

The Major Themes of the Bible Applied to Everyday Life: Marriage

Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time. (WCF 24.1)

Genesis 2:18-24

"18 Then the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him. 19 So out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the heavens and brought them to the man to see what he would call them. And whatever the man called every living creature, that was its name. 20 The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. 21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. 22 And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 23 Then the man said, This at last is 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 his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."

Matthew 19:5-6

"5 and said, Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh? 6 So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate."

1. Where do we get the idea that marriage is between one woman and one man?
2. Marriage is not is not an end unto itself. It points to something much deeper. What? (Ephesians 5:25-32, Rev 21:2,9)

Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with a legitimate issue, and of the Church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness. (WCF 24.2)

3. How does marriage serve "the mutual help of husband and wife?"

It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent. Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And therefore such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies. (WCF 24.3)

¹⁴ Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? ¹⁵ What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. ¹⁷ Therefore go out from their midst, and be separate from them, says the Lord, and touch no unclean thing; then I will welcome you, ¹⁸ and I will be a father to you, and you shall be sons and daughters to me, says the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6)

4. What does it mean to marry only in the Lord? What is the reasoning that Paul gives for this command?

5. What examples of unbelievers does Paul give? How would you describe those people in modern terms?
6. What other stipulation does Paul give about the kind of person a godly believer should marry?

Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, gives just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. (WCF 24.5)

7. What is the “contract” spoken about in this section?
8. How do we think about engagement in modern America?

In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead. (WCF 24.5)

Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God has joined together in marriage: yet, nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church, or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills, and discretion, in their own case. (WCF 24.6)

Matthew 19:8

“8 He said to them, “Because of your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.”

Matthew 19:9

“9 And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery.”

1 Corinthians 7: 12-16

“12 To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13 If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. 14 For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. 15 But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you to peace. 16 Wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife?”

9. What are the two provisions for biblical divorce?
10. Why is divorce such a serious issue?
11. If one get's a civil divorce, but it is not biblical, can they remarry?