

A WORD FROM PASTOR LLOYD:**Same-Sex Marriage***Understanding the Biblical Origin of Marriage*

If you are thinking about throwing away your old college dictionary and replacing it with Merriam-Webster's latest version, you might want to reconsider. Take for instance the revised definition it contains for "marriage."

Traditional (older) version:

mar • riage *1a*: the state of being married *b*: the mutual relationship of husband and wife : WEDLOCK *c*: the institution whereby men and women are joined in a special kind of social and legal dependence for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family.

Updated (newer) version:

mar • riage *1a (1)*: the state of being united to a person of the opposite sex as husband or wife in a contractual relationship recognized by law *(2)*: the state of being united to a person of the same sex in a relationship like that of a traditional marriage.

While most of society still agrees with the older, traditional definition, the cultural battle we are facing in America today has been clearly defined not only in the latest version of Webster's dictionary, but in courtrooms across the nation. The most recent challenge came last week when a ruling was handed down in New Jersey that essentially decreed 5,000 years of history and tradition null and void. The New Jersey State Supreme Court decided on October 25th that all of the rights and privileges of marriage must be extended to gay couples. The ruling says the state "must either amend the marriage statutes to include same sex couples or create a parallel statutory structure." They have given the state legislature 180 days to comply.

But for some this ruling did not go far enough. Chief Justice Poritz expressed that what we really need to do is "change everybody's thinking in the state so that we can totally accept this lifestyle as normal." Indeed, that is the goal of many gay activists. They are determined to reprogram how society views marriage. But their attempts to do so will never be accepted by those in the Christian community who believe the Bible and are unwilling to compromise the truth it contains.

Examining the Problem

Certainly no-one's basic human rights should ever be denied. However, when a few individuals who have freely chosen to live an alternate and untraditional lifestyle begin tampering with the sacred covenant of marriage, Christians have a responsibility to let our voices be heard for the benefit of all. According to the Scriptures homosexuality is a sin, so to say that two people of the same sex can be united in marriage is a mockery of God's design. This is not about rights being denied to anyone and it is not about hate, anger, or frustration as many have claimed. This is about love, a love that cares enough to tell the truth.

The crux of the problem today is that our nation has forgotten God. Even many believers rely more heavily on their own reasoning than on biblical truth. But whether one believes God's Word or not does not alter the fact that God is the One who created marriage. God's "definition" of what a marriage is has been the standard for all human history, and that standard has not changed.

But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female. For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

- Mark 10:6-8

The traditional form of marriage as we see in the Word of God is one man uniting with one woman. It is God's perfect plan.

(See also Genesis 1:27: 2:24: and 5:2)

Though sin and sexual deviation are age-old, it is only in the last thirty to forty years that we have seen such a marked shift from the traditional biblical concept of marriage (one man and one woman) to the growing acceptance of the idea that homosexual relationships ought to be considered normal. However, homosexuality – and hence same-sex marriage – are clearly defined as sin in the Bible.

You shall not lie with a male as with a woman. It is an abomination...If a man lies with a male as he lies with a woman, both of them have committed an abomination. - Leviticus 18:22, 20:13

For this reason God gave them up to vile passions. For even their women exchanged the natural use for what is against nature. Likewise also the men, leaving the natural use of the woman, burned in their lust for one another, men with men committing what is shameful, and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due. - Romans 1:26-27

However, aside from what the Bible says, a wealth of statistical evidence also exists pointing to the fact that same-sex marriage is a farce, and one that is fraught with problems both for those involved and for society in general. In the Netherlands where same sex marriage is legal the average homosexual relationship lasts only eighteen months. Gay men have an average of eight partners per year outside their “committed” relationships, which not only makes a travesty of the institution of marriage, but is also a detriment to the well being of society. In addition, statistics show that those in such relationships live shorter lives, have more physical and mental health problems, and are more likely to be the victims of violence. Also, their children are in trouble more often in school, at home, and with the police.¹

God is the One who instituted marriage, not the government. The stabilizing effect that families have had on our society throughout history is what led lawmakers to bestow certain benefits upon married couples. Those benefits are not rights, but privileges. To change the definition of marriage simply because some now want to receive those same privileges outside of the traditional means, is where the problem lies for many Christians. Government simply has no authority to change something that God has ordained.

The growing gay activist agenda that is prevalent in America today has at its roots the feminist movement of the 1970’s, which claimed that no distinction existed between men and women, except physically. However, uniqueness does exist between the sexes, and goes far beyond outward appearance. God made men and women different: the way we approach life; the way we raise children; the way we view our world; the way we relate to each other and to Him—He made each sex unique. And when it comes to the family the very fact that men and women are so different is one of the most important and necessary components of all in solidifying the foundation of the traditional family.

Mothers love with a nurturing love, focused on building relationships.

The importance of both parental role models in a child’s life cannot even begin to be measured, nor can we know all the beneficial ramifications of mothers and fathers working together to raise their children.

Fathers love with an instructional love, focused on building expectations and responsibility.

If traditional marriage is redefined what will become of motherhood and fatherhood? The term “gender,” would also become meaningless if same-sex marriage became commonplace. This dysfunctional union would also portend negative consequences for children raised in such households. The fact is homosexual couples cannot adequately provide the crucial balance and positive influence that a mother and father have in the home. This lack will negatively impact children and the whole of society.

What Can Christians Do?

Act

Christians should pay attention to what is going on in the courts, and send a message to their government officials on Election Day. We have a voice, and we need to use it. With New Jersey lawmakers now deciding on how to comply with the recent court ruling, and with eight states voting on marriage amendments over the next few weeks, much is at stake. Similar same sex court battles threaten to engulf the rest of the country as well. Find out where your elected officials stand on this crucial issue and vote those out who are not in favor of protecting the traditional view of marriage.

Love

God has called us to stand strong in all areas, including the issue of same sex marriage. However, He has not called us to act arrogantly, or to have hatred in our hearts towards others. He wants us to be an influence for Him in our world. Many of those who have practiced homosexuality in the past have repented and turned to the Lord, but many more are still trapped in that sinful lifestyle. We need to remember that God does not hate sinners. What God hates is sin, and Jesus Christ paid the ultimate price for sin on the cross. Everyone, no matter what they have done, when they receive Christ as Savior are forgiven and given a new life in Him.

Pray

More important than anything, Christians ought to pray. We should be on our knees for our country, praying that:

- We would continue to uphold the traditional definition of marriage in our country as between one man and one woman.
- Christians would hold up the standard of God’s Word in our lives that He might be seen and glorified in us.
- Those who are striving against the truth of God’s design of marriage would come to know the love of Christ.

If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. - 2 Chronicles 7:14

¹ Focus on the Family website article by Glenn T. Stanton, Director of Social Research and Cultural Affairs and Senior Analyst for Marriage and Sexuality, <http://www.family.org/cforum/fosi/marriage/>.