

Patriarchs' Journal™

Dedicated to the restoration, support and encouragement of biblical family structure.

Volume 2
Issue 17

As Christ

by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

HUSBANDS LOVE YOUR WIVES AS ...?

Strange as it is, some dare suggest that what Paul really meant in Ephesians 5:25 was no more than

Husbands love your wives as also saith the law.

Husbands love your wives as also your neighbor [associate].

In other words, some would reduce the love of Christ in the husband to: "Don't hit her, don't starve her, don't freeze her." Really? Is that all there is to it?

If so, why did Paul bring Christ into the equation at all? If that's all there was to it, why didn't Paul just say that? Why didn't he just say what he meant?

We don't need master-teachers, skilled in the art of endless debate, somehow to explain away the simple language of this wonderful phrase of Scripture, "*Husbands, love your wives ...*" Now listen carefully to what Paul writes next:

... even as Christ also loved the ecclesia, and gave Himself for it.

These words are so simple that a young child can grasp them and their significance. It takes amazing effort to explain away their clarity.

Surely we can learn much from Eden's garden as well as the Mosaic law in relationship to marriage; but Paul unveils tremendous new ground for the husband/wife relationship: Christ!

While it is suggested that the true meaning of these words is somehow limited to a context of a few verses (:25-30), the rich meaning of this phrase is actually to be understood in the broader context, taking us back to the beginning of the chapter.

The phrase "*and gave Himself for it*" looks backwards to :2. Paul plainly tells us exactly what that "giving" of Christ's love for us was: (1) an offering, and (2) a sacrifice. The *Concordant Literal Version (CV)* translates the Greek word rendered "*offering*" in the *KJV* as "*approach present*." An approach present was a gift offered to win another's favor. It was a humble, sacrificial act to enable the giver to draw near to the recipient. An approach present was not chocolates and flowers. It represented a most significant sacrifice on the part of the giver. So, according to Paul's own context, the husband's love is to be an "*approach present*," an "*offering*" of himself to his wife.

A whole new, never-before-known love was introduced by God through His Son, and it is that kind of love that the Father now has designed to be lived through husbands: a self-sacrificing love about which

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the law simply knew nothing. Christ represents the pinnacle of love and sacrifice, and Paul dares to hold up Christ's love for the ecclesia as a model for the husband. What a glorious privilege and divine honor we husbands have been graciously granted.

ALL I WANT FROM MY WIFE

Some husbands can be heard complaining, "All I want from my wife is for her to be ... loving ... giving ... gracious ... co-operative, etc." While these are wonderful ideals, and undoubtedly we should endeavor to lead our wives on a spiritual journey that would have us grow *together* in these areas, our responsibilities as husbands are not lessened by our wives' lack in any or all of them. Loving our wives is not at all contingent on their responses.

Husbands, be loving your wives according as Christ also loves the ecclesia, and gives Himself up for its sake (Ephesians 5:25).

This is a clear, stand-alone truth. Christ's love and giving up of Himself for us was in no way contingent on our own level of love, grace or co-operation: it was unmerited. This is Paul's point regarding our role with our wives. No one in the Old Testament ever could have known such a remarkable truth as this – because they never could have imagined the extent of selfless love outpoured at Calvary.

Will we ever "get" what we long for from our wives? Perhaps to some degree, but that is beside the point. Husbands have a higher calling than merely to "receive": they are called to selfless "giving." Some husbands are busy stressing to their wives the word "subject" ("submit") in Ephesians 5:22, all the while avoiding the "gives" in :25. Husbands who consume themselves with their wives' shortcomings are usually the same ones who fail to look in the mirror to see their own. To adapt our Savior's words,

Why do you notice the splinter in your wife's eye

Patriarchs' Journal™

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Patriarchs' Journal is a periodical dedicated to the definition, defense, support and encouragement of the God-ordained family as an autonomous, sovereign entity that existed before civil governments and religious organizations, and is independent of their approval and direction.

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We seek to bring as many voices from as many backgrounds as possible to this periodical. Many are scripturally based; others find their context in the social, legal, historical and scientific arenas. Because of the diversity, you will likely not agree with everything you read. Frankly, we do not ask that of you. In fact, your editorial staff does not agree with everything placed within these columns at times. We are simply presenting things that, we trust, will be supportive and edifying in their overall scope.

We will attempt to take an honest, fresh look at the subject of the family from a Biblical perspective, and to recover truth that has too long remained hidden under the veils of traditionalism, prejudice, misunderstanding, and fear (Mark 7:7, 13). Readers are encouraged to be as the Bereans and search the Scriptures (Acts 17:10-11; I Thessalonians 5:21). This publication is not intended to provide personal or legal advice.

Minor changes to punctuation and grammar may have been made to articles for better reading.

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and fail to see the plank in your own eye? How dare you say to your wife, "Let me take out the splinter that is in your eye," and you never notice the plank in your own eye? What a hypocrite! Take the plank out of your own eye first, and then you will see properly to take out the splinter in your wife's eye (cf. Matthew 7:3-5),

Husbands' standard excuse for not doing what God has called them to do is to follow Adam in shifting the blame to our wives. It is always somebody else's fault. If our wives were just somehow different, we would love them more and give up ourselves for them. We as husbands must be done with our selfish victim mentality. God is behind all of our circumstances, including our marital ones, and all that we are going through is for our good.

The husband's sacrificial love and giving to his wife are not merely petty matters; they are principles on which the divine structure of the universe is founded. The sooner we learn these grand truths, the further along we will be in our spiritual development. We will review the lessons of these divine principles over and over until Christ is formed in us. This life is the training and preparation for our celestial calling and responsibilities. Don't waste its priceless lessons. Make the most of them. We will be thankful for every lesson learned at the appearing of Christ – and make no mistake about it: there will be a great surprise waiting for us, for many of those who have appeared to be great spiritual teachers and leaders here in this life will be dwarfed by those whom Father has privately taught the principles of divine love and self-sacrifice.

Yet now are remaining faith, expectation, love – these three. Yet the greatest of these is LOVE (I Corinthians 13:13).

