

GOD'S INTENTION RELATED TO MARRIAGE

jkroberts_us@yahoo.com
www.pacolethillsbaptist.org

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Song of Solomon 1:1

“The Song of Songs, which is Solomon’s.”

1. These few words tell us quite a lot about this book of the Bible.
 - a. It was written as a song to be sung.
 - b. Of the 1005 songs Solomon wrote it was the best.
NOTE: The descriptive phrase, “The Song of Songs,” could be interpreted, “The Best of the Songs.”
2. Commentators differ as to its purpose and meaning.
 - a. Some see it as a commentary on married love.
 - b. Some see it as referring to Israel’s relationship to God.
 - c. Some see it as referring to the church’s relationship to Jesus Christ.
3. Some facts.
 - a. It is one of four Old Testament books that are not quoted from in the New Testament; the others being Esther, Obadiah and Nahum.
 - b. It is sung or read in part, or in its totality, by Jews on the first evening of the Passover celebration.
NOTE: Some conservative Jews see the book as a Midrash or exposition on the book of Exodus, while others see it as an allegory on the relationship of God and Israel.
 - c. It is also the inspiration behind hymns like, “The Lily of the Valley,” and, “His Banner Over Me is Love.”
4. I believe this song is about Solomon’s pursuit of and marriage to his first wife.
5. Had he obeyed God it would have had additional stanzas related to his lifelong commitment to and love for the object of his love as portrayed here.
6. The fact that Solomon ended up with 700 wives and 300 concubines does not call into question the divine authorship of this book, but it does point out man’s disobedient and sinful nature.
7. People have different ideas related to what defines manhood and womanhood, but the Bible teaches that no man, or no woman, can be the person God created them to be apart from God and His enablement.
8. Additionally no man or woman can love as God intends us to love apart from Him.
9. God’s perfect intention related to marriage is rarely achieved in our culture or even in the church, but that does not mean that it can’t be.

I. God intended marriage to be an intimate and exclusive relationship.

A. The exclusiveness of the marriage relationship is indicated by the statement, “For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.” Genesis 2:24

NOTE: Marriage involves a leaving and a cleaving, and to be successful no one or nothing can be allowed to come between a married couple; including their children.

NOTE: Also God's intention was, and always will be, that marriage is between a man and a woman; any other one flesh relationship is a perversion.

B. The Apostle Paul implied that adultery negates the marriage principle that two people become one in the sight of God. 1 Cor 6:15-18

Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take away the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? May it never be!
16 Or do you not know that the one who joins himself to a prostitute is one body with her? For He says, "THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH." 17 But the one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him. 18 Flee immorality. Every other sin that a man commits is outside the body, but the immoral man sins against his own body.

NOTE: Sexual sin is unique in that it involves the joining of two bodies. Adultery introduces a third or more partners into what is supposed to be an exclusive relationship. Once the two shall become one relationship has been violated it can never be fully repaired.

II. God intended marriage to be an extended, lifelong relationship.

A. Divorce is rampant in our culture and in the church.

B. God's intention was for one man to be married to one woman until one of them dies.

C. The Bible allows for divorce when adultery occurs.

1. Matt 5:31-32

"It was said, 'WHOEVER SENDS HIS WIFE AWAY, LET HIM GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE'; 32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the reason of unchastity, makes her commit adultery (in the eyes of others); and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery (in the eyes of others).

2. Matt 19:3-9

Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" 4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, 5 and said, 'FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH'? 6 "So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate." 7 They said to Him, "Why then did Moses command to GIVE HER A CERTIFICATE OF DIVORCE AND SEND her AWAY?" 8 He said to them, "Because of your hardness of heart Moses permitted you to divorce your wives; but from the beginning it has not been this way. 9 **"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."**

D. The Bible also allows for redemptive separations when called for and remarriage when a believing spouse is abandoned by their unbelieving spouse. 1 Cor 7:10-16

But to the married I give instructions, not I, but the Lord, that the wife should not leave her husband 11 (but if she does leave, she must remain unmarried, or else be reconciled to her husband), and that the husband should not divorce his wife. 12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an

unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he must not divorce her. 13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, she must not send her husband away. 14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. 15 Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace. 16 For how do you know, O wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, O husband, whether you will save your wife?

1. Paul's statement, "not the Lord," in verse 12 does not imply that what he is writing is not authoritative; rather he means it is not something Jesus addressed during his earthly ministry.
2. Adultery allows the innocent party to end the marriage without consequence, but all other problems are to be dealt with in a redemptive way. NOTE: That may mean what is called a redemptive separation.
3. An already married couple is to remain together when one partner becomes a Christian.
4. However, if the unbeliever chooses to leave, the believer is to allow them to do so and is no longer bound by their previous marriage vows.

NOTE: Unmarried and previously married Christians are only to marry in the Lord.

III. God intended marriage to be a loving, cooperative, and enabling relationship.

- A. Eve's assumption of headship, and Adam's failure to lead had disastrous results.
- B. What had been a cooperative relationship became a competitive relationship.
- C. God gave Adam authority over Eve, but sin created within Eve a desire to control. NOTE: God's statement to Eve, "**Yet your desire will be** for your husband, and he will rule over you," has nothing to do with physical desire. The same language is used in Genesis when God confronted Cain with these words, "If you do well, will not your countenance be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and **its desire is for you**, but you must master it." Genesis 4:7
- D. Only in Christ is there any real hope for a marriage to be what God intended it to be. Eph 5:22-33

Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,** 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 28 **So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;** 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 **FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.** 32 This

mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33
Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

APPLICATION

1. Christian marriage unites two different personalities making a new identity in the sight of God.
2. We are to complete one another and not deplete one another.
3. For many people marriage is a competition between two competing personalities, rather than a divinely ordained partnership.
4. Both the culture and the church are negatively impacted by the fact that God's intentions for marriage and the family are no longer embraced by the majority of people.
5. Children are often the unintended victims of this departure from God's plan and purpose for the family.