



### Luther on Marriage:

Therefore [God] also wishes us to honor [marriage], and to maintain and conduct it as a divine and blessed estate; because, in the first place, He has instituted it before all others, and therefore created man and woman separately (as is evident), not for lewdness, but that they should live together, be fruitful, beget children, and nourish and train them to the honor of God.

Therefore God has also most richly blessed this estate above all others, and, in addition, has bestowed on it and wrapped up in it everything in the world, to the end that this estate might be well and richly provided for. Married life is therefore no jest or presumption; but it is an excellent thing and a matter of divine seriousness. For it is of the highest importance to Him that persons be raised who may serve the world and promote the knowledge of God, godly living, and all virtues, to fight against wickedness and the devil (Large Catechism, Sixth Commandment, 207–208).

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## Around the Word Bible Study Trinity, 2015

# Marriage & Homosexuality

### Opening: Song of Songs 2:7–14; 8:4–7

<sup>2,7</sup>I adjure you, O daughters of Je- | rusalem,\*  
by the gazelles or the does | of the field,  
**that you not stir up or a- | waken love\***  
**until it | pleases.**

<sup>8</sup>The voice of my be- | loved!\*  
Be- | hold, he comes,  
**leaping over the | mountains,\***  
**bounding o- | ver the hills.**

<sup>9</sup>My beloved is like | a gazelle\*  
or a | young stag.

**Behold, | there he stands\***  
**be- | hind our wall,**  
gazing through the | windows,\*  
looking through the | lattice.

<sup>10</sup>**My beloved speaks and | says to me:\***  
**“Arise, my love, my beautiful one,**  
**and | come away,**

<sup>11</sup>for behold, the win- | ter is past;\*  
the rain is o- | ver and gone.

<sup>12</sup>**The flowers appear | on the earth,\***  
**the time of singing | has come,**  
and the voice of the | turtle dove\*  
is heard | in our land.

<sup>13</sup>**The fig tree ripens | its figs,\***  
**and the vines are in blossom;**  
**they give forth | fragrance.**  
Arise, my love, my beau- | tiful one,\*  
and | come away.

<sup>14</sup>**O my dove, in the clefts | of the rock,\***  
**in the crannies | of the cliff,**  
let me | see your face,\*  
let me | hear your voice,  
**for your | voice is sweet,\***  
**and your face is | lovely.**

<sup>8:4</sup>I adjure you, O daughters of Je- | rusalem,\*  
that you not stir up or awaken love  
until it | pleases.

<sup>5</sup>**Who is that coming up from the |**  
**wilderness,\***  
**leaning on her be- | loved?**

Under the apple tree I awakened you.  
There your mother was in labor | with you;\*  
there she who bore you was | in labor.

<sup>6</sup>**Set me as a seal up- | on your heart,\***  
**as a seal up- | on your arm,**  
for love is | strong as death,\*  
jealousy is fierce | as the grave.

**Its flashes are flashes | of fire,\***  
**the very flame | of the LORD.**

<sup>7</sup>Many waters cannot | quench love,\*  
neither can floods | drown it.

**If a man offered | for love\***  
**all the wealth of his house,**  
**he would be utter- | ly despised.**  
**Glory be to the Father and | to the Son\***  
**and to the Holy | Spirit;**  
**as it was in the be- | ginning,\***  
**is now, and will be forever. | Amen.**

### God’s Design for Marriage: Genesis 1–2

What essential qualities did God bestow upon His human creatures? See Genesis 1:27.

What is the first and most essential task God has given to husband and wife? See verse 28. How is the nature of the relationship between Adam & Eve defined Genesis 2:24?

How does their fulfillment of this mandate reflect God’s own image to creation? Compare the first task of husband and wife in Genesis 1:28 with God’s work in Genesis 1:31.

What was God’s reason for creating woman? See Genesis 2:18, 20. Notice the word used to describe the woman’s role in these two verses (עֲזָרָה, “helper”). Of whom else is this word used, and how does this demonstrate that the role of helper does not imply inferiority? See Psalm 30:10.