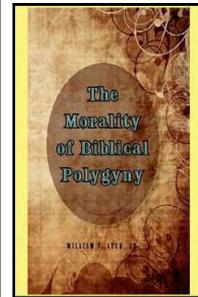
One may excel greatly in faith and hope, but Paul clearly tells us that without love we are "*nothing*" (:2), and ALL of our other efforts, no matter how noble they may appear to others, benefit "*nothing*" (:3). *Faith, hope and love:* having only the first two out of the three leaves us destitute. Love is faith's and expectation's superior. As husbands, let's learn well the lessons of Christ's love. Let's not come up empty at His appearing.

HELP OF A DIFFERENT KIND

I will make him an help meet for him (Genesis 2:18).

Make for him will I a helper as his complement (CV).

Sometimes a husband can be discouraged in his ministry by what he considers to be his "inadequate wife." "After all," he laments, "She doesn't qualify as a helper." Perhaps this is true. In some cases this situation results from the man having acted rashly and not taken the time to note this deficiency prior to his taking on the responsibilities of a covenant of marriage. Other men may contend that she has become unhelpful since the covenant was established; but are they not then suggesting that their wife somehow has



The Morality of Biblical Polygyny

by — William F. Luck, Sr.

28 pages, PB. \$5

This is an amazing, courageous, contemporary work. William Luck is the son of Moody Bible Institute's Dr. G. Coleman Luck, Sr, Chairman of the Department of Theology, and a capable biblical scholar in his own right.

"God didn't ask me my opinion about the issue. He expected me to represent His. I've tried. If you can prove I'm mistaken, I'll be the first to thank you. But I'm not holding my breath in the meanwhile." – the Author, from the Introduction

"To date [over twenty years after its original publication], I find the arguments 'pro' quite superior to those 'con.'" – the Author, from the Conclusion

- The Background
- Laws That Imply the Moral Propriety of Polygyny
- Passages That Appear To Prohibit Polygyny
- The Association of Polygyny with Other Evils
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(see order form on back page)



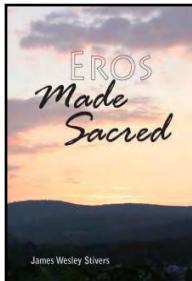
become unhelpful while under their husbandly ministry of nurture and loving care?

The reality of the divine method is that even an apparently “unhelpful” wife is indeed of great assistance to her husband. As hard as it is in the middle of our greatest trials, we must never forget that our “affliction” is divinely “working for us” (II Corinthians 4:17), or as the CV says, “*is producing for us a transcendently transcendent eonian burden of glory.*” When faith grasps this, husbands will, with Paul, be able to “*be glorying also in afflictions*” (Romans 5:3).

Glorying in our afflictions is a lesson we must learn repeatedly, and there is no better place to learn it than in the home.

CHOOSING THE “RIGHT” WIFE, OR BEING THE RIGHT HUSBAND?

Sometimes a husband may grumble about his “choice” of a wife. He’ll speak of her incompatibility, her lack of interest in mutual things, her indifference to spiritual matters, her brokenness, her deficiency of physical appeal, etc.



**Eros Made Sacred: or
The Biblical Case Made for Polygamy**
by — James Wesley Stivers
(originally published in 1991)
74 pages, PB. \$13

This book presents a clear biblical justification for polygamous marriage as sanctioned by the Holy Scriptures. The issue of polygamy is used to contrast current moral biases with those found in the Bible. First published more than 15 years ago, this thoughtful work has gone unrefuted. Provocative, instructional, challenging, edifying. The book chapters are:

- Polygamy: A Biblical Custom
- Objections Answered; In Favor of Polygamy
- The Ministry of the Patriarch
- Polygamy as a Tool of Christian Dominion
- Feminism, Monogamy and Witchcraft

(see order form on back page)

Interestingly, in Old Testament times marriages were commonly arranged. Although we do not necessarily promote a return to its practice, that does not mean that it was without any merit. One interesting thing that it and the levirate law (where a man was required to marry his brother’s widow) do is that they demonstrate that a man can love and care for a woman – *any woman* – even one they did not choose for themselves. The bottom line is that marriage is not so much about “choosing” the “right” wife, as it is about being the right husband.

Paul did not write:

Husbands love your ideal wives

Husbands love your loving wives

Husbands love your helpful wives

Husbands love your Proverbs 31 wives

Husbands love your non-deficient wives

Husbands love your uncomplicated wives

Husbands love your unbroken wives

Husbands love your compatible wives

Husbands love your submissive wives

Husbands love your spiritual wives

Husbands love your believing wives

Husbands love your attractive wives

Husbands love your supermodel wives

Husbands love your sexy wives

No, without any qualification whatsoever, Paul simply wrote:

Husbands love your wives ...





WIFE PLEASING

He who is married cares for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife (I Corinthians 7:33).

Wow, did Paul really say that? When was the last time you heard *wife pleasing* taught?

One reason that this important principle is often overlooked is that these words are frequently seen in a negative light; but Paul does not write these words disparagingly, as if *wife pleasing* were somehow dishonorable. He simply states them as a straightforward fact.

Paul presents “wife pleasing” as an argument for singleness (in reality or practice) based *only* on two contextual criteria:

the present distress (:26);

time is short (:29).

Both of these statements were the current context of Corinth in approximately 57 A.D. Neither of these statements were even in consideration 5-10 years after Paul wrote them; and neither are they considerations in the context of our day.¹

Gnostic influence, not the teachings of Paul, produces a disparaging look at things pertaining to this life – including *wife pleasing*. “*The things that are of the world*” are viewed as tainted and evil, and wife pleasing as a result is seen as “unspiritual.” This ancient error, adopted and advanced by Roman Catholicism, suggests that one should approach marriage half-heartedly, as some necessary evil; that somehow the husband – who regrettably missed the superior state of singlehood – should now actually treat his wife as if she and he were both single. This of course is contrary to Paul’s later revelation and encouragement in the details of earthly things:

Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men (Colossians 3:23).

All, whatsoever you may be doing, work from the soul, as to the Lord and not to men (CV).

It is also contrary to Paul’s great emphasis on attention to domestic duties:

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church [ecclesia], and gave Himself for it (Ephesians 5:25).

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord (Ephesians 5:22).

I will therefore that the younger women marry, bear children, guide the house ... (I Timothy 5:14).



