



*Marriage—Why God's
Definition Matters*

Cherrydale Baptist Church

Date: July 2004

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FOOTNES

1. A. *Homosexuality: Why Change is Possible* (Dr. Robert Spitzer and Dr. Joseph Nicolosi) Focus on the Family Tape—2001; B. *Re-igniting the Hope for Homosexuals* (John and Anne Povik) Focus on the Family Tape 2000; C. *The Roots and Causes of Male Homosexuality* Love Won Out Series Focus on the Family 2001, 2002.
2. Marriage Under Fire by Dr. James Dobson, page 6.
3. *The Slippery Slope of Same Sex Marriage* Family Research Council 2004 page 3.
4. *The American Sex Revolution* Pitirim Sorokin page 77-105
5. *Sexual Regulation and Cultural Behavior* JD Unwin.
6. *Follow the Footnote or the Advocate as Historian of Same-sex Marriage* by Peter Lubin and Dwight Duncan, Catholic University Law Review 47 (Summer 1998): 1300.
7. *I’ll Take Religion Over Gay Culture* Salon.com June 23, 1998.

Peter Marshall, former Chaplain of the Senate used to tell the story of “The Keeper of the Springs.”

It seems that many years ago in the Austrian Alps there was an old gentleman who lived high above a village and the town council got together and hired him as the keeper of the springs. He would go along from spring bed to spring bed high in the mountains with a shovel and would clean out the dirt and the silt, the leaves and the sticks, the weeds and dead animals, so that all of that fresh spring water would flow down into a river that went right through this village. As a result, the village prospered and it became a vacation spot. They built restaurants right on the water for the beautiful views. Swans swam on the water, fountains splashed with the fresh water, children played in it and mill wheels were turned by it. Years went by and a new city council was elected. As they went over the budget somebody said, “Who is this keeper of the springs? We haven’t seen him in years; what good does he do?” So they unanimously sent him a notice “Services no longer needed.” A few weeks went by and no one noticed any difference. But as the weeks began to pass they noticed there was a brown tint on the water and the dead animals began showing up, the mill wheels got clogged up with leaves and sticks. It wasn’t long until a green slime formed on the surface of the water and the swans moved away; there was an awful stench and the children got sick. So the town council called an emergency meeting and they rehired the keeper of the springs. Within a few weeks, life came back to that village.

What the keeper of the springs was to that village, the obedient believer in Christ is to the culture. The problem in our culture today

is that believers aren’t obedient and we have abandoned our roll as “keeper of the springs.” I am extremely concerned for this country. I am concerned that we are under the wrath of God and we are about to see all hell break loose unless believers who are obedient serve as their function as “keeper of the springs.”

The US Senate recently began a debate on the Federal Marriage Amendment. If it passes and it goes to all the states and becomes a part of our Constitution then we will say marriage in this country is defined between a man and woman. If that doesn’t happen there are activist judges who are going to see that the definition in this country changes. People say, “So what; what is the big deal?” I want to cover three things with you.

- First of all, the Biblical definition of marriage;
- Second, why holding to that traditional definition of marriage matters
- Third, what is our call as believers in Christ in this context?

I would like you to hear from the wisest man who ever walked this planet; a man who influenced all of western civilization; a man whose teachings are foundational to the documents that this country is founded upon. That man is Jesus Christ and He gave us God’s definition of marriage. It is recorded in Matthew 19 and Mark 10 in the New Testament. In the context the religious leaders were debating with Jesus about divorce. In His answer Jesus reached back to the book of Genesis pulled out Chapter 2 and He said this, “Have you not heard that in the beginning He created them male and female and for this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife and the two shall become one flesh?” If you want to know what God in the flesh has to say about the definition of marriage, make no mistake about it, He defined it clearly and He built it on Genesis 2. Let us look at the text. Jesus quoted part of it.

