

STAY MARRIED!

There is a lot of discussion today in the world about *what constitutes a marriage*. It was an issue in this year's presidential election.

There is also a lot of discussion today in the Church about *what constitutes staying married*. When Christian marriages get into trouble, they begin to question what constitutes a marriage and whether their marriage is from God.

This lesson will study FIVE aspects of what constitutes a marriage from God and why Christians should stay married.

1. God designed marriage as a divine institution (DI) for all mankind in Gen.2:18-25.

Gen.2:18-25 establishes 5 things that constitute marriage as a divine institution (DI#2).

- Wife was designed by God to be a suitable helper to the husband.
- Lord brings you together (think of all the combinations there are in the world to put you together).
- Oneness of two (marriage math is $1 + 1 = 1$).
- Leave (DI#3) to cleave (DI#2)
- Naked and unashamed (intimacy of marriage)

2. Jesus took Gen.2:18-25 as what constitutes a marriage and explained why we should **stay married in Matt.19:3-9.**

Jesus taught five things that constitute a marriage and that we should stay married.

- God made male and female for marriage.
- Leave and cleave
- God joins together
- Let no one separate (especially those married)
- Marriage without divorce

3. Paul took Jesus' teaching and discussed what constitutes staying together in a troubled marriage in 1 Cor.7:10-17.

Paul taught five things that constitute a marriage and why we should **stay married**.

- Don't separate (work on marriage not divorce).
- If divorced without cause of adultery, remain unmarried and work on marriage reconciliation – no rights for remarriage.
- If married to unbeliever and they wish to remain married – stay married.
- If married to unbeliever and they wish to divorce – rights for remarriage.
- If marriage has one believer, marriage and family as divine institutions are elevated to a Christian institution (sanctified).

“Only, as the Lord has assigned to each one, as God has called each, in this manner let him walk. And thus I direct in all the churches.” (1 Cor.10:17)

4. Paul taught that when marriage, Divine Institution #2 (DI#2) for a believer, becomes a Christian institution (CI). It becomes a Christian institution because every believer is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ. Marriage as a Christian institution operating under a higher standard than DI#2 (Eph.5:21-33).

“This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the Church.” (Eph.5:32)

Paul taught four factors that elevate a marriage from a DI#2 to a CI. Paul teaches why Christians should **stay married**. *“Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ (The Messiah, the Anointed One).” (5:21, Amplified)*

- Wives are to be submissive to husband as divine delegated authority *as to the Lord* (5:22-24)
- Husbands are commanded to love their wives just *as Christ loved the Church* (5:25-29).
- Christian husbands and wives are to do this as members of the body of Christ, the Church (5:30)
- Christian marriages live according to a higher standard than divine institution marriages (5:31-32)

5. Peter took these teachings on marriage and discussed working on troubled marriage so as to stay married in 1 Pet.3:1-7.

Peter taught four ways to work on a troubled marriage in order to stay married.

- Treat each other with spiritual kindness rather than hurtful words (1 Pet.3:4).
- Reverence your marriage because you understand that it is a sacred institution and each other because you understand that you are *joint heirs of the grace of life*.
- The wife’s reverent conduct is to respect her husband by submission to his position of divine delegated authority as to the Lord (Eph.5:22).
- The husband’s reverent conduct is to treat his wife with respect by loving her unconditionally as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself up for her (Eph.5:25).

ALWAYS WORK ON STAYING MARRIED RATHER THAN ON GETTING DIVORCED!

“To sum up, let all be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted, and humble spirit; not returning evil for evil, or insult for insult, but giving a blessing instead; for you were called for the very purpose that you might inherit a blessing.” (1 Pet.3:8-9)

For the next two weeks note how the following become part of your marriage when you consistently apply point five to your marriage (1 Pet.3:8-9) – GOD IS AWESOME!

- *harmonious* _____
- *sympathetic* _____
- *brotherly* _____
- *kindhearted* _____
- *humble spirit* _____
- *not returning evil for evil* _____
- *giving a blessing instead* _____