Bible Polygamy

Biblepolygamy.com features the straightforward teaching ministry of Brian Kelson. Here is a sampling of many topics found:

- Why teach the truth of Polygamy?
- Why is truth suppressed?
- Polygamist men and women in the Bible
- Early church and Martin Luther
- By the power vested in me?
- Fear & Hypocrisy

When the apostle Paul wrote to the Galatians he had been painted in a negative light by those opposing him. His apostleship had been put in question, his gospel had been ridiculed and his person had been defamed.

Paul’s vigorous appeal to his friends was ultimately ignored and in his last letter to Timothy we read that “all in Asia had turned away from him.” ... This very Paul warned that in the last days, sound doctrine would not be endured and Christians would ever learn but never acknowledge the truth.

Many attempts will be made to discolor the truth of polygamy, but this site appeals to all readers to examine the Word of God against popular theology.

1. For more on this subject, see the author’s article, “The Current era is Limitless” (*Bible Student’s Notebook*, #488).



For Paul, it is the details of ideal family life that are a prerequisite to taking care of the ecclesia (“*controlling his own household ideally*” I Timothy 3:4, CV), for “*if anyone is not aware how to control his own household, how will he care for the ecclesia of God?*” (:5). Even the offering of service to the ecclesia is based first on ideal household service from which one is “*procuring for themselves an ideal rank ... in the faith*” (:12-13).

A husband who erroneously attempts to conduct his life as though he had no wife most likely will find himself *actually* not having a wife!

THE SIN OF HUSBANDS: BITTERNESS

Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them (Colossians 3:19).

Divine revelation alerts husbands to their natural hindrance to loving their wives: bitterness. Bitterness is defined as,

anger and disappointment at being treated unfairly; resentment²

2. Oxford Dictionary.



The Great Omission:
Christendom's Abandonment
of the Biblical Family
by — Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.
204 pages, PB. \$15

This book presents twenty years of study, taking a candid look at the issue of multiple wives in Scripture and society. The book chapters are:

- The Problem: The Sad, Ignored Epidemic
- The Divine Provision
- The Marital Gift
- The Old Testament Scriptural Precedent
- The New Testament Scriptural Precedent
- The Religious System's Destruction of the Biblical Family
- The History of Its Practice
- The Cultural Issue
- The Benefits of Plural Marriage
- Who Is Immoral?

This book also has 14 appendices.
(see order form on back page)

a feeling of anger and unhappiness.³

Some husbands tell us that they can't help the negative feelings that they have toward their wives. A husband may say that he can't “help” having these feelings, but certainly one can “help” what is done about them. Negative “feelings” of bitterness or otherwise can't be used as an excuse. Feelings are fickle. Feelings aren't trustworthy. Feelings should never *lead* our way. Feelings are great servants, but dangerous masters. We must not allow ourselves to be dominated by our feelings.

Adam Clarke (1760-1832) wrote concerning this passage,

Wherever bitterness is, there love is lacking. And where love is lacking in the married life, there is hell upon earth.⁴

Jamieson, Fausset and Brown remind us that,

Many who are polite abroad, are rude and bitter at home.⁵

The divine, Pauline instruction, followed immediately after the directive to love our wives, is to “*be not bitter against them*.” A.T. Robertson (1863-1934) tells us plainly that, “This [bitterness] is the sin of husbands,” and that it is in the “present middle imperative in prohibition: ‘Stop being bitter.’”⁶

Christ's love was willingly self-sacrificial; yet, as husbands, is ours resentful? Does Christ resent the ecclesia for all that it puts Him through? Is He ever bitter and angry toward us for all of His personal labors and loss – sacrificed for us?

Negative feelings toward our wives should be for us an immediate indication of the hardness of our own hearts. We must ever look to the Savior for correction and encouragement of such sinful attitudes.

JUST SHORT OF FULFILLMENT

For the creature was made subject to vanity, not

3. Cambridge Dictionary.

4. Adam Clarke Commentary, 1832.

5. Commentary, 1871.

6. Word Pictures of the New Testament, 1927.





willingly, but by reason of Him Who has subjected the same in hope (Romans 8:20).

For to vanity was the creation subjected, not voluntarily, but because of Him Who subjects it, in expectation (CV).

Husbands often are discouraged because they live just short of fulfillment. As a husband, do you keenly sense that something is missing? That something is lacking? That satisfaction is elusive?

According to Romans 8:20, God has *subjected* you, as well as the rest of His creation, to *vanity*, making you unfulfilled, unsatisfied, disappointed, disheartened, discouraged, frustrated, irritated, empty and hollow. Are you not deeply aware of this state of subjection?

Looking at the definition of our English word “*vanity*,” reading it slowly, ask yourself, “Does this definition sound a little too familiar?” “Do these words seem a little like my own life?”

emptiness; lack of substance to satisfy desire ... fruitless desire or endeavor; trifling labor that produces no good ... empty pleasure; vain pursuit; idle show; unsubstantial enjoyment.⁷

The Greek word ματαιότης (*mataiotēs*) rendered “*vanity*” is defined as,

emptiness;⁸

seeking without finding.⁹

Do these words also resonate somewhere deep within you? Have you long sought for something which would make everything settled and right in your marriage? Has the complete contentment for which you have always sought seemingly lurked just outside of your reach?

“If I could just ...”

“If she would just ...”

“... then things would be different and I would be complete.”

To contemplate more thoroughly what God has truly subjected us to, thoughtfully consider the way “*vanity*” in Romans 8:20 is translated in the follow versions:

*aimless frustration;*¹⁰

*spoil;*¹¹

*imperfection;*¹²

*folly;*¹³

*failure and unreality;*¹⁴

*futility;*¹⁵

*weakness;*¹⁶

*limitation;*¹⁷

10. *An Understandable Version.*

11. *Bible in Worldwide English.*

12. *Montgomery New Testament.*

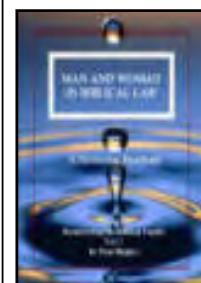
13. *The Riverside New Testament.*

14. *Weymouth New Testament.*

15. *Moffatt New Testament.*

16. *New Life Study Testament.*

17. *Phillips New Testament.*



Man and Woman in Biblical Law

by — Tom Shipley

268 pages, PB. \$30

The goal of this book is to lay the foundation for the establishment of a truly biblical social order, especially within the community of Bible-believing, Christ-honoring families. The subject matter is patriarchy. The biblical exposition contained herein is devoted to establishing the proposition that it is patriarchy which was and is mandated by God ever since the original creation of man and woman. The scriptural discussion on polygamy here serves as a supporting role to the fundamental proposition of God-ordained and mandated patriarchy.

