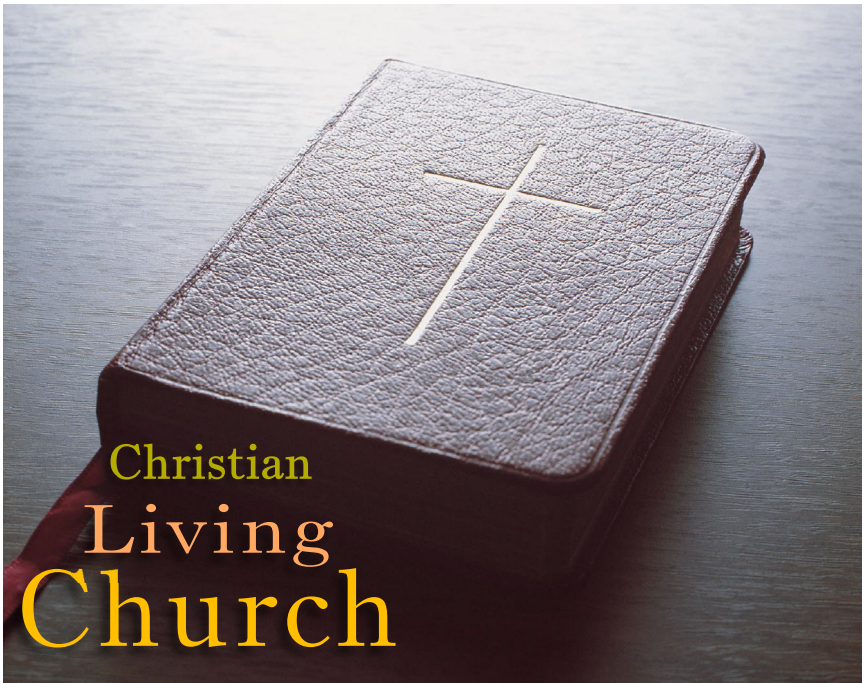


# Marriage / Divorce

*“But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.”*



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# Marriage / Divorce



This series of lessons has been designed for private study or classroom presentation. The purpose of this foreword is to explain certain conventions utilized throughout the program. The overall concept is to begin with the basic concepts necessary for the new convert to understand and progress toward more complex doctrine. The lessons are numbered in order to maintain the proper sequence of study.

When Scripture references are encountered in the text, various actions are recommended. When in parenthetical bold (**Genesis 1:1**) the verse is to be looked up and read right away. Frequently, the next textual statement will comment on that verse. Reading verse and text in proper order will enhance one's understanding of the verse. Direct quotes from Scripture will be "*bold italicized and contained in quotation marks*" and, unless otherwise noted, will be from the King James Bible. When the reference is in parenthetical non-bold (Genesis 1:1) it is to provide the Scriptural basis for the statement if confirmation is desired. References in blue [Genesis 1:1](#) will be listed in the lesson section entitled **FURTHER STUDY**.

**FURTHER STUDY** is the "homework" section. Its purpose is to encourage Bible study at home. The referenced verses have a short summation to assist the student desiring more knowledge about a subject to find what they are looking for.

The **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS** section is primarily for classroom use. Open discussion with the exchange of ideas produces growth for all involved. Most of the time the answer is contained in the referenced Scripture but sometimes the question is offered for open discussion. Even in private Bible study, analysis of the question and the search for its answer can be rewarding.

This work is offered to anyone with a desire to better understand God's Word. It is our hope and prayer that the person studying these lessons will come away with a better understanding of God's will and a closer walk with our Lord, Jesus Christ.

With Loving Concern for all those seeking God's Message  
The Church of God Rocky Mount  
Rocky Mount, Virginia

# Key Verse: Mark 10:6-8



*“But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.”*

## Discussion Question:

### What does this Key Verse mean to you?

From the beginning of Creation God made them male and female and instituted the rite of marriage. For the purpose of marriage a man shall leave his parents and be joined to his wife. Not his partner, but his wife. A marriage is one man and one woman. Marriage is a union of a man and a woman as designed by God. Your spouse is more important than your parents or children. This does not mean to forsake your parents, but points out the relative importance of the two relationships. It does not mean that there will not be times when your children come first, but the spouse was there first and will be there after the children leave.

