

## "God's Plan for Marriage"

In the beginning God created male and female and united them as one, making the first family. Hello, I'm Phil Sanders. And this is a Bible study, "In SEARCH of the Lord's Way." Thousands of years have passed and nothing's better than God's plan for marriage. Stay with us and we'll see why.

Welcome to In Search of the Lord's Way. God in His wisdom created us the way He wanted us to be, male and female united together as the basis of the family and the basis of society. The Lord's way is always the best way. Thanks for taking time with us today. We want to be part of your life each week.

Great confusion about what constitutes family and marriage now permeates our society. A Pew Forum survey released in 2010 said that 39 percent of Americans believe marriage is obsolete. Well, this change in thinking profoundly impacts our country and especially children. In 1960, 72 percent of adults in America were married. Today only half of all adults are married. Many are waiting until later in life to marry, and the number of divorced people has tripled since 1960. More than that, the number of couples living together without marriage has grown dramatically.

From the beginning God made a pattern for the home. A pattern is a form or model designed to be imitated or copied. Psalm 145 and verse 17 says, "The LORD is righteous in all His ways And kind in all His deeds." When people follow the Lord's way, they find blessing. Psalm 119:2 says, "How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, Who seek Him with all their heart." We should all take the advice of Proverbs 3:5 to 7, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil." Sadly, some think that they have a better way than the Lord's way.

Now, to study more about God's plan for marriage, we offer the information in this little booklet "Together For Life", and it's free. If you'd like a copy of this or a CD of our study and you live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. Now, if you live outside the United States, we have materials free online, and you can stream this program on our website at [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org).

The Edmond church will now worship in song, we'll read from Matthew chapter 19:3 to 6, and examine God's plan for marriage.

Our today reading comes from the gospel according to Matthew chapter 19 verses 3 to 6. And Jesus is talking about the beginning of marriage and how it's to be permanent.

Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful *for a man* to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created *them* from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, 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'? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."

These are the words of Jesus. Let's pray together. Father, we're thankful that in Your wisdom and love You created the family. Joining men and women together so that they may come to love You and may raise their children. And Father we pray that we may always follow that model that You've given to us. In Jesus name we pray, Amen.

God's pattern for the family began at creation. The Lord God said in Genesis 1:26 to 28, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over

the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. God blessed them; and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

God saw that it was not good for man to be alone (Genesis 2 and verse 18). And, though Adam was surrounded by every living creature, “for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him” (Genesis 2 and verse 20). “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. And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. 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.’ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and (shall) hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed” (Genesis 2:21 to 25).

Now, God showed his love and wisdom by giving a woman to Adam, giving him just what he needed. She was a helper designed specifically for him. He didn’t need another male exactly like himself; he needed a female. No doubt Adam realized that among the animals there was male and female of each kind. Man and woman need each other physically, socially, and spiritually. Like a lock with a key or a bow with a string, each needs the other to function properly. Alone neither can accomplish what God intended.

Some have suggested that Adam’s declaration, “This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh” in Genesis 2:23 reveal his commitment to Eve under all circumstances. Here God uses the story to speak to every age, “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh” (Genesis 2 and verse 24). Our Lord Jesus, in fact, quotes this very passage in Matthew 19:5. Marriage uniquely unites a male with a female physically and emotionally. The man and woman were to become one flesh, an intimate relationship that took priority over all others. Because of this physical bond, a man should loosen the bonds he has even with his parents and loyally hold fast to his wife.

God gave us a plan for marriage to bless us with a way that would be best for everyone. First, God showed his wisdom and love toward mankind by providing marriage as the basis and the model for family. The benefits of marriage as God designed it are numerous. God’s plan for marriage provides for procreation. God’s first commandment to man is found in Genesis 1:28. God said, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.” Now it’s undeniable that it takes both a male and a female to produce a child. Second, God’s plan for marriage provides the best environment for raising children. Every child needs both a father and a mother. Each of the parent has a necessary and meaningful role in the rearing of children. A mother can’t do everything a father can do, and a father can’t do what a mother can do.

