Christ accomplished this by taking our place and dying on the cross for our sins so we might receive the righteousness of Christ. In that way, when God the Father looks down at His Church He sees a people who are flawless and thus fitting to be united with His son. Christ is the perfect husband, and when we are complete in our glorification, we will be the perfect wife as the Church.

Marriage as a Broken Picture

Yet our marriage is only a picture—a flawed and imperfect picture. Husbands abuse wives, wives undermine their husbands, and spouses cheat on each other which can all lead to separation and divorce. God did not intend marriage to be plagued by sin, and divorce and pain was not in his design.[{12}](#) However, we did sin and as a result sin has damaged our relationships, including marriage, in a deeply painful way.



Nevertheless, God still works to better our marriages. He sent the Holy Spirit to help believers in the process of sanctification—which is making us more like Christ. Both songs lack a place for sanctification. Trainor does not want to be confronted and OMI only wants to be affirmed.

But marriage is made for more than just affirming the good and ignoring the bad. Because men and women are different yet compatible, God uses marriage to aid in the process of making us more Christlike. Women tend to be more relational and emotional and men tend to be more protective and provisional. In marriage, the wife can learn from and value her husband's strengths and the husband can learn from and value his wife's strengths, as co-heirs with Christ. And when one spouse has wronged the other they can and should go to each other for confession, repentance and reconciliation that will result in more unity and ultimately aid in their sanctification.

With the power of the Holy Spirit working in us, even in our sinful state, we can still strive to symbolize our unity in Christ in our marriages. Married Christians should continually search the Bible for insight and direction on how to better serve and love their spouse. However, both married and single Christians all wait expectantly for the glorious wedding feast celebrating our unity to Christ.

Notes

1. There has been some debate about whether or not Trainor's song is supposed to be understood as a satire. I am more inclined to think it may be hyperbolic but I think it might be too generous to call it a satire. However, most conclude that if it is meant to be satirical it does not skillfully convey that message. For more of this conversation simply google "Dear Future Husband sexist satire" and you should have plenty of articles to start on.
2. Fidelity and sex should both be a fundamental part of a biblical marriage. See Hebrews 13:4.
3. Ephesians 5:28-29, 1 Peter 3:7, and Proverbs 4:7-9. All Bible verses are in the English Standard Version.
4. Genesis 2:18.
5. Genesis 2:18, Proverbs 31:10-11, 17, 28.
6. Proverbs 18:22.
7. Ephesians 5:33.
8. Genesis 2:24 and Ephesians 5:33
9. 1 Corinthians 7:4.
10. Ephesians 5:32.
11. Because marriage is a picture of the reality of our unity in Christ that is not yet fully realized, we value and guard the sanctity of it. That is why as Christians we should be mournful at the distortions of marriage such as divorce or homosexuality. Distortions in marriage are so offensive because they distort the truth that marriage is supposed to reflect. Because marriage should be highly regarded and protected the Bible uses harsh language when speaking about sexual immorality and divorce (For example, see Malachi 2:16 for severity of husbands not loving their wives).
12. See Matthew 19:6 and 1 Corinthians 7:10-11.

Divorce – A Biblical Christian Perspective

Kerby Anderson examines the epidemic of divorce from a Christian, biblical worldview perspective. He presents data on its impact on families and society and compares the trend with biblical teaching on the subject.

Families are experiencing many problems today, but the role of divorce in this picture has been frequently overlooked because its destructive effects have been subtle, yet insidious. When the divorce rate increased in the 1960s, few would have predicted its dire consequences three decades later. Yet divorce has changed both the structure and the impact of the family.

This is not just the conclusion of Christians, but also the conclusion of non-Christian researchers working in the field. Clinical psychologist Diane Medved set out to write a book to help couples facing transitions due to divorce. She begins her book with this startling statement:

I have to start with a confession: This isn't the book I set out to write. I planned to write something consistent with my previous professional experience helping people with decision making. . . . For example, I started this project believing that people who suffer over an extended period in unhappy marriages ought to get out...I thought that striking down taboos about divorce was another part of the ongoing enlightenment of the women's, civil- rights, and human potential movements of the last twenty-five years...To my utter befuddlement, the extensive research I conducted for this book brought me to one inescapable and irrefutable

conclusion: I had been wrong.”(1)

She titled her book *The Case Against Divorce*.

Until the 1960s, divorce has been a relatively rare phenomenon. Certainly there have always been some couples who have considered divorce an option. But fundamental changes in our society in the last few decades have changed divorce from being rare to routine.

During the 1970s, the divorce rate doubled (and the number of divorces tripled from 400,000 in 1962 to 1.2 million in 1981).(2) The increase in the divorce rate came not from older couples but from the baby boom generation. One sociologist at Stanford University calculated that while men and women in their twenties comprised only about 20 percent of the population, they contributed 60 percent of the growth in the divorce rate in the 1960s and early 1970s.(3)

This increase was due to at least two major factors: attitude and opportunity. The baby boom generation's attitude toward such issues as fidelity, chastity, and commitment were strikingly different from their parents'. Their parents would stay in a marriage in order to make it work. Baby boomers, however, were less committed to the ideal of marriage and quite willing to end what they felt was a bad marriage and move on with their lives. While their parents might keep a marriage going "for the sake of the kids," the baby boom generation as a whole was much less concerned about such issues.

Economic opportunities also seem to be a significant factor in divorce. The rise in divorce closely parallels the increase in the number of women working. Women with a paycheck were less likely to stay in a marriage that wasn't fulfilling to them. Armed with a measure of economic power, many women had less incentive to stay in a marriage and work out their differences with their husbands. A study of mature women done at Ohio

State University found that the higher a woman's income in relation to the total income of her family, the more likely she was to seek a divorce.(4)

Divorce and Children

Divorce is having a devastating impact on both adults and children. Every year, parents of over 1 million children divorce. These divorces effectively cut one generation off from another. Children are reared without the presence of their father or mother. Children are often forced to take sides in the conflict. And, children often carry the scars of the conflict and frequently blame themselves for the divorce.

So what is the impact? Well, one demographer looking at this ominous trend of divorce and reflecting on its impact, acknowledged:

No one knows what effect divorce and remarriage will have on the children of the baby boom. A few decades ago, children of divorced parents were an oddity. Today they are the majority. The fact that divorce is the norm may make it easier for children to accept their parents' divorce. But what will it do to their marriages in the decades ahead? No one will know until it's too late to do anything about it.(5)

What little we do know about the long-term impact of divorce is disturbing. In 1971, Judith Wallerstein began a study of sixty middle-class families in the midst of divorce. Her ongoing research has provided a longitudinal study of the long-term effects of divorce on parents and children.