Marriage, as we have seen in the

key verse, was given by God for man and woman. Since the institution of marriage was not created by man it cannot be changed by man. What does this mean? Marriage is between one man and one woman, *not* two men or two women as some are now saying is ok. This would constitute a change in the God-ordained design of marriage.

Just because marriage was given by God does not mean man does not have any part in it. A man and woman have the choice to marry or not to marry and a priest, minister, or magistrate will perform the marriage. The bride and groom will also determine the wedding location, the attending participants and who will be invited to the marriage. Sometimes the vows are modified to include something personal from each spouse. Such modifications are appropriate as long as the substance of the vows is not changed.

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To proclaim that the vows spoken are a promise before God, to promise to be *loving and faithful, to have and to hold, to love, to honor and to cherish, in joy and in sorrow, in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, for as long as we both shall live* are details that must be included in the ceremony.

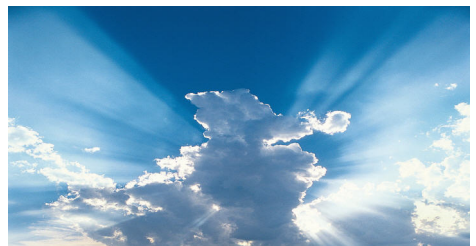
To promise before God acknowledges that this union is not by man's authority but God's. If you ever want to keep a promise this would be a good place to start. Breaking any promise is bad enough but breaking one purposely made before God takes this to a different level.

The combining of loving and faithful was not by chance. If you break one you will be breaking both. This includes, but is not limited to, adultery whether physically or mentally.

There is no guarantee that a marriage will be great all the time. The promise to love, honor and cherish in sickness and in health, *for better or for worse* covers a lot

of ground. There will be some tough times. Just because your spouse gets sick is not a justifiable reason to get divorced. It is at times like these that your love and compassion are needed more than ever. Marriage is not a business partnership that can be ended just because it's not financially profitable. This is not a reason to get divorced! It is an occasion to discuss the problem with your spouse (not your friends) and come to some mutual agreement to resolve the problem. Marriage can and should be a wonderful thing but it takes effort on the part of both of you. Happy marriages don't just happen; they are made!

Marriage is a lifetime arrangement, which is why the list of vows closes with *as long as we both shall live*. After the ceremony and consummation of the marriage it is up to the husband and wife to make it a good mar-



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riage. No one else, not parents, family or friends can make a marriage good or bad. They can help or harm, but only to the extent allowed by the husband and wife. It is what the couple makes of it, no more and no less. It is not something to be taken lightly, embarked upon for a trial period or entered into on a whim. It is also not for people that have not yet reached the age of sufficient maturity to possess the ability to cope with the responsibilities of marriage.

When is this age of sufficient maturity? Most people will say as an adult, but it's really upon reaching the age of responsibility. What is the age of responsibility, 16, 18 or 21? There is no universal age associated with reaching the age of responsibility. This is the age at which you are considered to be able to make good informed decisions and live with the results of the decisions. Here in the United States I would place it somewhere between 18 and 21. Some may think they can marry at 16 and while it's possible it is not likely, given the laws of the coun-

try. Then there are some at 21 who are still not mature enough to go out and hold down a job, pay bills, etc. Personally, I tell my children they should not get married until they are out of college and have a stable job, which means 22-23. This is because the process of getting married and adjusting to a married life can only distract someone from the needed studies. Second, until you have reached this age you are not normally old enough to completely understand what you are doing.

Marriage is not a way to change people. If a person marries another with the idea of changing them they are headed for a rocky marriage. Water seeks its own level and a personality returns to its own province. The one being changed may alter their behavior for a while but after the glow of the newly entered married state wears off, the old traits will return and the war will begin! Not only will marriage not correct such problems but the presence of such things should be red flags for anyone thinking about marriage.