Third, God’s plan for marriage provides a place where righteousness dwells. God said in Hebrews 13:4, that, “Marriage is to be held in honor among all, and the marriage bed is to be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” When parents simply live together without being married, they provide a morally-compromised home for their children. They can’t fulfill God’s instructions to fathers in Ephesians 6 and verse 4 to “bring their children up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” Fourth, God’s plan for marriage shows great durability. When a man and a woman honor their pledge to live together after the ordinance of God until death parts them, they provide security for one

another and security for their children. They turn their house into a home, a dwelling filled with love and happiness.

Now, it's not an accident that in the original Greek New Testament the word for husband (*aner*) is the same word for male and the word for wife (*gune*) is the same word for woman. According to the New Testament, all husbands are males and all wives are female. 1 Corinthians 7: and verse 2 says, "But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife (*gune*) and each woman her own husband (*aner*)." The Scripture here is specific; marriage is between a male (*aner*) and a female (*gune*). A husband cannot marry a husband, and a wife cannot marry a wife. Males are physically and sexually made for females, and females for males. The Bible doesn't confuse us about God's will on this matter. We also see here that a man is to have his own wife, not wives; and a woman is to have her own husband, not husbands.

Some argue that any two people who love each other and are sexually attracted ought to have the right to marry. Well, some say love and desire are more important than the laws of God. They believe they can set God's pattern for marriage aside. But if any love relationship permits marriage, then we should allow adults to marry little children? Should we let brothers marry their sisters? Recently communities are forming of open relationships consisting of multiple husbands, wives, boyfriends, and girlfriends. These open relationships with "many loves" have been called *polyamorous*. Now such behavior creates chaos and ruins the moral and social fabric of the home. It will surely lead to loneliness, betrayal and broken hearts.

The Lord himself designed marriage for the blessing and benefit of mankind. God's commandments relating to wedlock are just as binding as those which relate to the plan of salvation or to worship. God's way is always best, and no alternative can replace it. We should preserve the sanctity of marriage as God ordained it. Any civil or ecclesiastical effort to alter God's teaching will inevitably lead to moral confusion. Now, just because people have a sexual attraction to another person doesn't mean that we have a right to be with them. We might be convinced that pedophiles are born with a predisposition towards sex with children, but few would claim that therefore it was moral, right, and good. Alcoholics might be born with a predisposition to drink, but I have never heard of an alcoholic claim alcoholism to be a moral activity on these grounds.

You see, feelings or desires cannot turn something that is sinful into something morally acceptable. That would be a moral chaos. Imagine telling our young people: well, "Please live according to the teaching of God. But, if you discover something is really attractive or tempting to you, and if you discover that is difficult to avoid, then it's all right to do. Well, the only behaviors that are really immoral are the ones that you feel no temptation to follow." What if we said that to our kids? You see, if a person followed that advice, one would never know when he or she is being tempted. Sexual attraction does not make fornication or living together without marriage morally acceptable. Nor does it sanctify same-sex marriage.

James 1:13 to 15 says, "Let no one say when he is tempted, 'I am being tempted by God'; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death." Sexual temptation comes to us as a feeling; oh, it's a strong, a strong enticement to sin. And when people give in to their lusts and sin, their sins bring for spiritual death. And they're not right with God.

Paul described those who would tamper with the word of God as disgraceful and underhanded in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 2. Tampering is the practice of twisting or distorting a Biblical passage so that it

says what the person wants it to say. Tampering shows no respect for the authority of God. By its very nature, changing the Scriptures leads to deception and the corruption of the truth. Peter spoke of those “ignorant and unstable” souls who twist the Scriptures to their own destruction in 2 Peter 3 and verse 16.

When people ignore God’s teaching about marriage, they unalterably harm themselves. God distinguishes sexual activity in marriage from every other sexual behavior. “Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral (that is the fornicators) and adulterous” (Hebrews 13 verse 4). Now, the Scriptures describe sex outside of marriage between two or more individuals as sexual immorality or fornication; in Greek it is the word *porneia*. *Porneia* is a broad term and refers to all kinds of sexual activity between unmarried people, including incest, prostitution, bestiality, and homosexuality.