Like Diane Medved, Judith Wallerstein had to revise her previous assumptions. According to the prevailing view at the time, divorce was seen as a brief crisis that would resolve itself. Her book, *Second Chances: Men, Women and Children a Decade After Divorce*, vividly illustrates the long-term psychological devastation wrought not only on the children but

the adults.(6) Here are just a few of her findings in her study of the aftershocks of divorce:

- *Three out of five children felt rejected by at least one parent.*
- *Five years after their parent's divorce, more than one-third of the children were doing markedly worse than they had been before the divorce.*
- *Half grew up in settings in which the parents were warring with each other even after the divorce.*
- *One-third of the women and one-quarter of the men felt that life had been unfair, disappointing and lonely.*

In essence, Wallerstein found that the emotional tremors register on the psychological Richter scale many years after the divorce.

In addition to the emotional impact is the educational impact. Children growing up in broken homes do not do as well in school as children from stable families. One national study found an overall average of one lost year of education for children in single-parent families.(7)

Divorce and remarriage adds another additional twist to modern families. Nearly half of all marriages in 1990 involved at least one person who had been down the aisle before, up from 31 percent in 1970.(8)

These changing family structures complicate relationships. Divorce and remarriage shuffle family members together in foreign and awkward ways. Clear lines of authority and communication get blurred and confused in these newly revised families. One commentator trying to get a linguistic handle on these arrangements called them "neo-nuclear" families.(9) The rules for these neo- nukes are complex and ever-changing. Children looking for stability are often insecure and

frustrated. One futuristic commentator imagined this possible scenario:

On a spring afternoon, half a century from today, the Joneses are gathered to sing "Happy Birthday" to Junior. There's Dad and his third wife, Mom and her second husband, Junior's two half brothers from his father's first marriage, his six stepsisters from his mother's spouse's previous unions, 100-year-old Great Grandpa, all eight of Junior's current "grandparents," assorted aunts, uncles-in-law and stepcousins. While one robot scoops up the gift wrappings and another blows out the candles, Junior makes a wish ...that he didn't have so many relatives.(10)

The stress on remarried couples is difficult enough, but it intensifies when step-children are involved. Conflict between a stepparent and stepchild is inevitable and can be enough to threaten the stability of a remarriage. According to one study, remarriages that involve stepchildren are more likely to end in divorce than those that don't.(11) Fully 17 percent of marriages that are remarriages for both husband and wife and that involve stepchildren break up within three years.(12)

No Fault Divorce

Historically the laws governing marriage were based upon the traditional, Judeo-Christian belief that marriage was for life. Marriage was intended to be a permanent institution. Thus, the desire for divorce was not held to be self-justifying. Legally the grounds for divorce had to be circumstances that justified making an exemption to the assumption of marital permanence. The spouse seeking a divorce had to prove that the other spouse had committed one of the "faults" recognized as justifying the dissolution of the marriage. In most states, the classic grounds for divorce were cruelty, desertion, and adultery.

This legal foundation changed when California enacted a statute in 1969 which allowed for no-fault divorce. This experiment has effectively led to what could now be called "divorce-on-demand." One by one, various state legislatures enacted no-fault divorce laws so that today, this concept has become the de facto legal principle in every state.

The fault-based system of divorce law had its roots in the view that marriage was a sacrament and indissoluble. The current no-fault provisions changed this perception. Marriage is no longer viewed as a covenant; it's a contract. But it's an even less reliable contract than a standard business contract.

Classic contract law holds that a specific promise is binding and cannot be broken merely because the promisor changes his/her mind. In fact, the concept of "fault" in divorce proceedings is more like tort law than contract law in that it implies an binding obligation between two parties which has been breached, thus leading to a divorce. When state legislatures implemented no-fault divorce provisions, they could have replaced the fault-based protections with contract-like protections. Unfortunately, they did not. In just a few decades we have moved from a position where divorce was permitted for a few reasons to a position in which divorce is permitted for any reason, or no reason at all.

The impact on the institution of marriage has been devastating. Marginal marriages are much easier to dissolve, and couples who may have tried to stick it out and work out their problems instead opt for a no-fault divorce.

But all marriages (not just marginal marriages) are at risk. After all, marriages do not start out marginal. Most marriages start out on a solid footing. But after the honeymoon, comes the more difficult process of learning to live together harmoniously. The success of the process is affected by both internal factors (willingness to meet each other's needs,

etc.) and external factors (such as the availability of divorce). But even these factors are interrelated. If the law gives more protection to the marriage contract, a partner may be more likely to love sacrificially and invest effort in the marriage. If the law gives less protection, a partner may be more likely to adopt a “looking out for number one” attitude.

Biblical Perspective

The Bible speaks to the issue of divorce in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. The most important Old Testament passage on divorce is Deuteronomy 24:1-4.

If a man marries a woman who becomes displeasing to him because he finds something indecent about her, and he writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, and if after she leaves his house she becomes the wife of another man, and her second husband dislikes her and writes her a certificate of divorce, gives it to her and sends her from his house, or if he dies, then her first husband, who divorced her, is not allowed to marry her again after she has been defiled. That would be detestable in the eyes of the LORD. Do not bring sin upon the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance.

These verses were not intended to endorse divorce; just the contrary. The intention was to regulate the existing custom of divorce, not to put forth God’s ideal for marriage. Divorce was allowed in certain instances because of human sinfulness (Matt. 19:8).

Divorce was widespread in the ancient Near East. The certificate of divorce apparently was intended to protect the reputation of the woman and provided her with the right to remarry. This public declaration protected her from charges of adultery. The Mishnah, for example, stated that a divorce certificate was not valid unless the husband explicitly said,

“Thou art free to marry any man.”(13)

Key to understanding this passage is the definition of “something indecent.” It probably did not mean adultery since that was subject to the penalty of death (22:22), nor did it probably mean premarital intercourse with another man (22:20-21) since that carried the same penalty. The precise meaning of the phrase is unknown.

In fact, the meaning of this phrase was subject to some debate even during the time of Christ. The conservative school of Shammai understood it to mean a major sexual offense. The liberal school of Hillel taught that it referred to anything displeasing to the husband (including something as trivial as spoiling his food). The apparent purpose of this law was to prevent frivolous divorce and to protect a woman who was divorced by her husband. The passage in no way encourages divorce but regulates the consequences of divorce.

Another significant Old Testament passage is Malachi 2:10-16.

Have we not all one Father ? Did not one God create us? Why do we profane the covenant of our fathers by breaking faith with one another?...Has not the LORD made them one? In flesh and spirit they are his. And why one? Because he was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. “I hate divorce,” says the LORD God of Israel.