(see order form on back page)

7. Noah Webster, *American Dictionary of the English Language*, 1828.

8. James Strong, *Strong's Greek Dictionary*, #G3153.

9. E.W. Bullinger, *A Critical Lexicon and Concordance to the English and Greek New Testament*.



 *The process and completion of the creative work, which includes redemption, is as much of God as its inception. – A.P. Adams dissolution.¹⁸*

are competent of ourselves, to reckon anything as of ourselves, but our competency is of God.

Do these words echo in some empty recess of your heart? Plainly, we were created *deficient in ourselves* so that we would need to find our *sufficiency outside of ourselves*. Yet, we look in the wrong places when we ultimately seek our sufficiency *anywhere* other than in God.

Paul, in light of the ministry committed to him, was acutely aware of his own deficiency:

Who is sufficient for these things? ... Not that we are sufficient of ourselves, to think anything as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is from God” (II Corinthians 2:16; 3:5).

Our constant unsettled state and insatiable inner longings, our elusive, nagging lack of complete fulfillment, are but gentle, though sometimes not so gentle, reminders of our need of *Him*.

We’re *all* broken – every last one of us – this means husbands as well as wives. It’s God’s design for our earthly lives. He keeps us ever deficient so that He may teach us our supreme sufficiency *in Him*. This is a keystone truth, a lifelong lesson: He *alone* is our sufficiency.

DEFICIENT AS A HUSBAND

Will we as husbands ever love and lead our wives as fully as we should? Of course not, for even at our best we fall endlessly short. The truths of Romans 8:20 also speak of our being subjected to incompetency, ineptness, weakness, feebleness and failing.

The Greek word for “*vanity*” is also defined as:

inutility;¹⁹

frailty, lack of vigor.²⁰

The *Concordant Version* translates II Corinthians 2:16 and 3:5 using the word “*competent*” as antithetical to “*vanity*”

And for this who is competent? ... Not that we

18. [i.e., putrefaction] Original New Testament.

19. James Strong, Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance.

20. Joseph Thayer, Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament.

As with our deficiency, our weakness and failures are likewise reminders of our own need of God. He keeps us ever *incompetent* so that He may teach us His supreme competency. This, too, is a foundational truth, one that takes a lifetime to learn. He alone is our competency.

Remember these words the next time you struggle with dissatisfaction and inability:

not willingly (Romans 8:20);

not voluntarily (CV, Dabhar);

not by choice (Rotherham).

Your incompetency and your deficiency as a husband are not particularly your fault. You didn’t sign up for this lack. You didn’t ask for it. It is simply part of God’s current design for you – all for your greater good and that of your wife and family. One day, after our terrestrial education has passed and our immortality is effected by resurrection, all of this vanity will be gloriously corrected. For now, it’s in our incompetency that we find competency, and it’s in our deficiency that we find sufficiency – because in the end it is designed to lead us to Him.

Well did Paul learn from God,

“My grace is sufficient for you: for My strength is made perfect in your weakness.” Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me (II Corinthians 12:9). 

(Excerpted from his book, *Wife Loving*.)



Clyde has been an active Bible student and teacher for 40 years, and has 19 published books. He resides in Windber, PA enjoying the greatest roles of his life: husband, father, and grandfather.





Polygamy

by — B.L. Cocherell

The vast majority of professing Christians today believes that the Bible teaches that monogamy is the only acceptable form of marriage and that polygamy violates God's law concerning marriage. But is this what the Bible teaches, or is this just a popular cultural opinion?

Within both secular and biblical history, and up to this present day and age, we find people entering into both monogamous and polygamous marriages for reasons of economics, cultural and social requirements, political alliances, procreation, sexual lust and true love.

It is not the intent of this study to compare the merits of a monogamous or a polygamous marital relationship. This study is meant to clarify the legality of polygamy from the biblical perspective and answer some conceptual questions about the polygamous marital relationship.

Is Polygamy a Sin?

In order to determine if polygamy is a sin from the biblical perspective, one must first know what sin is and is not. Notice how sin is defined in the Bible:

Whosoever commits sin transgresses also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law (I John 3:4, KJV).

All unrighteousness is sin (I John 5:17 Paraphrased.).

Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Blessed is the one not condemning himself in what he approves. But the one doubting, if he eats, he has been condemned, because it is not of faith – and all that is not of faith is sin (Romans 14:22-23, Paraphrased).

Therefore, to anyone knowing to do good, and not doing it, it is sin to him (James 4:17, Paraphrased).

What Is Sin?

Sin is the violation of the physical and spiritual law of God – sin is lawlessness. Sin is any deviation from God's righteous laws, precepts and principles that define how people should live and worship God.

The law reveals the standard of behavior with which all must comply, and its perfect system of justice demands the execution of all lawbreakers (Romans 3:20; 6:23). The law only determines guilt or innocence; it does not have the ability to restore harmony between God and humanity.

The law of God is perfect. Its precepts, principles and value judgments are empirical and do not depend upon human validation.

No Law, No Sin

In his letter to the saints at Rome, the apostle Paul explained,

Sin is not imputed when there is no law (Romans 5:1213, KJV).

Is there a law in the Bible that prohibits polygamy? No. There is no such law found in the Bible; and where polygamous relationships are noted, there is nothing negative said about this form of marriage. However, there are many laws noted in Scripture that regulate the polygamous marriage, and there are also many Scriptures that clearly show that polygamy does not violate God's law.

Polygamy Is Not Adultery

Lawful polygamy is not adultery; it is a material relationship which is sanctioned and governed by God's law. Adultery is the result of a husband or a wife breaking the marriage contract. Adultery is an illegal relationship with someone other than the person to whom one is married. According to the letter of the law, polyg-

amy is not adultery because there is a marriage agreement in place between the husband and each wife.

Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge (Hebrews 13:4).

POLYGAMY PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

In order to show the validity of polygamous marriages for the elect of God under the gospel age agreement, it is necessary to review what the Bible says about its practice before the advent of Christ, during the early church era, and after Christ returns.