### Our Lord Affirms God’s Design: Mark 10

What does our Lord say about God’s will for marriage in Mark 10:1–12? If procreation is the fruit of the marriage union, how do the following verses (Mark 10:13–16) relate to our Lord’s discussion on marriage?

### Husbands, Wives, & Christ: Ephesians 5

What is the role of the wife with respect to her husband? See Ephesians 5:22. How does what St. Paul’s says in verse 22 (“as to the Lord”) and verse 24 extol the virtue of submission?

What God-pleasing order does the apostle affirm in v. 23? How does Christ Himself provide the model of submission for wives? See Philippians 2:5–8. What command does our Lord give to His disciples in Matthew 16:24–25? If Christ's submission to the will of the Father led Him to the cross, how is the wife's role in marriage an example of cross-bearing?

What is the role of the husband with respect to his wife? See Ephesians 5:25. How does Scripture define the relationship between Jesus and the Church? See Matthew 25:1–13; Revelation 19:7; 21:2, 9; 22:17; Ephesians 5:31–32.

What is the nature of Christ's relationship with His bride? See Ephesians 5:25–27 and Acts 20:28. How, then, is the husband's role in marriage an example of cross-bearing?

**Self-Denial, Repentance, & Forgiveness**

Can husband and wife fulfill their obligations to one another? See Romans 3:10–12, 19–20. What, then, is essential to a healthy marriage? See Ephesians 4:32.

Notice how God's expectations for marriage stand in stark contrast to our culture's: He has given us marriage as a place to practice self-denial, repentance, and forgiveness. In this respect, marriage is a microcosm of the entire Christian life and a reflection of the relationship between Christ and His Bride, the Church (Ephesians 5:31–32).



**Calling Evil Good: Malachi 2**

How does God address the priests in Malachi 2:1–3? What was one of the essential tasks God gave to Aaron and the priests? See Leviticus 10:8, 11 and Ezekiel 44:23.

How is God's relationship with Levi described in Malachi 2:4–7? What problem with the priesthood is described in Malachi 2:8? Where was the teaching of the priests particularly poor? See Malachi 2:14–16.

Notice also what these verses assume about the nature of the marriage relationship; see especially v. 14 on gender, sexual fidelity, and vows; v. 15 on procreation; and v. 16 on divorce; compare also Mark 10:2–9.

Finally, how does God summarize the behavior of the corrupt priests in Malachi 2:17, and how does this relate to the question of same-sex "marriage"?

**Sexual Impurity, Judgment, & Grace**

What kindled God's wrath in Romans 1:18–23? What judgment did God pronounce these sins, according to v. 24–28? Seen in light of these verses, how might the Supreme Court's decision to legalize same-sex marriage in the United States serve as divine judgment?

What warning are we given in these verses about the danger of persisting in open, unrepentant sin? What command is given to all, regardless of sexual orientation? See Matthew 5:48.

How does God regard the contrite, regardless of sexual orientation? See Psalm 51:17. Who can and cannot be forgiven, according to Luke 18:9–14? Has our Lord ever turned away a contrite sinner, even if they were notorious? See Matthew 9:11–13 and Isaiah 42:1–3.

**The Cure for Sexual Immorality: 1 Corinthians 7**

What instructions concerning marriage does St. Paul give in 1 Corinthians 7:1–5? How might sex be abused, according to verse 5?

Who has pure sexual desires? See Matthew 5:28 and Psalm

51:5. What has God given men and women in order to restrain the temptation to sexual immorality? See 1 Corinthians 7:2.

Do the apostle's instructions in verse 4 encourage self gratification or cross bearing and self denial? Keeping in mind that everyone has impure sexual desires, how do these verses apply to someone who is attracted to members of the same sex?

What is the alternative to the lifelong union between one man and one woman in the holy estate of marriage? See 1 Corinthians 7:8–9.

**Closing: Wake, Awake, for Night is Flying** (LSB, 516)

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