This passage deals with breaking a prior agreement or covenant. It specifically addresses the issue of illegal intermarriage and the issue of divorce. Malachi specifically teaches that husbands and wives are to be faithful to one another because they have God as their Father. The marriage relationship is built upon a solemn covenant. While God may tolerate divorce under some of the circumstances described in Deuteronomy 24, the instructions were given to protect the woman if a divorce should occur. This passage in Malachi

reminds us that God hates divorce.

In the New Testament book of Matthew, we have the clearest teachings by Jesus on the subject of divorce.

It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to commit adultery, and anyone who marries a woman so divorced commits adultery. (Matt. 5:31-32) I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery. (Matt. 19:9)

In these two passages, Jesus challenges the views of the two schools of Jewish thought (Shammai, Hillel). He teaches that marriage is for life and should not be dissolved by divorce.

Defining the word *porneia* (which is translated marital unfaithfulness) is a key element in trying to understand these passages. While some commentators teach that this word refers to incestuous relationships or sexual promiscuity during the betrothal period, most scholars believe the word applies to relentless, persistent, and unrepentant adultery. Among those holding to this exception clause for adultery, some believe remarriage is possible while others do not.

The other significant section of teaching on divorce in the New Testament can be found in Paul's teaching on divorce in 1 Corinthians 7:10-15.

To the married I give this command (not I, but the Lord): A wife must not separate from her husband. But if she does, she must remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband. And a husband must not divorce his wife. To the rest I say this (I, not the Lord): If any brother has a wife who is not a believer and she is willing to live with him, he must not divorce her. And if a woman has a husband who is not a

believer and he is willing to live with her, she must not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband has been sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife has been sanctified through her believing husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. But if the unbeliever leaves, let him do so. A believing man or woman is not bound in such circumstances; God has called us to live in peace.

In the first section, Paul addresses Christians married to one another. Paul was obviously aware of the prevalence of divorce in the Greek world and of the legal right that a wife has to initiate a divorce. He gives the command for believers to stay married.

In the next section, Paul addresses the issue of mixed marriages. He says that even in spite of religious incompatibility in such a marriage, Paul teaches that the believing spouse is not to seek divorce. Some divorces may have been initiated because of the command of Ezra to the Israelites in Jerusalem after the exile (Ezra 10:11) to divorce themselves from pagan spouses. Paul affirms the same biblical principle: do not seek divorce. However, if the unbelieving spouse insists on divorce, the believer may have to concede to those proceedings and is not bound in such circumstances.

Based on the preceding verses, we can therefore conclude that a Christian can acquiesce to divorce in cases of marital infidelity by the other spouse or in cases of desertion by an unbelieving spouse. Yet even in these cases, the church should not encourage divorce. Certainly in very troubling cases which involve mental, sexual, and/or physical abuse, legal separation is available as a remedy to protect the abused spouse. God hates divorce; therefore Christians should never be in the position of encouraging or promoting divorce. Instead they should be encouraging reconciliation.

One final question is whether a divorced person is eligible for a leadership position within the church. The key passage is 1 Timothy 3:2 which calls for a church leader to be above reproach and "the husband of one wife." Rather than prohibiting a divorced person from serving in leadership, the language of this verse actually focuses on practicing polygamists. Polygamy was practiced in the first century and found among Jewish and Christian groups. The passage could be translated "a one-woman man." If Paul intended to prohibit a divorced person from leadership, he could have used a much less ambiguous term.

As Christians in a society where divorce is rampant, I believe we must come back to these important biblical principles concerning marriage. Christians should work to build strong marriages. Pastors must frequently preach and teach about the importance of marriage. We should encourage fellow Christians to attend various marriage enrichment seminars and ministries in our community.

As Christians I also believe we should reach out to those who have been through divorce. We must communicate Christ's forgiveness to them in the midst of their shattered lives. They need counseling and support groups. Many times they also need financial help and direction as they begin to put together the shattered pieces of their lives.

But as we reach out to those whose lives are shattered by divorce, we must be careful that our ministry does not compromise our theology. We must reach out with both biblical convictions and biblical compassion. Marriage for life is God's ideal (Genesis 2), nevertheless, millions of people have been devastated by divorce and need to feel care and compassion from Christians. Churches have unfortunately erred on one side or another. Most churches have maintained a strong stand on marriage and divorce. While this strong biblical stand is admirable, it should also be balanced with compassion towards those caught in the throes of divorce. Strong convictions

without compassionate outreach often seems to communicate that divorce is the unforgivable sin.

On the other hand, some churches in their desire to minister to divorced people have compromised their theological convictions. By starting without biblically-based convictions about marriage and divorce, they have let their congregation's circumstances influence their theology.

Christians must simultaneously reach out with conviction and compassion. Marriage for life is God's ideal, but divorce is a reality in our society. Christians should reach out with Christ's forgiveness to those whose lives have been shattered by divorce.

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Adultery

Adultery and Society

The seventh commandment says "Thou shalt not commit adultery." Nevertheless, this sin has been committed throughout history. Today, though, adultery seems more rampant than ever. While tabloid stories report the affairs of politicians, millionaires, and movie stars, films like "The English Patient," "The Prince of Tides," or "The Bridges of Madison County" feature and even promote adultery.

How prevalent is adultery? Two of the most reliable studies come to similar conclusions. The Janus Report on Sexual Behavior estimates that "More than one-third of men and one-quarter of women admit having had at least one extramarital sexual experience."^{1} A survey by the National Opinion Research Center (University of Chicago) found lower percentages: 25 percent of men had been unfaithful and 17 percent of women. Even when these lower ratios are applied to the current adult population, that means that some 19 million husbands and 12 million wives have had an affair.^{2}

Whatever the actual numbers, the point to be made is that adultery is much more common than we would like to admit. Family therapist and psychiatrist Frank Pittman believes “There may be as many acts of infidelity in our society as there are traffic accidents.”[\[3\]](#) He further argues that the fact that adultery has become commonplace has altered society’s perception of it. He says, “We won’t go back to the times when adulterers were put in the stocks and publicly humiliated, or become one of those societies and there are many in which adultery is punishable by death. Society in any case is unable to enforce a rule that the majority of people break, and infidelity is so common it is no longer deviant.”[\[4\]](#)

Perhaps you are thinking, “This is just a problem with non-Christians in society. It can’t be a problem in the church. Certainly the moral standards of Christians are higher.” Well, there is growing evidence that adultery is also a problem in Christian circles. An article in a 1997 issue of *Newsweek* magazine noted that various surveys suggest that as many as 30 percent of male Protestant ministers have had sexual relationships with women other than their wives.[\[5\]](#)

The Journal of Pastoral Care in 1993 reported a survey of Southern Baptist pastors in which 14 percent acknowledged they had engaged in “sexual behavior inappropriate to a minister.” It also reported that 70 percent had counseled at least one woman who had had intercourse with another minister.