darkness into His marvelous light.” I believe one of our strongest apologetics is a Godly home that models our message. We need to repent and act as the “keeper of the springs.” Ms. Camille Paglia, a self-confessed radical lesbian and atheist feminist warned, “The insulting disrespect shown by gay activist to religion . . . would produce a backlash. History shows that massive spiritual revivals are a fundamental, recurrent element in culture. There may, unfortunately, be deep, slow-moving forces at work like those that led to Christianity’s triumph over cosmopolitan, sexually permissive, but ethically weak late-paganism during the Roman Empire.”⁷ I am a part of the deep, slow moving force. I want to be a “keeper of the springs!” The Bible teaches what the church fathers often said, “The church is against the world for the world.” We are the “keepers of the springs.”

loving care of children born to the union.

Peter Lubin and Dwight Duncan, did extensive research and say the resistance to same sex marriage is not limited to western culture but extends to almost every culture throughout the world.⁶ In five thousand years of recorded history cultures that have built on that traditional definition of marriage prospered and those who refused perished. Are we so arrogant to think that we are the exception; we can change the rules without ugly consequences? There is a God in heaven and He judges nations and He will judge us unless the church repents and we cry out for mercy and we step up and model Godly homes and influence our leaders and serve as “keepers of the springs.” Forty years after the sexual revolution, what has it brought us? Huge divorce rates, fatherless children, sexually transmitted diseases, corruption in society. And now, a push for another social experiment. So how is the church to respond?

2 Timothy 2:24-26 gives the answer. “The Lord’s bondservant must not be quarrelsome but kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition; if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil having been held captive by him to do his will.” If we want to be effective in seeing people delivered and the culture changed we have to be patient when wronged, with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition. We can only do this when we are full of the Holy Spirit and submitted to Christ in humility. Self-righteousness should never mark our spirit. We should be known as a people who love and serve others regardless. But also as a church that will never, never compromise what the Scripture teaches. Love and truth must always mark us.

Our calling is found in 1 Peter 2:9 “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation a people for God’s own possession so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of

²¹So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place.

²²The LORD God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. ²³The man said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” ²⁴For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. Genesis 2:21-25

This is God’s definition of marriage: One man, one woman, coming together for a lifetime with a commitment built on five things.

- First, receive your mate as a gift from God. That is how Adam responded to Eve.
- Then leave your father and mother and
- Cleave unto your mate and
- Then become one and
- Practice transparency. They were naked and not ashamed.



During the five thousand years of recorded human history, every society has built upon that definition. Those societies that built upon it prospered. Those that rejected it and built on something else, history shows they have crumbled. That is the way it has always been.

- The US Supreme Court 1888 in *Maynard vs. Hill* described marriage as creating the most important relationship in life, as having more to do with the morals and civilization of a people than any other institution.
- In 1971, *Baker vs. Nelson*, the Minnesota Supreme Court affirmed the Judeo Christian roots of the definition of marriage when they said “The institution

of marriage as the union of a man and a woman uniquely involving the procreation and rearing of children within a family is as old as the book of Genesis.

When you take that definition and then begin to read through the Old Testament you will see the definition holds firm. Some people raise the question about polygamy. Abraham, David and heroes of the faith were polygamists! I want you to realize they violated the Biblical definition and in every single case the ugly consequences of polygamy were always pointed out in Scripture. The New Testament reaffirmed over and over again this definition. Jesus honored that traditional definition of marriage by performing His first miracle at a wedding in Cana. We see Him quoting this text again as we already cited in a debate about divorce. The Apostle Paul went so far as to say a Godly man and woman in marriage is God’s object lesson to the world of His relationship with His Bride, the Church. (Ephesians 5) The author of Hebrews says that marriage is to be held in honor among all men. (Hebrews 13:4)

Now you can not mention marriage without going right to the next subject – sexuality. If you are a believer and you do not have a good biblical handle on sexuality you are going to get really confused in this culture. The following chart provides an overview of what the Bible says about sexuality. I want to tell you the best sex manual ever written is the Bible! It is clear, it is bold, it is blunt, it is specific. It is also encouraging. It lets us know that sex is a magnificent gift from a loving God; and in giving the gift He put strict parameters around it. The gift is to be used only within marriage. Outside of marriage it brings very negative consequences.

