

The Consequences of Ideas  
Lesson 26: Redefining Marriage

## I. Introduction

- a. In our day a movement is growing that seeks to redefine marriage in ways that **violate** the plain teaching of Scripture. *Matt 19:4-6 Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. KJV*
- b. The impulse to redefine marriage in order to recognize same-sex and multiple partner relationships is a **symptom**, rather than the cause, of the erosion of the marriage culture in the U.S.
- c. It reflects a loss of understanding of the **meaning** of marriage as embodied in our civil laws and religious practices and fails to comprehend the philosophical ideas that were foundational in shaping the institution.
- d. It is critical that this move be defeated, for yielding to it would mean abandoning the possibility of **restoring** a sound understanding of marriage and, with it, the hope of rebuilding a healthy marriage culture.
- e. As believers we need to understand the underlying problems and fatal **errors** in the reasoning of those who seek a redefinition of marriage.

## II. Fatal Errors

- a. The first fatal error is that in the act of redefining marriage we would lock into place the false and **destructive** belief that marriage is all about romance and sexual gratification.
- b. A redefinition would cause our understanding of the primary purpose of marriage to veer away from the fact that marriage is about **procreation**. *Gen 9:7 As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it." NIV*
- c. It would also obscure the unique character and value of sex within the bounds of marriage and it would obliterate the vital societal role of marriage which is to promote and protect **life**.
- d. Such a move would destroy any recognition that children are gifts of God and that in the rearing of children we discover the profound reasons for and **benefits** of the marriage covenant. *Ps 128:4-6 Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD . The LORD shall bless thee out of Zion: and thou shalt see the good of Jerusalem all the days of thy life. Yea, thou shalt see thy children's children, and peace upon Israel. KJV*
- e. The second fatal error involves the misunderstanding on the part of our opponents about the teaching of the Bible and Christian tradition on questions of sexual morality and the **nature** of marriage.
- f. Those who favor same-sex and polyamorous relationships fail to understand that true marriage is only possible because of the sexual **complementarity** of man and woman.
- g. Without this complementarity, the complete, mutual sharing between the partners, inclusive of the bodily unity that binds husband and wife biologically as one, would **not** be possible.
- h. This is because the body is not merely an extrinsic **instrument** of the human person, but truly part of the personal reality of the human being.
- i. Human beings are not merely centers of consciousness or emotion, or minds, or spirits, inhabiting non-personal bodies. The human person is a dynamic **unity** of spirit, soul, and body. *1 Thess 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. KJV*
- j. The third fatal error of reasoning of many, including some Christians, is that they believe the historic definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman is a denial of equality or **civil rights**.
- k. This argument fails because marriage is a religious institution, **not a right** bestowed by either God or man. Governments acknowledge this religious institution, and make laws which limit it but do not control it.
- l. Those who seek redress for this supposed denial of equality, in reality seek to **impose** upon society a forced approval for their lifestyle choices, thus rendering those who oppose them guilty of violation of their equal protection rights.
- m. The fourth fatal error of this position is that they believe that **no harm** would be done to anyone if the law were to confer upon those living together in a sexual partnership the status of being "married."
- n. On inspection however, the argument that laws governing one kind of marriage will not affect another **cannot** stand. This can be clearly seen as one extends the idea that sex = marriage to its logical limits.
- o. For example, if sex makes marriage, then anyone who has sex would be considered married regardless of **whom or what** they may choose as sexual objects.
- p. It could also then be logically asserted with equal **validity** that polygamous households, even adult brothers, sisters, or brothers and sisters living in incestuous relationships should be recognized as valid marriages.
- q. Should these, as a matter of equality or civil rights, be recognized as lawful marriages, they would have a devastating effect on the entire **concept** of marriage and the traditional institution would be effectively destroyed.

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### III. The Consequences of Redefinition

- a. The truth is that marriage is not something **abstract** or neutral that the law or those with a vested interest may legitimately define and re-define as a matter of whim and fancy.
- b. No one has a civil right to have a non-marital relationship treated as a marriage. From God's perspective, marriage is an **objective** reality. *Matt 19:6 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. KJV*
- c. The **duty** of the law is to recognize and support marriage for the sake of justice and the common good and we believe that genuine social harms follow where this duty of law fails.
- d. First, the religious liberty of those for whom this is a matter of conscience is jeopardized because traditional marriage believing pastors would be **required** to perform homosexual marriages.
- e. Second, parents who believe that non-marital sexual partnerships are immoral have their rights **abridged** when education programs in schools teach children that these are acceptable and equal relationships.
- f. Third, the common good of society is damaged when the law becomes a **tool** for eroding the understanding of marriage. A flourishing marriage culture is vitally dependent upon a proper definition of marriage.
- g. We are today far from having a thriving marriage culture. If we are to begin to rebuild such a culture, the last thing we can afford to do is to re-define marriage in such a false and **misleading way**
- h. Christians **must** take this stand because the Bible teaches us that marriage is a central part of God's creation covenant and that the union of husband and wife mirrors the bond between Christ and his church.

### IV. A Christian Response

- a. It is out of love and prudent concern for the common good that we pledge to labor ceaselessly to **preserve** the legal definition of marriage as the union of one man and one woman and to rebuild the marriage culture.
- b. Just as Christ was willing to give Himself up for the church in a complete sacrifice, we are willing to make whatever sacrifices are required of us for the sake of the keeping the **traditional** definition of marriage.
- c. Our struggle is not against homosexuality per se; they are not the enemy. **Immoral** conduct, be it heterosexual or homosexual is sin and particularly damages the culture of marriage.
- d. Our rejection of sinful conduct within and without the church, though resolute, seeks the **reconciliation** of sinners to our loving God, not the condemnation of them for their sin.
- e. To those who are so disposed, who struggle to **resist** the temptation to yield to desires that they, no less than we, regard as sinful; we stand with them, even when they falter. *Gal 6:2 Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. KJV*
- f. We, acknowledge that all are sinners who have fallen short of God's intention for our lives. We, no less than they, are in constant need of God's patience, love and **forgiveness**.
- g. For the sake of re-establishing a culture of marriage we call on the entire Christian community to **resist** sexual immorality in any form and to unite in the struggle against any attempt to redefine marriage.

### V. Application

- a. Christ calls all who err from His path of righteousness to "a more excellent way." As his disciples we will reach out in love to assist all who hear the call and wish to answer it.
- b. As importantly, we as Christians must bear witness to the sanctity of marriage by our lives as well as our words.
- c. What can we do as a church to contribute to the rebuilding of the culture of marriage in America?
- d. What can you do individually to contribute to the rebuilding of the culture of marriage in America?