A 1988 survey of nearly 1000 Protestant clergy by *Leadership* magazine found that of the 300 pastors who responded, 12 percent admitted to sexual intercourse outside of marriage, and that 23 percent had done something sexually inappropriate with someone other than their spouse. The researchers also interviewed nearly 1000 subscribers to *Christianity Today* who were not pastors. They found the numbers were nearly double: 45 percent indicated having done something sexually inappropriate, and 23 percent having extramarital

intercourse. [{6}](#)

Adultery is in society and is now in the church. Next, we'll look at some of the myths surrounding extramarital affairs.

Myths About Adultery

Marital infidelity destroys marriages and families and often leads to divorce. Public sentiment against adultery is actually very strong as approximately eight out of ten of Americans disapprove of adultery. [{7}](#)

Yet even though most people consider adultery to be wrong and know that it can be devastating, our society still perpetuates a number of untruths about adultery through a popular mythology about extramarital affairs. At this point we want to examine some of the myths about adultery.

Myth #1: "Adultery is about sex." Often just the opposite seems the case. When a sexual affair is uncovered, observers often say, "What did he see in her?" or "What did she see in him?" Frequently the sex is better at home, and the marriage partner is at least as attractive as the adulterous partner.

Being pretty, handsome, or sensual is usually not the major issue. Partners in affairs are not usually chosen because they are prettier, more handsome, or sexier. They are chosen for various sorts of strange and nonsexual reasons. Usually the other woman or the other man in an adulterous relationship meets needs the spouse does not meet in the marriage. Dr. Willard Harley lists five primary needs for a man and five primary needs for a woman in his book *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage*. He believes that unmet needs, by either partner, are a primary cause of extramarital affairs. He has also found that people wander into these affairs with astonishing regularity, in spite of whatever strong moral or religious convictions they may hold. A lack of fulfillment in one of these basic emotional areas creates a

dangerous vacuum in a person's life. And, unfortunately, many will eventually fill that need outside of marriage.

Frank Pittman, author of the book *Private Lies: Infidelity and the Betrayal of Intimacy*, found in his own personal study that many of his patients who had affairs had a good sex life, but came from marriages with little or no intimacy. He concluded that, "Affairs were thus three times more likely to be the pursuit of a buddy than the pursuit of a better orgasm."[\[8\]](#)

Sex may not be involved in some affairs. The relationship may be merely an emotional liaison. Counselor Bonnie Weil warns that these so-called "affairs of the heart can be even more treacherous than the purely physical kind. Women, particularly, are inclined to leave their husbands when they feel a strong emotional bond with another man."[\[9\]](#)

Myth #2: "Adultery is about character." In the past, society looked down on alcoholics as having weak character because of their problem. Now we see it as an addiction or even a disease. While that doesn't excuse the behavior, we can see that can't be merely labeled as bad character.

There is growing psychological evidence that adulterous behavior in parents dramatically affects children when they reach adulthood. Just as divorce in a family influences the likelihood of the adult children to consider divorce, adulterous behavior by parents seems to beget similar behavior by their offspring. Is this not one more example of the biblical teaching that the sins of one generation being visited upon the next?

Myth #3: "Adultery is therapeutic." Some of the psychology books and women's magazines circulating through our culture promote extra-marital affairs as positive. This myth that an affair can revive a dull marriage is a devastating lie. Depending on which source you are reading, an affair will: make you a better lover, help you with your mid-life crisis,

bring joy into your life, or even bring excitement back into your marriage. Nothing could be further from the truth. An affair might give you more sex, but it could also give you a sexually transmitted disease. It might bring your marriage more excitement, if you consider divorce court exciting. Remember that adultery results in divorce 65 percent of the time. "For most people and most marriages, infidelity is dangerous."[\[10\]](#)

Myth #4: "Adultery is harmless." Movies are just one venue in which adultery has been promoted positively. *The English Patient* received twelve Oscar nominations including best picture of the year for its depiction of an adulterous relationship between a handsome count and the English-born wife of his colleague. *The Bridges of Madison County* relates the story of an Iowa farmer's wife who has a brief extra-marital affair with a *National Geographic* photographer that supposedly helped re-energize her marriage. *The Prince of Tides* received seven Oscar nominations and shows a married therapist bedding down her also-married patient.

Notice the euphemisms society has developed over the years to excuse or soften the perception of adultery. Many are not repeatable, but ones that are include: *fooling around, sleeping around, flings, affairs, and dalliances*. These and many other phrases perpetuate the notion the adultery is guilt-free and hurts no one. Some have even suggested that it's just a recreational activity like playing softball or going to the movies. Well, don't pass the popcorn, please.

Forbidden sex is an addiction that can—and usually does—have devastating consequences to an individual and a family. Adultery shatters trust, intimacy, and self-esteem. It breaks up families, ruins careers, and leaves a trail of pain and destruction in its path. This potential legacy of emotional pain for one's children should be enough to make a person stop and count the costs before it's too late.

Even when affairs are never exposed, emotional costs are involved. For example, adulterous mates deprive their spouses of energy and intimacy that should go into the marriage. They deceive their marriage partners and become dishonest about their feelings and actions. As Frank Pittman says, "The infidelity is not in the sex, necessarily, but in the secrecy. It isn't whom you lie with. It's whom you lie to." [\[11\]](#) 1

Myth #5: "Adultery has to end in divorce." Only about 35 percent of couples remain together after the discovery of an adulterous affair; the other 65 percent divorce. Perhaps nothing can destroy a marriage faster than marital infidelity.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way. One counselor claims that 98 percent of the couples she treats remain together after counseling. Granted this success rate is not easy to achieve and requires immediate moral choices and forgiveness, but it does demonstrate that adultery does not have to end in divorce.

Preventing Adultery: Her Needs

How can a couple prevent adultery? Dr. Willard Harley in his book *His Needs, Her Needs: Building an Affair-Proof Marriage* provides some answers. He has found that marriages that fail to meet a spouse's needs are more vulnerable to an extramarital affair. Often the failure of men and women to meet each other's needs is due to a lack of knowledge rather than a selfish unwillingness to be considerate. Meeting these needs is critically important because in marriages that fail to meet needs, it is striking and alarming how consistently married people seek to satisfy their unmet needs through an extramarital affair. If any of a spouse's five basic needs goes unmet, that spouse becomes vulnerable to the temptation of an affair.



First, let's look at the five needs of a wife. The first need is for *affection*. To most women affection symbolizes security, protection, comfort, and approval. When a husband shows his wife affection, he sends the following messages: (1) I'll take care of you and protect you; (2) I'm concerned about the problems you face, and I am with you; (3) I think you've done a good job, and I'm so proud of you.