eternal life.” God judges nations. Paul declares in Romans chapter one the wrath of God. Now many when they think of the wrath of God picture an angry-faced God. When we study wrath in Romans it means that God simply just says “Fine, have it your way, I will back off. I will just let you go.” According to Romans (Romans 1:18, 24, 26, 28) there are three stages that a nation can go through. Stage three is exactly where we are. We are under the wrath of God. However, Chronicles reminds us “If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray then I will heal their land.”

Harvard sociologist Pitirim Sorokin has analyzed cultures spanning several thousand years on several continents and found that virtually no society has ceased to regulate sexuality within marriage as defined as the union of a man and woman and survived.⁴ In 1947 Carle Zimmerman wrote “Family and Civilization.” He recorded his keen observations as he compared the degeneration of various cultures with a parallel of family life in those cultures. Specific patterns of domestic behavior typified the downward spiral in each one Zimmerman studied. He gave eight specific indicators. Number eight is pushing for other sexual expressions outside of marriage. He says in every single case where permission was granted, the culture fell apart. JD Unwin did an exhaustive research on 88 civilizations that have existed in the history of the world. Each culture has reflected a similar life cycle beginning with the strict code of sexual conduct and ending with a demand for complete freedom to express individual passion. Unwin reports that every society which extended sexual permissiveness was soon to perish.⁵ In his exhaustive examination of human history, Giovanni Battista Vico (1668-1744) Professor of Rhetoric at the University of Naples, concluded that marriage between a man and a woman is an essential characteristic of civilization, and as such is the “seedbed” of society. Vico warned that chaos would ensue in the absence of strong social norms encouraging marital faithfulness and

suddenly say two men or two women can be married you have automatically robbed the children of a father and a mother and it has ugly consequences. Think of the consequences in sex education. Can you imagine sex education if this becomes law? Then almost any sexual choice would be equal to any other sexual choice and marriage would lose its sacredness. If we take ten years of that kind of education, we will have chaos in the country. It will destroy the moral fabric and the children will suffer the brunt of it.

If you say that two men being married, two women being married is equal to a man and a woman being married you have no basis whatsoever to let it stop there. The ACLU has already gone on record in support of polygamy.³ The most common thought today affecting the elite is a new word, “polyamory,” that means many loves. Marriage can be groups of people as long as they just love each other. Do enough of that in a culture and you destroy it. It will disintegrate because we will no longer have strong families.

Stanley Kurtz, author of “Beyond Gay Marriage,” did us a favor because we don’t have to wonder what will happen if we go in that direction. Denmark, Norway and Sweden have already been doing this for ten years, and the consequences are obvious. Marriage loses its sacredness. Couples there no longer chose to be married. In those countries 80 percent of the first born children are born out of wedlock, 60 percent of the second born children are born out of wedlock. Couples question why they should be married; believing it is just like any other relationship and they are destroying the fabric, the strength of a culture.

History is a great teacher and there is a consistent voice throughout history which matches what God says. In Galatians 6:7 it says “Don’t be deceived. God will not be mocked. Whatever you sow, that you will reap. You sow to the flesh you will reap corruption. You sow to the spirit, you will reap

Sexuality

	OLD TESTAMENT	NEW TESTAMENT
SEX (in marriage only)	Sex is good in God’s sight	Sex is approved
	Sex for pleasure is approved	
	Foreplay is recognized as normal	
	Sex is openly discussed	Inference to this
FORNICATION	Forbidden	Forbidden
ADULTERY	Forbidden	Forbidden
HARLOTRY	Forbidden	Forbidden
MASTURBATION	Nothing stated	Nothing stated
HOMOSEXUALITY	Forbidden	Forbidden
BESTIALITY	Forbidden & condemned	
INCEST	Forbidden	Forbidden
RAPE	Forbidden	
SEX THOUGHTS		Lustful thoughts should be controlled

