

The Nature of Marriage

Introduction:

- A. *Changes of a profound nature are under way in American family life.... This ferment has convinced some social scientists that the 'death of the family' is at hand. Ferdinand Lundberg, author of 'The Coming World Transformation,' says the family is 'near the point of extinction.'*(US News & World Report, April 16,1973, p. 71)
 - B. Christians are faced with the crucial choice of following God's plan for marriage or conforming to the world. - Romans 12:2
 - C. What is the nature of marriage?
- I. Origin: Divine (First Divine Institution) - Genesis 2:18-24
- A. We should study God's will for it, not human philosophy about it.
 - B. Man does not have the right to change it.
 - C. Man does not have the right to alter its relationships to suit himself or society.
 - D. Man does not have the right to enter or leave it at will; God determines who can enter or leave.
- II. Definition: Bodily & Spiritual Union of Man and Woman
- A. Characteristics
 - 1. Bond (Covenant) - Malachi 2:14
 - a. terms - 1 Corinthians 7:2; Matthew 19:9
 - b. promises (mutual agreement) - Luke 1:26-27,34
 - c. ratification (meeting legal requirements) - Galatians 3:15; John 2:1-11
 - 2. Binding - Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39
 - 3. Bonding (New Relationship) - Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:6;
 - B. Description: *Marriage is an institution ordained of God for the honor and happiness of mankind, in which one man and one woman enter into a bodily and spiritual union, pledging each to the other mutual love, honor, fidelity, sympathy, forbearance, and comradeship, such as would assure an unbroken continuance of their wedlock so long as both shall live* (H. Leo Boles).
- III. Purposes
- A. Companionship - Genesis 2:18
 - B. Procreation - Genesis 1:27-28
 - C. Avoid Fornication - 1 Corinthians 7:2
- IV. Number of Mates: One (Monogamous, Heterosexual) - Matthew 19:4-5; cf. 1 Samuel 1:1-7
- V. Duration: Lifetime - Romans 7:2; Matthew 22:23-30
- VI. Result: Happiness - Genesis 1:25-28,31; Proverbs 18:22
- Conclusion:
- A. Rather than seeking to alter God's plan, we should in faith conform to it. - Hebrews 13:4
 - B. Marriage can either be the greatest source of happiness this side of Heaven or the greatest cause of misery this side of Hell. Whether your marriage will be one of joy and permanence or of despair and separation will be determined by whether or not you follow the law of the Lord concerning marriage.