Adultery takes place when a married person has a sexual contact with someone other than his or her spouse. Marriage is a covenant union that excludes all others. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 19 verses 4 to 6, “Have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh’? So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.” Now, a part of the traditional marriage vow is that the two will remain united “until death do us part.”

Sexual immorality of all kinds was common in pagan Corinth. Paul condemned the practice of sexual immorality; that is fornication, adultery, and homosexuality in 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 9. By inspiration Paul instructed the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 6 and verse 18 to “Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body.” Promiscuous, sexual immorality led to the many sexually transmitted diseases rampant in Corinth in those days, and it will lead to sexually transmitted disease today. Galatians 6 verses 3, a excuse me, verses 7 and 8. It says, “Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.”

Now those who ignore God deceive themselves by imagining that they may have sex with whomever they please without consequences. The facts do not lie. According to a statement by Dr. Amy Lansky of the U. S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention, “AIDS is fifty times more prevalent among men who have sex with men than the rest of the population.” In 2008, men who had sex with men accounted for 63% of the primary and secondary syphilis cases in the United States.

The Scriptures describe homosexuality as unnatural. Romans 1:26 to 27 says, “For their women exchanged natural relations for those that are contrary to nature; and the men likewise gave up natural relations with women and were consumed with passion for one another, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.” As a practice, sodomy is filled with filth and disease. And God spoke against it because it’s harmful. God didn’t speak against it to be mean but because He loves us and knows that troubles come from sin. Oh, let’s follow God.

Let’s pray together. Oh, Father we pray that You will help us to be committed to Your ways. Knowing that they are what are best for us and what is right. And Father help us to leave the sinful things behind. And this we pray in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, Amen.

I’m thankful for my sweet wife, Jackie. We’ve been married forty-five years. We committed ourselves to live a lifetime together in the holy bonds of matrimony. Divorce was never an option; we

pledged nothing but death will ever separate us. Our commitment to each other has provided a stable and loving home for our four children and twelve grandchildren. Following God isn't merely a good thing; it's the best and the right thing to do! When people follow their feelings or the way of the world, they inevitably harm themselves. We need God's teaching to guide us. Jeremiah 10:23 says, "I know, O LORD, that a man's way is not in himself, Nor is it in a man who walks to direct his steps."

Following the Lord's plan of salvation is also best and right. Being right with God is essential to the wellbeing of our souls. To be saved, to become a Christian, to believe, is believe Jesus is the Christ, repent of your sins, to confess Jesus as God's Son, and to be baptized into Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. When people heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, they acted with urgency! The people at Pentecost gladly received Peter's words and were baptized (Acts 2:41). The men and women at Samaria heard Philip preaching the gospel, believed and were baptized (Acts 8 verse 12). The eunuch heard Philip's sermon, saw water, and asked to be baptized. After hearing the truth, the jailer at Philippi was baptized though it was midnight (Acts 16:33). What are you waiting for? Arise and be baptized and wash away your sins, calling on His name (Acts 22 and verse 16).

We hope that today's study about God's plan for marriage has encouraged you. We're offering a free little booklet, Together For Life. And it's free. And if you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy or a CD of this message, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to [searchtv@searchtv.org](mailto:searchtv@searchtv.org). Or, you can call the Search office it's toll-free. And that number is 1-800-321-8633. We'd love to hear from you. You can also download these lessons or a newsletter online at our website: [www.searchtv.org](http://www.searchtv.org). At that website there's a schedule of our programs and a map with the location of churches that are in your area and many of the songs that we sing. Now, you can watch SEARCH anytime on YouTube! We have our own channel. And you can subscribe to it, it's "SearchTVMinistry." We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. So write in and ask for one. We'll be happy to it to ya and they're free. Now don't worry, we're not asking for money if you ask for these things. We're here to help you get to heaven.

We do ask that you get your heart focused on God today by going and worshiping at church. There's probably a church of Christ in your area. If you're looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we'll be happy to help you find one. We'll be back next week, Lord willing. And so we ask you to keep searching God's Word with us and do tell a friend about the program. Let em know that you're watching and encourage them to watch too. And as always we say to you, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord's Way.