Polygamy in the Old Testament

In the Old Testament there are dozens of examples of men marrying and being married to more than one wife at a time. The patriarchs Abraham and Jacob are examples of righteous men who had several wives in order to father male heirs.

Abraham's Wives

Abraham had two wives and one concubine Keturah

who later became his wife after Sarah died (Genesis 25:1; I Chronicles 1:32). Sarah, his first wife, gave her servant Hagar to him as a wife to bear his children (Genesis 16:14).

It is important at this point to understand that, in ancient times, when a man had more than one wife or wives and concubines, these wives and concubines were segregated by position and authority within the husband's family. The first wife held the highest position and it was to her first-born son that the husband's inheritance was given. The husband's concubines were true wives, but subordinate to the first wife.

Although it is difficult for some people to accept the premise that one person can own another person as property, this is nevertheless a fact of history and a perfectly legal biblical concept which has its own set of rules that must be followed concerning the treatment of such individuals. Sarah had the legal right to give her servant Hagar to her husband as a wife to bear his children, because her servant was her property to manage as she saw fit (see Genesis 16:1-16).

Although the child born to Sarah's servant was not

THE FELLOWSHIP INN

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her genetic offspring, the child was in fact legally hers. Moreover, the child would have received an inheritance as the first-born son if Sarah had not given birth to Isaac.

Jacob's Wives

Jacob, whom God named Israel, had four wives. His first two wives were Leah and Rachel who were sisters. Leah gave Jacob her servant Zilpah to be his wife and bear his children. His second wife Rachel gave Jacob her servant Bilhah to bear his children. From these four wives, the twelve patriarchs of the twelve tribes of national Israel were born. See Genesis 30:1-10; 35:23-27.

Here we see a situation similar to that of Abraham and Sarah: Leah and Rachael owned female servants whom they gave to their husband Jacob as wives for the purpose of bearing children.

Gideon's Wives

Gideon, who judged Israel for many years and obeyed God's instruction to lead Israel out from under the oppression of the Midianites, had many wives and at least one concubine:

Gideon had seventy sons which he fathered: for he had many wives. And his concubine that lived in Shechem also bare him a son, whom he called Abimelech (Judges 8:3031).

A Warning about Kings and Wives

God knew that, after entering the Promised Land, the Israelites would want to imitate the nations around them and be governed by a king. So before the Israelites entered into the Promised Land, they were given specific instructions about the placing of a king over them (Deuteronomy 17:14-19). One of these instructions prohibited such a king from having many wives. Some believe that this instruction prohibited polygamy; however, this instruction was a preventive measure to keep the king from being adversely influenced by his many wives:

Neither shall he multiply wives to himself, that his heart turn not away (Deuteronomy 17:17).

Israel Wanted a King

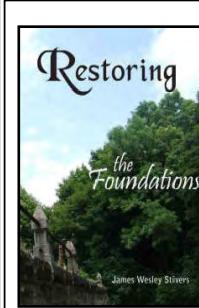
Just as God expected, Israel rebelled against Him and the system of priests and judges that He had established to govern them and wanted to be governed by a king, so God chose Saul to rule over them.

King Saul had many wives and at least one concubine named Rizpah (II Samuel 3:7; 21:11). When Saul died and David assumed rule over Israel, he took the former wives of Saul and added them to the wives he already had (II Samuel 12:8). But apparently the number of wives that David had was not excessive. God said of king David, who was a polygamist, that David had a perfect heart (attitude) before him, which means that David was in harmony with God's law (see also I Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22).

Solomon's Wives

King Solomon is an example of a man who allowed his wives to influence him into turning from God (see I Kings 11:1-8).

But king Solomon loved many strange women, together with the daughter of Pharaoh, women of the Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites; Of the nations concerning which the Lord said to the children of Israel, You shall not go in to them, neither shall they come in to you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods: Solomon clung to these in love. And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines: and his wives turned away his heart. For it came to pass, when



Restoring the Foundations: Essays in Relational Theology

by — James Wesley Stivers
(originally published in 1995)
94 pages, PB. \$13

A companion book to *Eros Made Sacred*, this is a study of the Christian Man's relation to God, woman, his children, his firstborn, social order, etc.

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Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods: and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father (I Kings 11:14).

Notice that Solomon was not criticized or condemned for having hundreds of wives and concubines; he was criticized and condemned because of the kinds of wives he chose, his departure from God, and his idolatry and worship of false gods.

Polygamy and the Early Church

There is very little mention of polygamy in the New Testament, but there are a number of teachings and clarifications that can be of assistance to a polygamist.

Avoid Fornication

Some people view Paul's instruction to the Corinthians concerning the avoidance of fornication as proof that only monogamous marital relationships are sanctioned for the elect:

Now concerning the things that you wrote to me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband (I Corinthians 7:12).

When Paul's letters to the Corinthians are studied, it is clear that there were major problems concern-

ing marital relationships, adultery, promiscuity and incest within the congregation. Here Paul is addressing the problem of sexual urges and promiscuity. He is merely saying that, in order to avoid these sexual pressures, men and women should enter into a marital relationship.

FORBIDDEN SEXUAL RELATIONS

There are a number of laws set forth in both the Torah and the New Testament that deal with the issue of incest and monogamous and polygamous marriages. Although these laws may seem archaic to some people, they are principles that must be practiced in order to receive the blessings promised through them.

In Leviticus chapters 18 and 20, there is a long list of prohibited sexual relationships, all of which apply to monogamous and/or polygamous marital relationships.

Leviticus 18 begins with the Creator God reminding the Israelites of His Sovereignty over them, and He instructs them not to practice the ways of the Egyptians or the people of Canaan. Because the Creator promises life (salvation) to those who practice His law, it is clear that the laws prohibiting adultery, incest and promiscuity still apply today.

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, "Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them, 'I am the Lord your God. After the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do: and



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after the doings of the land of Canaan, where I bring you, you shall not do: neither shall you walk in their ordinances. You shall do My judgments, and keep My ordinances, to walk therein: I am the Lord your God. Therefore, you shall keep My statutes, and My judgments: which if a person practices, he shall live in them: I am the Lord” (Leviticus 18:1-5).

Forbidden Behavior

The original language of the following verse leaves no doubt that the Creator is giving very specific instructions prohibiting adulterous, incestuous and/or promiscuous behavior with close relatives:

None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nudity: I am the Lord (Leviticus 18:6).