Do you realize that the book of Genesis declares that the sexual relationship in marriage is a portrayal of the image of God? (Genesis 1:27) Human sex is sacred. It is not like animal sex. That is why when people violate it, their soul responds negatively. When they follow the right principles it does something positive to their soul. Genesis 1:27 says it and Hebrew parallelism lets you know how sacred it is: “God created man in His own image. Male and female He created them.” Have you ever wondered with all of the sexual temptation we have why doesn’t God just turn the switch off? Why would He keep the switch on? Because the sex drive pushes us to relationship. We just keep trying over and over again. Sex within the context of marriage becomes a bonding glue; outside the context of marriage it is destructive.

The Bible talks very directly about homosexuality in sixteen different passages; ten in the Old Testament (Genesis 13:13; 18:20-21; 19:1, 4-11, 3, 24, 28; Ezekiel 16:49-50; Leviticus 18:22, 20:13, Deuteronomy 23:17-18; Judges 19:22-24; Hosea 9:9; 1 Kings 14:24; 15:12; 22:46; 2 Kings 23:7), six in the New Testament (Romans 1:21, 24, 26-27; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; 1 Timothy 1:8-10 2 Peter 2:6; Jude 7; Colossians 3:5-6). There is a consistent uncompromising message. Homosexual practice is an abomination to God. It is wrong. There is no condemnation of homosexual orientation. There is a huge difference between the two. The practice is condemned. The orientation is not. I have heard homosexuals make statements like: “Do you think I wanted to be this way?” “Do you think I chose it?” Homosexuals are not born that way. There is no evidence for a “gay” gene. Sociological factors in the home can foster a homosexual orientation.¹ The homosexual orientation is not condemned, acting on it is. That is where the church has to have a clear, uncompromising statement rooted in Scripture that acting on it is wrong. But at the same time, we must proclaim love, compassion and understanding and not come across as self-righteous bigots or in essence stating “While we are

all sinners, you are worse than we are.”

In 1 Corinthians 6:11 the Apostle Paul in the context talks

about homosexual practice and then says: “And such were some of you, but you have been washed, you have been sanctified, you have been justified in the name of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit.” In other words, change is possible through Christ. That is why we want to be a church that strongly supports ministries to homosexuals. We want to be a church that welcomes homosexuals; we want to love them. We consistently need to give the same message: “There is hope for me. I am a sinner. There is hope for

you. You are a sinner. If we come to Christ we can live righteous lifestyles.” That is our message.

There may be a few folks who frankly reject the Bible, so I’m going to give some arguments that are not rooted in Scripture for why it is so extremely important to hold tenaciously to that traditional definition of marriage. Why is it so important?

First of all, that the government has a vested interest in protecting the traditional definition of marriage. The role of government is to do what is best for society and to hold to traditional standards for the benefit of all people involved. When it forsakes that role, societies crumble. For example, the Defense of Marriage Act, 1996; Congress debated it; 85 Senators supported it; President Clinton signed it into law saying that in the United States of America marriage is defined as one man, one woman. I want to submit to you that when they signed that into law they were not narrow minded bigots, they were not hate mongers; they were doing their duty of standing for what is right for the benefit of the country. They knew that history demonstrates the best thing for any country is promoting one man and one woman coming together to form a marital bond, that is the proper place for sexuality and the raising of children.

We need to ask the question, “What is best for the children?” If the law is changed so that two men or two women can be married and that it is equal to heterosexual marriage, how will that impact children? Ten thousand studies (not just one or two) have confirmed that what is best for children is to have a father and a mother in the context of marriage.² Ten thousand studies have shown that children in that environment have less suicide, less addiction to drugs, less giving in to peer pressure, they do better in school, they are better emotionally in every way, there is less crime. All of society benefits if that traditional marriage is promoted and children are better off. So if you