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The vow *till death do us part* is one of the main reasons marriage is one of the biggest decisions you will ever make. A house can be sold, business partnerships can be dissolved and careers can be changed. A marriage is to be forever, as long as we're flesh and blood. The marriage ends, by God's standards, only upon the death of a spouse. The only decision I can think of bigger than this is the decision to follow Christ once you have repented of your sins.

Why did God institute marriage? He said it is not good for man to live alone (**Genesis 2:18**). If our Lord said it is not good for us to be alone, who are we to disagree? I can offer a few reasons why it is not good to live alone. When you're sick who will take care of you? In case you have an accident at home and you are unable to call for help, a spouse dialing 911 can be a real blessing. If you want children, not only their conception but their proper rearing takes a father and a mother. Finding a wife is a good thing and is an arrangement that has the approval of the Lord (**Proverbs**

**18:22**).

A number of people living in their non-Christian world rationalize that since marriage is given by God it needs to be recognized only by Christians. Some atheists and religious groups that do not believe in God reason that they are not subject to God's law due to their denial of His existence, therefore the Biblical requirements concerning marriage do not apply to them. This pattern of thought is wrong. The Ten Commandments are relevant to them. They are not free to murder or steal, no matter what they believe. The same is true of any of God's laws. God is the Creator of all mankind so everyone is still bound by His law and the Biblical stipulations concerning marriage, even those that don't believe in Him.

Marriage is a sacred institution because it was ordained by our Creator. There is another reason for marriage to be regarded as more than just another ritual. The act allowed by marriage between husband and wife creates life. Outside of marriage this behavior is called adultery. It is forbidden

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**(Exodus 20:14).** Even the very thought of it is forbidden **(Matthew 5:27-28).** Copulation outside of marriage creates children without two parents which results in an incomplete family environment or, if both parents are present but still unmarried, it presents a flawed example for the development of the child's moral principles. How are you going to explain to your teenage offspring that fornication is sin when your unmarried state is a glaring demonstration of your ethical shortcomings?

The man is the head of the marriage. As the head of the marriage it is the responsibility of the man to assure that the household is provided for and the family is safe. He is responsible not only for important matters, but also many minor things. If there is a disagreement over a matter and compromise cannot be reached, generally the husband will decide. This is because he is the one God will hold responsible. There will be times when the opinion of the wife should prevail, however. For example, if the dissension is over what she is going to fix for dinner, get out of

the kitchen. Even though he is the head of the family, the husband is charged with the obligation to love his wife. This means to be compassionate for her welfare and to put forth an effort to provide for her needs and good health. It does not mean to acquiesce to her every unreasonable request. Each party must respect the role of the other as established by God. The wife must submit to the husband as he meets his responsibility according to God's assignment of it. The husband must be attentive to the positive attributes of the wife and allow her to be the help that God intended. He must love her as he loves himself, giving her the autonomy to express herself and grow in the ability to nurture her dreams. This is what any man wants for himself and it is what a loving husband would do for his wife. As the marriage matures, the husband providing for the household and the wife providing for the home, if each will respect the role of the other they can truly begin to think with one mind, function as a well-coordinated team, becoming virtually *one flesh*.

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## Discussion Questions:

1. Who performed the first marriage ceremony and gave the bride away? **Genesis 2:21-22**

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2. Was divorce in God's original plan? **Matthew 19:8**

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3. If those who are married and obeying God's law condone others living together in the unmarried state, what is in store for them?  
**2 John 1:9-11**

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4. Is submission to one defined as the head in any way degrading?  
**1 Corinthians 11:3**

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# Marriage / Divorce



## FURTHER STUDY:

**Deuteronomy 5:18** do not commit adultery.

**Malachi 2:14-16** let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.

**Mark 10:9** What God has joined together.

**Ephesians 5:21-25** Husband and wife submitting to each other.

**Colossians 3:18-20** Wives, Husbands, Children.

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**Notes:**

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**Notes:**

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