The English word *uncover* in :6 is translated from the Hebrew word *galah*, which means *to denude* (especially in a disgraceful sense). From the context of :6 it is clear that the Hebrew word *galah* is being used to describe prohibited sexual relations between close relatives.

Within the following verses there are references to a person's biological relatives, relatives one step removed (e.g. a half-sister), and relatives through marriage (e.g. stepsister, aunt, uncle, mother-in-law).

Father, Mother, and Wife

You shall not uncover the nudity of your father, or the nudity of your mother, she is your mother; You shall not uncover her nudity. You shall not uncover the nudity of your father's wife: it is your father's nudity (Leviticus 18:7-8).

There are three individuals noted in :7-8 with whom you are not to have sexual relations: Your father, your mother and your father's wife.

The English word *mother* in :7 is translated from the Hebrew word *em*, which in this context means a mother, whereas the English word *wife* in :8 is translated from the Hebrew word *ishshah*, which means a woman.

The Hebrew words *em* and *ishshah* make a clear distinction between the mother and the wife, thereby indicating that the one spoken of as the wife is not the mother, but is another woman (*i.e.*, wife). This wife could be the father's only wife who is not a person's mother or one of the father's wives who is not a person's mother.

The willful violation of this law by both individuals required that the death penalty be administered to both of them:

Cursed be he that lies with his father's wife [ishshah]; because he uncovers his father's skirt. And all the people shall say, "Amen" (Deuteronomy 27:20).

The man that lies with his father's wife [ishshah] has uncovered his father's nakedness: both of them shall surely be put to death; their blood shall be upon them (Leviticus 20:11).

It Is Your Father's Nudity

Verse 8 tells us that if a person has sexual relations with their Father's wife (not the person's mother) it is the same as having a sexual relation with their own Father. This is because the father and his wife are as one flesh (Genesis 2:2; Matthew 19:5). Therefore, a sexual relation with the wife is the same as a sexual relation with the husband.

The Sister and the Daughter

The nudity of your sister, the daughter of your father, or the daughter of your mother, whether she be born at home, or born abroad, even their nudity you shall not uncover (Leviticus 18:9).

Verse 9 clearly prohibits a sexual relationship with a person's biological sister or half-sister.

It is important to remember that, when a man and a woman marry, they become as one flesh (Genesis 2:2; Matthew 19:5). The person prohibited from sexual relations in :9 is the child of the father and the mother; therefore, this person is genetically linked to the daughters of both parents whether they are a biological sister, or a half-sister.





Deuteronomy 27:22 states,

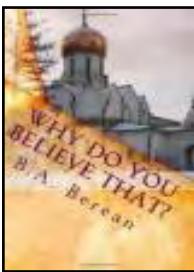
Cursed be he that lies with his sister, the daughter of his father, or the daughter of his mother. And all the people shall say, Amen.

A Sister

The nudity of your father's wife's daughter, begotten of your father, she is your sister, you shall not uncover her nudity (Leviticus 18:11).

Because the English word *wife* in :11 is translated from the Hebrew word *ishshah* (woman), this seems to be a prohibition of a sexual relationship with a person's half-sister.

If a man shall take his sister, his father's daughter, or his mother's daughter, and see her nudity, and she see his nudity; it is a wicked thing; and they shall be cut off in the sight of their people:



Why Do You Believe That?

by — B.A. Berean.
148 pages, Paperback

This well written, easy to read book is designed to provoke the reader lovingly to examine why they believe what they believe, while at the same time encouraging and equipping readers to study the Scriptures for themselves. Hold on tight, as aim is taken at a couple of the most sacred cows in the church today: traditional marriage and monogamy. It is done in an effort to help you see that what you've been told the Bible "says" may not actually be what the Bible teaches. Hailed by some advocates of polygamy, plural marriage, polygyny, etc. as the best "under the radar" educational tool available to introduce the masses to Biblical marriage and the options it provides beyond those presented in religious tradition. If you are pro-polygamy, part of the biblical families movement, or simply a truth seeker, you will enjoy reading this insightful book. The Bible study helps presented within these pages are well worth the price of admission. You will want to read it again and again and share it with others.

(discontinued)

he has uncovered his sister's nudity; he shall bear his iniquity (Leviticus 20:17).

This law prohibits a man from having sexual relations with a biological sister or a half-sister from either his father or his mother. This law also applies to marital relationships, whether monogamous or polygamous. The English phrase *cut off* is translated from the Hebrew word *karath*, which is a primitive root meaning *to cut off, down or asunder*, and by implication it means to *destroy or consume*. Moreover, it seems that, in the context of :17, the death penalty is to be applied to individuals participating in these forbidden sexual relationships.

Two Sisters

A man cannot be married concurrently to women who are sisters.¹

Neither shall you take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nudity, beside the other in her life time (Leviticus 18:18).

Prior to the laws given to national Israel, marriage between a man and sisters was not prohibited. Jacob married Leah and Rachel who were sisters. However, after the nation of Israel was formed, this type of marital relationship was prohibited. We are not told the reason for this prohibition, but perhaps it was to mitigate strife and competition between siblings within a family unit.

A Sister-in-Law

You shall not uncover the nudity of your brother's wife: it is your brother's nudity (Leviticus 18:16).

1. [Editor:] An alternate view of this subject is that the prohibition is not merely against taking "a wife to her sister;" but to do so specifically so as "to vex her."

The phrase 'to vex her' is considered to be other than superfluous. There would be no reason to include it in the biblical text if it didn't add meaning. Given that all punctuation has been inserted by translators, my understanding of this prohibition is that it does not categorically prohibit a man marrying sisters. It prohibits a man marrying his wife's sister for the purpose of vexing her.

The author's speculation is found to be along the lines of the perhaps most common justification for prohibiting polygamy altogether: that it will create strife. All relationships create strife unless those individuals involved maintain an active commitment to prevent strife, because it is never otherwise the case that two people will want the exact same thing. Thus, there will be strife over sibling rivalry or competing intentions, but only if we let it become strife.



Leviticus 20 tells us that the punishment for the willful violation of this law is that the couple remain childless. Of course if the brother is dead the women is free to marry again, because the death of either spouse nullifies the marital agreement.