Men need to understand how strongly women need these affirmations. For the typical wife, there can hardly be enough of them. A hug can communicate all of the affirmations of the previous paragraph. But, affection can be shown in many ways such as: kisses, cards, flowers, dinners out, opening the car door, holding hands, walks after dinner, back rubs, phone calls—there are a thousand ways to say "I love you." From a woman's point of view, affection is the essential cement of her relationship with a man.

The second need is *conversation*. Wives need their husbands to talk to them and to listen to them; they need lots of two-way conversation. In their dating life prior to marriage, most couples spent time time showing each other affection and talking. This shouldn't be dropped after the wedding. When two people get married, each partner has a right to expect the same loving care and attention that prevailed during courtship to continue after the wedding. The man who takes time to talk to a woman will have an inside track to her heart.

The third need is *honesty and openness*. A wife needs to trust her husband totally. A sense of security is the common thread woven through all of a woman's five basic needs. If a husband does not keep up honest and open communication with his wife, he undermines her trust and eventually destroys her security. To feel secure, a wife must trust her husband to give her accurate information about his past, the present, and the future. If she can't trust the signals he sends, she has no foundation on which to build a solid relationship. Instead of adjusting to him, she always feels off balance; instead of

growing toward him, she grows away from him.

Financial commitment is a fourth need a wife experiences. She needs enough money to live comfortably: she needs financial support. No matter how successful a career a woman might have, she usually wants her husband to earn enough money to allow her to feel supported and to feel cared for.

The fifth need is *family commitment*. A wife needs her husband to be a good father and have a family commitment. The vast majority of women who get married have a powerful instinct to create a home and have children. Above all, wives want their husbands to take a leadership role in the family and to commit themselves to the moral and educational development of their children.

Preventing Adultery: His Needs

Now, let's look at the five needs husbands have. The first is *sexual fulfillment*. The typical wife doesn't understand her husband's deep need for sex anymore than the typical husband understands his wife's deep need for affection. But these two ingredients can work very closely together in a happy, fulfilled marriage. Sex can come naturally and often, if there is enough affection.

The second need for a man is *recreational companionship*. He needs her to be his playmate. It is not uncommon for women, when they are single, to join men in pursuing their interests. They find themselves hunting, fishing, playing football, and watching sports and movies they would never have chosen on their own.

After marriage wives often try to interest their husbands in activities more to their own liking. If their attempts fail, they may encourage their husbands to continue their recreational activities without them. But this option is very dangerous to a marriage, because men place surprising

importance on having their wives as recreational companions. Among the five basic male needs, spending recreational time with his wife is second only to sex for the typical husband.

A husband's third need is *an attractive spouse*. A man needs a wife who looks good to him. Dr. Harley states that in sexual relationships most men find it nearly impossible to appreciate a woman for her inner qualities alone—there must be more. A man's need for physical attractiveness in a mate is profound.

The fourth need for a man is *domestic support*. He needs peace and quiet. So deep is a husband's need for domestic support from his wife that he often fantasizes about how she will greet him lovingly and pleasantly at the door, about well-behaved children who likewise act glad to see him and welcome him to the comfort of a well-maintained home.

The fantasy continues as his wife urges him to sit down and relax before taking part in a tasty dinner. Later the family goes out for an evening stroll, and he returns to put the children to bed with no hassle or fuss. Then he and his wife relax, talk together, and perhaps watch a little television until they retire at a reasonable hour to love each other. Wives may chuckle at this scenario, but this vision is quite common in the fantasy lives of many men. The male need for his wife to "take care of things"—especially him—is widespread, persistent, and deep.

The fifth need is *admiration*. He needs her to be proud of him. Wives need to learn how to express the admiration they already feel for their husbands instead of pressuring them to greater achievements. Honest admiration is a great motivator for men. When a woman tells a man she thinks he's wonderful, that inspires him to achieve more. He sees himself capable of handling new responsibilities and perfecting skills far above those of his present level.

If any of a spouse's five basic needs go unmet, that person

becomes vulnerable to the temptation of an affair. Therefore, the best way to prevent adultery is to meet the needs of your spouse and make your marriage strong.

Notes

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Same Sex Marriage: A Facade of Normalcy

Sue Bohlin takes a look at the arguments for same sex marriage and finds them lacking from a Christian, biblical worldview perspective. She explains that those pushing for same sex marriage have redefined it into something it never was and was never intended to be.

What's Marriage For?

In any discussion on same sex marriage, we need to start at the beginning: What is marriage is for, anyway? Marriage begins a family. The family is the basic building block of society. It has always been this way from Adam and Eve down to today.

Man did not invent marriage; God did. He invented and ordained marriage as the foundation for all human society when He gave Eve to Adam and pronounced them man and wife. Marriage is one of those institutions that is found in every human culture. Across the globe and across the ages, marriage has always been defined the same way: one man and one woman in a committed relationship, providing a safe place to bear and raise children. I would suggest that since this pattern for marriage applies to all cultures and all times, this indicates that God is its inventor and creator. It's such an intrinsic part of the way we relate to each other that even those who have lost track of the story of the true God (the non-Judeo-Christian cultures) still practice marriage according to the pattern God designed: one man and one woman in a committed relationship, providing a safe place to bear and raise children.

God has woven “marriage into human nature so that it serves two primary purposes throughout all societies.”[{1}](#) The first is the way men and women were created to complement each other. Marriage balances the strengths and weaknesses of masculinity and femininity. Women help civilize men and channel their sexual energy in productive rather than destructive ways. Men protect and provide for women—and any children they produce together.

Marriage is built on a basic building block of humanity—that we exist as male and female. The strong benefit of marriage as God intended it is that males and females are designed with profound and wonderful differences, and these differences are coordinated in marriage so that each contributes what the other lacks.[{2}](#)

The second purpose of marriage is producing, protecting, and providing for children. Marriage ensures that children have the benefits of both mother and father. Each gender makes a unique and important contribution to children’s development and emotional health, and marriage provides the best possible environment for children to thrive as they enjoy the benefits of masculinity and femininity.

Those who are pushing for same sex marriage don’t see marriage this way. They seek to redefine it as a way to get society’s stamp of approval on their sexual and emotional relationships, and a way to secure financial and other benefits. Both of these reasons are about the adults, not about children. Both reasons are driven by the philosophy of “How can I get what I want? How can I be happy?” It’s a very self-centered movement.

Many homosexuals want the right to marry only because it confers society’s ultimate stamp of approval on a sexual relationship—*not* because they want to participate in the institution of marriage.

Why Same Sex Relationships Are Wrong

Let's look at several reasons (though not an exhaustive list by any means) that same sex relationships are wrong.

