

Article 18: The Family

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation.

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

I. A PURPOSE To Be ACCOMPLISHED

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood, or adoption.

The attack on the family and the attack on creation are inseparable.

If God created man, we are accountable to Him.
If man created God, we can do as we please

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. Genesis 2:23-24

Notice, it is man who made the declaration, "she shall be called woman." But God who made the declaration, "they shall become one flesh." God is the person who designed, established and ordained marriage and the family. It is not man's right or privilege to determine how a family is designed or what it looks like. That leads us to the next point..

II. A PERVERSION To Be AVOIDED

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman

The statement of faith says that marriage is the "uniting." In other words, shacking up does not constitute a family. Just because 2 or more people live together, that doesn't make them a family. A commune is not a family, sorry Charles Manson. A family is "composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption."

Conversely, if you are blood kin, you're STILL family.

Not only that, but the article confirms that a marriage is between two men, or two women, or a man and an animal, but between a man and a woman.

The redefinition of the family is THE critical issue of our day. There may be emotional love in the relationship, there may be companionship, there may be shared responsibility, but there's just not a family. Again, God established marriage and the family so HE determines what it looks like and how it works, not a court or legislature or public referendum. Sometimes the majority opinion is the wrong opinion.

²⁵For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen. ²⁶For this reason God gave them over to degrading passions; for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural, ²⁷and in the same way also the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another, men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.
Romans 1:25-27

III. A PERMANENCE That Is APPOINTED

in covenant commitment for a lifetime

Many people say "I do" but then they don't. They get married for better or for worse but not for good. The Bible is clear that God intends marriage to be permanent.

³Some Pharisees came to Jesus, testing Him and asking, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason at all?" ⁴And He answered and said, "Have you not read that He who created them from the beginning MADE THEM MALE AND FEMALE, ⁵and 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."
Matthew 19:3-6

We have lost the understanding of Covenant, and what it means. We often look at marriage as a contract. A contract and covenant are not the same. A contract is established and effective when both parties of the contract fulfill their requirements in the contract. A covenant is not that way. The word covenant literally means, "to cut." In antiquity a covenant was a blood pact.

Do you see the picture of "the two shall become one flesh" as it relates to the covenant and the symbolism of an animal carcass that was sacrificed as a sign of a covenant?

IV. A PICTURE That Is ASSERTED

It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church

Marriage displays a picture of Christ and the church. Christ entered into covenant with the church, but the sacrificial lamb was himself. And his fulfilling of the covenant vow is not based on what the bride (the church) does or doesn't do. Notice how the Bible refers to the church as the bride of Christ...

⁷Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready." ⁸It was given to her to clothe herself in fine linen, bright and clean; for the fine linen is the righteous acts of the saints. ⁹And he said to me, "Write, 'Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb'" Revelation 19:7-9

We'll see more about this picture and how it is practically lived out in just a moment.

V. A PROVISION That Is AFFORDED

To provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race

God made provision in the marriage relationship for three things to be accomplished.

A. Companionship

Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him." Genesis 2:18

When God saw Adam alone, it was the one thing in all his creation he described as being "not good." So he turned what was not good into something that was very good.

B. Sexual Pleasure

Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun. Ecclesiastes 9:9

³*The husband must fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband. ⁴The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. ⁵Stop depriving one another, except by agreement for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer, and come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control. 1 Corinthians 7:3-5*

C. Procreation

God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth." Genesis 1:28

This is the first command that was given to humanity, to multiply themselves. To fill the earth.

VI. A PATTERN That Is ACKNOWLEDGED

The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people

²²*Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. ²³For 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. ²⁴But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, ²⁶so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, ²⁷that 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. ²⁸So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church Ephesians 5:22-29*

There is a word in these verses that is not popular in our culture. It's the word "be subject" or submit.

VII. A PERSON That Is AFFIRMED

Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord.

¹³*For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother's womb. ¹⁴I will give thanks to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; wonderful are Your works, and my soul knows it very well. ¹⁵My frame was not hidden from You, when I was made in secret, and skillfully wrought in the depths of the earth; ¹⁶Your eyes have seen my unformed substance; and in Your book were all written the days that were ordained for me, when as yet there was not one of them. Psalm 139:13-16*

VIII. A POSITION That Is ACCEPTED

Parents are to teach their children...

Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

²⁰*My son, observe the commandment of your father and do not forsake the teaching of your mother; ²¹Bind them continually on your heart; tie them around your neck. ²²When you walk about, they will guide you; when you sleep, they will watch over you; and when you awake, they will talk to you. Proverbs 6:20-22*