If a man shall take his brother's wife, it is an unclean thing: he has uncovered his brother's nakedness; they shall be childless (Leviticus 20:21).

How the required punishment for the violation of this law was administered is lost in antiquity; however, in the Talmud Mas. Yevamoth 55a there is a lengthy discussion that basically says that, if the offending parties had children prior to the violation, the violators would see these children die during their lifetime, and if they did not have children prior to their violation their union would not produce children.

A Granddaughter

The nudity of your son's daughter, or of your daughter's daughter, even their nudity you shall not uncover: for theirs is your own nudity (Leviticus 18:10).

Verse 10 prohibits a person from having sexual relations with a granddaughter.

A Biological Aunt

You shall not uncover the nudity of your father's sister: she is your father's near kinswoman. You shall not uncover the nudity of your mother's

sister: for she is your mother's near kinswoman (Leviticus 18:12-13).

Verses 12-13 prohibit sexual relationships with a person's aunt. Leviticus 20 tells us that the willful violation of this law requires punishment:

You shall not uncover the nakedness of your mother's sister, nor of your father's sister: for he uncovers his near kin: they shall bear their iniquity [i.e., their consequence or their punishment] (Leviticus 20:19).

An Uncle's Wife

You shall not uncover the nudity of your father's brother, you shall not approach to his wife: she is your aunt (Leviticus 18:14).

The law prohibits a sexual relationship with a person's biological aunt by marriage and equates such a sexual relationship the same as a sexual relation with the uncle. Leviticus 20 tells us that the punishment for willful violation of this law is that the couple will die childless:

If a man shall lie with his uncle's wife, he has uncovered his uncle's nakedness: they shall bear their sin; they shall die childless (Leviticus 20:20).²

2. See Talmud Mas. Yevamoth 55a for an explanation of the administration of punishment for violating this law.

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A Daughter-in-Law

You shall not uncover the nudity of your daughter-in-law: she is your son's wife; you shall not uncover her nudity (Leviticus 18:15).

The willful violation of this law by both individuals required that the death penalty be administered to both of them as noted in Leviticus 20:

If a man lie with his daughter in law, both of them shall surely be put to death: they have wrought confusion; their blood shall be upon them (Leviticus 20:12).

Three Generations

You shall not uncover the nudity of a woman and her daughter, neither shall you take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nudity; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness (Leviticus 18:17).

The English word *take* in :17 is translated from the Hebrew word *laqach*, a root word that can mean *to take* (in the widest variety of applications). For example, *to receive, to acquire, to buy, to bring, to marry and to take a wife*.

Of all of the prohibitions listed thus far, this prohibition most closely points to a restriction dealing with a polygamous marriage, because it seems to prohibit concurrent sexual relations with three generations of women of the same family line, (*i.e.*, mother, daughter, granddaughter).

Two Wives and the First-born Son

If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son is hers that was hated (Deuteronomy 21:15).

The English word *two* in :15 is translated from the Hebrew word *shenayim*, which means *two or twofold*. The English word *wives* in :15 is translated from the Hebrew word *ishshah*, which in this context means a *woman* (opposite of a man) or a *wife* (woman married to a man).

The two Hebrew words *shenayim* and *ishshah* document that the practice of polygamy was a legal form of marriage at the very beginning of Israel as a nation. Verses 16-17 address the inheritance issue concerning the husband's first-born son of the wife that he hates:

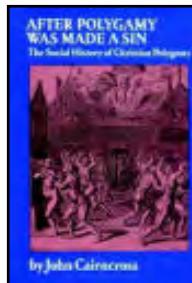
Then it shall be, when he makes his sons to inherit that which he has, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he has: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his (Deuteronomy 21:16-17).

There is no condemnation of a polygamous marriage in this law. The law just clarifies the issue concerning the inheritance to be given to a first-born son.

A Wife and Her Mother

If a man take a wife and her mother, it is wickedness: they shall be burnt with fire, both he and they; that there be no wickedness among you (Leviticus 20:14).

This law prohibits a man taking a woman and her mother as wives. Violation of this law required that the man and both women be executed by fire.



After Polygamy Was Made a Sin

The Social History of Christian Polygamy

by — John Cairncross

260 pp., PB. \$30

Cairncross contends in this fascinating historical analysis that it was when the Church became centered in Rome that "polygamy" became a "sin." Based on rigorous research he demonstrates however that there is a strong underground polygamous Christian tradition, including support from such prominent figures as Milton, Newton, Spinoza and others.

(see order form on back page)



Deuteronomy 2:23 says,

*Cursed be he that lies with his mother-in-law.
And all the people shall say, "Amen."*

SPIRITUAL LEADERS

While polygamy is not forbidden or condemned in the teachings of the New Testament, there are instructions which prohibit the spiritual leadership of congregations from having more than one wife.³

The following are the apostle Paul's instructions to Timothy and Titus concerning the number of wives [permitted to] men who are ordained into the ministry of the church.

To Timothy Paul writes,

*This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, **the husband of one wife**, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach (I Timothy 3:12).*

To Titus Paul writes,

*For this cause left I you in Crete, that thou should set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed you: If any be blameless, **the husband of one wife**, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly (Titus 1:56).*

Paul's instruction to Timothy and Titus reveals that polygamous marriages were common within the congregations of the elect at that time. Otherwise, these instructions would have been unnecessary if only monogamous marital relations were permitted within the church.

The reasons for this prohibition should be obvious considering the time and effort required to carry out the responsibilities of one who is called to lead and care for the elect in the capacity of a spiritual leader.

3. [Editor:] For an alternate view of this subject see "Husband of One Wife," by B.A. Berean, *Patriarch's Journal*, Issue 11.

POLYGAMY AND PROPHECY

The prophet Isaiah recorded many things that would occur before and after Christ returns to establish the Kingdom of God on earth. One of the things that he recorded shows that polygamous marriages will be practiced after Christ's return:

In that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, "We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by your name, to take away our reproach" (Isaiah 4:1).

Prophecies show that, before Christ returns, the earth's population will be greatly reduced. Isaiah's prophecy shows that there will be a tremendous imbalance between the numbers of men and women able and willing to marry. The number of women who desire marriage will far exceed the number of eligible men. These women will want children, companionship and a sexual relationship, so they will be willing to be a part of a plural marriage to fulfill these natural human desires.