First, homosexuality is an attempt to meet legitimate needs in illegitimate, ungodly ways. We all have God-given heart hungers to feel loved and known and validated—to feel that we matter. God intends for us to have those needs met first by our parents and then by our peers, but sometimes something goes wrong. People find themselves walking around with a gaping, aching hole in their souls, longing to make the connections that didn't happen when they were supposed to, earlier in their lives. From both the women and the men that I know who are dealing with unwanted homosexuality, I hear the same thing: "I just want to be held, I just want to be known, I just want to be special to someone." But turning to homosexual or lesbian relationships to get those needs met is not God's intention for us.

Second, same sex relationships are outside of (and fall far short of) God's created intention for sex. God made us male and female, designed to complement each other physically, emotionally, and spiritually. Two men or two women coming together can never live out God's intent for His creation. The biology of our gender shows us that same sex relationships don't work, but opposite sex relationships do. It is unwise to ignore the obvious about how the pieces fit, or don't fit, as the case may be.

Third, marriage is an earthbound illustration of the mystery of Christ and the church.^{3} There is a mystical unity of two very different, very *other* beings coming together as one. Only the profound differences of man and woman display this mystery. "If the man represents Christ and the woman represents the church, then a male to male partnering would be, in essence, a symbolic partnering of God with Himself apart from His people. Likewise, a lesbian relationship would

become a symbolic partnering of God's people without Him. Either option is incomplete, unnatural, and abhorrent."[\[4\]](#)

Fourth, same sex relationships are idolatrous. In Romans 1, Paul describes the downward spiral of people who worship the creature instead of the Creator. When God says intimate relationships with people of the same sex are forbidden, and people insist on pursuing them anyway, they have elevated something else to the position of a god. It could be the other person, or sexual pleasure, or even just one's own feelings, but all these things become idols because they are more important than anything else, including God.

Homosexual and lesbian relationships are wrong because God designed us for something far better. The nature of the gospel is to bring transformation to every aspect of a believer's life, and many people have discovered the "something better." (See my article, "[Can Homosexuals Change?](#)")

The Differences Between Heterosexual and Homosexual Relationships

Sometimes you hear gays or lesbians say, "We're just like anybody else. We have two kids, a dog, a mortgage, and we worry about the economy. We just don't want anybody telling us who we can love." My friend Brady, who used to be part of that gay sub-culture, calls the homosexual lifestyle "a façade of normalcy." And it is *only* a façade.

Consider the huge variance in the stability of relationships. Despite a high divorce rate, 57% of heterosexual marriages last over twenty years.[\[5\]](#) The average length of homosexual relationships is two to three years.[\[6\]](#) Only 5% of them last 20 years.[\[7\]](#)

And consider the issue of promiscuity. In heterosexual marriages, over three-fourths of the men and 88% of the women

remain faithful to their marriage vows.{8} Most sexually active gay men are promiscuous, engaging hundreds of sexual partners over a lifetime.{9}

The concept of a committed relationship is very different for the two groups. Most heterosexual couples are faithful and stable. When homosexual men are in what they call a "committed" relationship, this usually includes three to five outside partners each year.{10} Rev. Troy Perry, founder of the Metropolitan Community Church, told the *Dallas Morning News*, "Monogamy is not a word the gay community uses. . . . We talk about fidelity. That means you live in a loving, caring, honest relationship with your partner. Because we can't marry, we have people with widely varying opinions as to what that means. Some would say that committed couples could have multiple sexual partners as long as there's no deception. Each couple has to decide." {11}

In Holland, which legalized gay marriage in 2001, the average is eight outside partners.{12} One study of gay men who had been together for over five years could not find one single monogamous relationship.{13} Not one!

Women in lesbian relationships often stay together not because they want to, but because they're stuck financially and emotionally. "I heard one speaker say at a Love Won Out conference, "We don't have partners, we have prisoners." Of course, that's not universally true, but over the years of walking toward Jesus with women who were no longer in lesbian partnerships, I have heard over and over, "We didn't know how to do life apart from each other."

Heterosexuals live longer, happier lives. Sexually active homosexual men live a dangerous and destructive lifestyle. They are at huge risk for contracting AIDS, and run a much higher risk of sexually transmitted diseases than straight men. The gay community experiences three times more alcoholism and drug abuse,{14} and much more promiscuity and domestic

violence than the straight world.[{15}](#) Gay men can expect to live twenty years less than their straight neighbors.[{16}](#)

And finally, a home with a mom and a dad is the best possible place for children. Homosexual parents put kids at risk. The American College of Pediatrics discovered that children raised by gay parents tend to be more dissatisfied with their own gender, suffer a greater rate of molestation in the family, have homosexual experiences more often, and are encouraged to experiment in dangerous, destructive lifestyle choices.[{17}](#)

Please hear me: We're commenting on the extremely high-risk *behavior* that is part and parcel of a homosexual lifestyle. That's not the same thing as condemning the *people* who engage in it. A homosexual lifestyle *is* a façade of normalcy, but it can be changed.

Answering Arguments for Same Sex Marriage

Let's look at several arguments being offered for same sex marriage.

The first is that marriage will encourage faithfulness and stability in volatile homosexual relationships. But the nature of homosexual and lesbian relationships is broken to begin with. Two broken people will not create a whole, healthy relationship. The best description I've ever heard of same sex relationships is "one broken little boy looking for his daddy, connecting with another broken little boy, looking for *his* daddy." And the same is true of women. Neither a marriage license, nor the approval of society, can fix the nature of a relationship that is irretrievably broken at its core.

Another argument is that we need same sex marriage to insure hospital visitation. But it's the patient who decides. If he appoints his partner as a health-care proxy, even if he's in a coma that document will insure access to the hospital. We don't need marriage for that. It's a smokescreen.

A third argument is that we need same sex marriage to insure survivorship benefits. But that's what a will is for. You don't need marriage for that.

Some say that we need same sex marriage for Social Security benefits. This is an interesting argument, since Social Security benefits were created to address the financial inequity of father as breadwinner and mother as stay-at-home caregiver. Homosexual relationships are usually two-incomes. It's very rare to have one stay-at-home caregiver of the kids, since homosexual relationships do not and cannot produce children naturally. When they do, they are borrowing from God's plan for creating families.

Then there's the discrimination argument. There are really two issues that fall under this argument: *denied liberties* and *denied benefits*.

Concerning the issue of denying the liberty to marry, this argument doesn't hold water. Any person can marry whoever he or she pleases, with certain restrictions that are true for everyone. You can't marry a child, a close blood relative, a person who is already married, or a person of the same sex. These restrictions apply equally to everyone; there is no discrimination here. The problem is, some people don't like the restrictions.

True discrimination functions against an unchangeable identity, such as gender or color. Homosexuality is a lifestyle, a chosen behavior. Even sexual orientation is changeable. It's not easy, but it *is* possible.

The other issue of discrimination is denied benefits. But benefits are granted to families because society has an interest in providing a safe place for children to grow up and be nurtured. So the government provides child-oriented benefits such as inheritance rights and tax relief to ease the financial burden of children. Insurance policies and Social

Security benefits provide for the money gap between wage-earner and caregiver. These benefits are inherent to *families*. The essence of marriage is about building families. Homosexual relationships cannot build families legitimately. They have to borrow from heterosexual relationships or technology to create children.

Final Points to Consider

Joe Dallas draws on his wisdom and experience as a former homosexual to address the issue of same sex marriage in his book *When Homosexuality Hits Home*. He provides some excellent points to consider about this subject.[{18}](#)

We can recognize that people genuinely love each other, and we can respect their right to form a partnership, even if we disagree with the nature of their partnership. We can say a relationship is wrong without disrespecting or condemning the people in that relationship.

For example, look at the relationship between Spencer Tracy and Katharine Hepburn. Tracy was a married man when he met and fell in love with her. For decades they had a deeply committed and affectionate relationship although they never married. Note two glaring and conflicting facts about their relationship: it was adulterous, and therefore wrong, and they truly loved each other. You can find a number of good things about their relationship, such as the way they respected each other and cared deeply for each other and seemed to be good for each other. When we say it was morally wrong, this does not deny the good things about their relationship. But to recognize the good things does not change the fact that it was morally wrong. The two are not mutually exclusive.

With gay or lesbian couples, we can acknowledge that there may, indeed, be deep love and commitment to each other. After all, humans have an amazing God-given capacity to love—even

outside the bounds of His design and commands. But God cannot and does not sanction homosexual relationships, so we cannot either. We can respect those involved without capitulating to their demands.

Redefining marriage is especially unacceptable to Christians, since it is spelled out in both Testaments as a type of God's relationship with His people. In the Old Testament, God is portrayed as the husband of the nation of Israel, and in the New Testament, Jesus is the bridegroom of the Church. Marriage is far more than a social construct that provides for the creation of new families. It is a living parable that helps us to understand the dynamic, mysterious relationship between God and His people. How can we redefine something that has such a deep, spiritual meaning? Even if that were not part of the equation, we would still need to deal with the truth that marriage was created by God, and we do not have the right to tinker with His creation.

The problem with same sex marriage is that it doesn't work, it doesn't fit, and it is an attempt to make right something that is intrinsically, irretrievably wrong. God created us in His image as both male and female, and intends that His full image be expressed as men and women come together in designed complementarity. This is impossible in same sex marriage.

Notes

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18. Dallas, p. 162-165.

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See Also:

- [Can Homosexuals Change?](#)
- [Did Phil Get It Wrong? Is Homosexuality Sin?](#)
 - [Homosexual Myths](#)
 - [Homosexuality: Questions and Answers](#)
 - [Homosexual Theology](#)
- [When Someone In Your Congregation Says "I'm Gay"](#) (Pastors' Brochure)

[And also our answers to e-mails about homosexuality issues](#)

Church, Marriage and Family

July 22, 2010

Does going to church strengthen marriage and family? I would think that any Christian would agree with that statement. But I find it exciting that even secular researchers would agree that church and religious activities are good for marriage and family.

On a regular basis, the Heritage Foundation posts the latest findings from researchers. This month their "Top Ten" related

to religion and family. Here are some of the findings they summarized.

Researchers have found that couples who believe that marriage has spiritual significance tend to adjust more easily to marriage and experience lower levels of conflict. They have found that marriages in which both the husband and wife frequently attend church services are less likely to end in divorce than marriages in which neither spouse attends frequently. On average, wives who attend church weekly with their husbands experience higher level of marital happiness than peers in marriages in which neither spouse attends church weekly.

Adolescents who attend church more frequently and report that religion is important in their lives are more likely to marry and less likely to cohabit than peers who are less religious. Adolescents who consider religion to be important in their lives tend to have a higher expectation of getting married than their peers. Young adults who attended religious services frequently during adolescence are more likely to disapprove of premarital sex and cohabitation than peers who had not attended services frequently.

Research even found that urban mothers who give birth out of wedlock are more likely to become married within a year of their children's birth if they attend religious services. Men and women who attend religious services weekly are less likely to commit an act of domestic violence than peers who seldom attend.

Many years ago, Linda Waite and Maggie Gallagher wrote the book, *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People are Happier, Healthier, and Better off Financially*. At the time, they documented the benefits of marriage. These findings not only show the benefits of marriage, but the benefits of church attendance to marriage and family. I'm Kerby Anderson, and

that's my point of view.

Photoshopping Life

When Ray and I [visited the Galapagos Islands](#), one of my favorite pictures was the two of us with a gigantic tortoise. Unfortunately, my big ol' red purse was on the ground in the picture too. So I photoshopped it out.



At our son's wedding, one of the ushers wasn't wearing his boutonniere when it was time for the formal pictures. "Not to worry," the photographer said. "We can photoshop it in later."

During my daughter-in-law's holiday family picture taking, someone suggested photoshopping in a beloved uncle, since they were missing him. "No! He's been dead for two years!" someone else responded. "You don't photoshop in a dead person who couldn't have been here with us!"

We just had fiber-optic TV and internet installed. We can now

pause and rewind live TV. Whoa.

The ability to manipulate digital images and sounds has spoiled us, I'm afraid, into thinking we should be able to manipulate the rest of life. It's a technologically enhanced update of the enemy's lies in the garden, enticing Eve to think she and Adam were entitled to be like God, a thinly veiled offer to make themselves as gods, just as he had.

And so we end up with people redefining things like marriage to include any two people, including those of the same sex. And a couple of gay men who successfully got both their names put on the birth certificate of their adopted son. This is the fruit of people redefining truth and reality according to their whims and desires.

And it is so much more serious than subtracting a purse or adding a flower.

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/photoshopping_life on January 6, 2009.

35 Years and Counting

August 4, 2009

Yesterday, Ray and I celebrated 35 years of marriage. My good friend and fellow Tapestry blogger Gwynne Johnsons wrote on my Facebook, "Congratulations...got you beat by 15 years :) ☐ ..Good guys are the BEST of God's gifts..." Amen to that!

We've been privileged to walk through almost all those years

with our dear friends and fellow Probe Ministries staff Kerby and Susanne Anderson (whom you may recognize from the national radio show Point of View), who were married the same day. Last night, as we visited together, I asked the Andersons and Ray what they had learned over our 35 years, and we were all in agreement about the basics.

The non-negotiable part of a successful marriage is to continually love, accept and forgive the other. That starts with the absolute commitment to mean and to live out our wedding vows. It's a covenant, a "promise on steroids," that goes far beyond "I promise to be here as long as love shall last."

I've been thinking about what I've learned for sure over 35 years.

As one of our pastors once said, "The AIDS of marriage is justified self-centeredness." Selfishness is a oneness-killer. God intends to use our spouse to shape us and mold us and give us daily opportunities to crucify our flesh, our self-centeredness, as He forms us into the people He intends us to be.

It's helpful to see marriage as two "forgiven forgivers." Extending forgiveness as we have received it from God, as quickly as possible, keeps the oneness and intimacy flowing.

We need to keep a balance between what we overlook and let go from a heart of grace, and what we need to address because it is big enough to cause us to withdraw from the other. [Godly conflict resolution](#) is essential for living well with another sinner.

Cultivating an "attitude of gratitude" and verbally expressing gratitude for the small things the other does to serve and love us, goes a long way.

There is no substitute for creating habits of kindness toward

our spouse. And we are just as pleasant and courteous to each others as we are to strangers, which is simply a habit as well as a character issue.

Learning about communication skills truly enhances the marriage relationship. The most powerful tools I've ever come across, and which we have made a part of how we live with each other, are:

1. Don't interrupt the other person.
2. Tell the other what you heard to make sure you understood them right.
3. Avoid being a WENI (sounds like "weenie"): withdrawing, escalating when arguing, negatively interpreting what the other is saying, and invalidating the other.

God has been good, and we thank Him for His blessing of a great friendship and relationship with each other!

This blog post originally appeared at blogs.bible.org/tapestry/sue_bohlin/35_years_and_counting

“Are Single Women Purposeless Beings?”

You have biblically and honestly tackled the question of the roles of women in your articles.

But I have a question concerning the meaning of women's lives. What does the Bible mean when it says that God intended to create a woman to help man? Does it then reduce single women to purposeless beings who have nothing to do on earth? I mean not the widowed, but the never marrieds.

No, the Bible does not reduce single women at all. I believe God's design of women means that when we operate in our strengths and giftings, we are helping other people in a variety of ways. People have many needs on many levels: physically, emotionally, spiritually, aesthetically. When women bring our God-given beauty and sensitivity, nurture and compassion, intellect and leadership skills to our communities, I think we are contributing in ways that matter. Please note, none of these have to do with marital status.

I think of single friends who are teachers, helping children and adults learn and grow.

I think of single friends who are medical professionals, compassionately treating the sick and helping people get and stay healthy.

I think of single friends who are interior designers and decorators or work for them, bringing beauty and order to homes and offices.

I think of single friends who are counselors, helping people deal with pain and problems and restoring them to functionality.

I think of single friends who are serving in ministry, pointing people to Jesus and helping them grow spiritually.

It's true that God created Eve as a helpmate for Adam, but not all women are called to marriage. Some women are called to help others in their singleness. Many of the women I know, regardless of career or calling, delight in helping others in a variety of ways. And lest anyone think being a helper is an inferior status, may I respectfully point out that God is glad to be our helper? The Psalms are rich with references to God as our helper, our rescuer, our protector. And that's just the beginning. He created us to need help, to need Him and each other, so there is nothing "lesser than" about orienting one's life in terms of helping others.

I hope this helps. <smile>

Talking Points Against Homosexual “Marriage”

The November 2003 decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Court that gave homosexual couples the constitutional right to marry has intensified debate about same-sex marriage. There are currently six different court cases concerning same-sex marriage. The topic of same-sex marriage will be in the news and part of popular discussion. Therefore, here are a few key talking points on the subject of homosexual marriage.

1. *Right vs. privilege:* Gay activists talk about the “right” to get married. Yet in the next sentence they talk about obtaining a marriage license. Marriage is a privilege, not a right. Therefore, the state must have a standard for issuing a license. We don’t give a license to anyone who wants to drive a car. You must know basic information and demonstrate an ability to drive. We don’t grant a medical license to just anyone. Someone must demonstrate a level of competence. Marriage isn’t a right, it is a privilege that the state can and should regulate.

2. *Devalues marriage:* Giving same-sex couples the right to marry devalues true marriage. Imagine if at the next awards ceremony, everyone received an award. Would anyone value the award if everyone received one? Any adult is permitted to marry another adult of the opposite sex. But you can’t marry a child, you can’t marry a blood relative, you can’t marry someone already married, you can’t marry someone of the same

sex.

3. Basic biology: Homosexual relations deny the self-evident truth that male and female bodies complement each other. Human sexuality and procreation is based upon a man and a woman coming together as one flesh. Marriage between a man and a woman promotes procreation and makes intimate sexual activity orderly and socially accountable.

4. Public health: Homosexual sex is dangerous and destructive to the human body. The International Journal of Epidemiology reports that the life expectancy at age 20 for gay and bisexual men is 8 to 10 years less than for all men. If the same pattern of mortality were to continue, researchers estimate that nearly half of gay and bisexual men currently 20 years of age will not reach their 65th birthday.

5. Counterfeit: Arbitrarily granting a marriage license to a same-sex couple doesn't constitute marriage. It is a counterfeit of true marriage. It is like trying to tape two same-sex electrical plugs together to form an electrical current.

6. Monogamy/fidelity: Same-sex marriage will not be monogamous. One lesbian writer calls gay marriage "monogamy without fidelity." Another homosexual columnist writes of "a broader understanding of commitment." A recent Dutch study found that homosexual relationships last, on average, about 1-1/2 years and that men in those relationships have an average of eight partners per year outside their main partnership.

7. Children: Marriage between a man and a woman is the ideal family unit. It promotes procreation and ensures the benefits of child rearing by the distinct attributes of both father and mother. Two research papers by Timothy Dailey for Family Research Council (*Homosexual Parenting: Placing Children at Risk* and *Homosexuality and Child Sexual Abuse*) document

concerns about children raised in gay marriages.

9. Majority rule: A recent poll by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life found that public opposition to gay marriage is increasing. In July, 53 percent opposed same-sex marriage. By October 59 percent were opposed to same-sex marriage.

10. Popular vote: States legislatures have already spoken to the issue of same-sex marriages. Thirty-seven states have already passed a Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) stating that marriage is between a man and a woman. In 1996 Congress also passed a national DOMA.

11. Religion: The Bible teaches that homosexuality is not natural and is wrong (Romans 1:26-27, 1 Corinthians 6:9-10). Other religions also concur with this judgment.

12. Emotional: Gays and lesbians are relationally broken people. Just as in heterosexual marriage, two broken people cannot produce a whole, healthy unit. However, heterosexuals can get help for their brokenness and repair the relationship, but the relationships of homosexual couples are intrinsically and irreparably flawed.