Forbidding to Marry

Now the Spirit speaks expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; Forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth (I Timothy 4:13)

Paul's prophetic warning has truly come true today. There are many who have departed from the faith and teach things that are contrary to the Word of God. It is interesting to note that "forbidding to marry" is one of the things that these evil people will teach.

Although "forbidding to marry" clearly includes the teaching of celibacy as a requirement to live a pious life or to serve as a spiritual leader, it could also include teaching that polygamous marriages are forbidden.

Polygamy was practiced without criticism before the advent of Christ and was regulated by many laws con-

cerning fair and equitable treatment of wives and children, succession of heirs and distribution of inheritances. Additionally, polygamy will be practiced after Christ returns according to the prophecy of Isaiah.

OBJECTIONS TO POLYGAMY

Many people who profess to follow biblical teachings object to the practice of polygamy, and attempt to alter the intent and meaning of Scripture in favor of their own tradition, cultural education or personal belief or bias. The following will examine some of the Scriptures that people use in an attempt to prove that polygamy is not a marital option for the elect today.

The “One Man-One Wife” Rule

Many cite the example of Adam and Eve as the basis for their belief that it was God’s original intent that marriage be a monogamous relationship between one man and one woman:

Adam said, “This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, be-

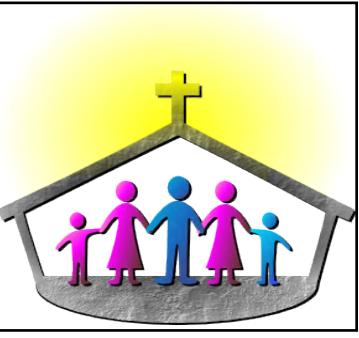
cause she was taken out of man.” Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be one flesh (Genesis 2:2324).

Although it is clear that the Creator made only one wife for Adam, this fact does not establish a “one man-one wife rule.” Genesis 2:23-24 is only a statement of fact; it does not establish monogamy as the only valid marital state.

One Flesh

Because Genesis 2:24 says: “*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they shall be one flesh,*” some people assume that this is proof that polygamous marital relationships are sinful. However, the assumption that being *one flesh* is confined to the marital relationship between one man and one woman is inconsistent with the teachings of the apostle Paul:

Don’t you know your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a whore? God forbid. What? Don’t you know that he which is joined to an whore is one body? For he says that two shall become one flesh. But he that is joined to the Lord is one (I Corinthians 6:1517).



Biblical Families

Biblical Families is a ministry dedicated to encouraging and strengthening Biblical marriages, including, but certainly not limited to, plural marriage. We see plural marriage as a good, and caring, option for believers – ensuring that no one need be left without a family.

Biblical Families places a strong emphasis on fellowship and supporting each other, as per the New Testament, and organizes national retreats and regional meetings.

Our website includes many helpful resources:

- Online Articles
- Discussion Boards
- Newsletters
- Retreat Information
- Local contacts
- Links to other helpful resources

www.BiblicalFamilies.org

Clearly two becoming *one flesh* is not limited to one man and one woman, nor does it place limits on the number of women that can be wives of one man. The *one flesh* concept and its reality in the physical world applies to any sexual relationship between a man and a woman. If this were not so then Paul’s analogy would not make sense, because even a married man can have sexual relations with a whore. Although Paul is using this analogy to explain a spiritual concept, his use of this example seems to indicate that a man can become one flesh with more than one woman.

The Pharisees’ Question

The Pharisees also came to Him to test Him. They asked Him, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for every cause?” Jesus replied, “Haven’t you read, that at the beginning He made them male



and female, and He said, 'For this reason shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cling to his wife: and the two of them shall be one flesh'? Therefore, they are no more two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has joined together no man should separate" (Matthew 19:3-6).

The question put to Jesus was not about monogamy or polygamy; the question concerned divorce and remarriage. It was a question of law (*i.e.*, God's law concerning marriage) and specifically the portion of this law that dealt with the cancellation of the marriage contract.

They then asked him, "Why then did Moses command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?" He said to them, "Because of the hardness of your hearts Moses allowed you to put away your wives: but this was not allowed at the beginning. And I say to you, Whoever divorces his wife, except for fornication, and marries another, commits adultery: and whoever marries her which is divorced commits adultery" (Matthew 19:7-9; see also Mark 10:11-12.)

Jesus explains that the reason that the Creator God allowed Moses to sanction divorce was because of the hardness of Israelite men's hearts. He also says that the law did not allow for divorce when marriage was established at creation.

It is important to understand that God makes the rules concerning human behavior, and that He has the authority to alter these rules as He sees fit in order to fulfill His plan for humanity and to accommodate the human condition.

Jesus, Who was the Creator God and law-giver before He became human, clarified and modified the law of divorce when He said that the only valid reason for the cancellation of a marriage contract is fornication (which includes adultery). Jesus also explained that those who remarry after an unlawful divorce commit adultery (a violation of God's law; see Matthew 5:31-32; 10:11-19; 19:3-9; Luke 16:18).

Polygamy and Problems

Many people feel that, even though polygamous

marriages are not condemned in Scripture, there are many Scriptures showing that adultery, incest, jealousy, hatred, bitterness, unhappiness and immorality are associated with polygamy. Therefore, they believe that polygamy must not be the most desirable relationship to enter into. The problem with this argument is that the Scriptures also show the same kind of problems within monogamous relationships.

King David

There is no doubt that king David, who was a man greatly beloved by God (I Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22), had many wives and concubines (II Samuel 5:13).

Many people point to his adulterous relationship with Bathsheba as a condemnation of polygamy. However, an honest review of this account does not show any condemnation of polygamy, but it clearly shows that David had committed adultery with Bathsheba before he murdered her husband:

I gave you your master's house, and your master's wives into your bosom, and gave you the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had not been enough, I would have given you even more. Therefore, why have you despised the Lord's commandment and done evil in His sight? You have killed Uriah the Hittite with the sword, and have taken his wife to be your wife, and have slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon (II Samuel 12:8-9).

Nowhere in the account of this event or in any of the accounts of David's life is he ever condemned for having too many wives or concubines.

The simple truth is that polygamy creates no more of an environment or opportunity for adultery, incest, jealousy, hatred, bitterness, unhappiness and immorality than monogamous marriages. The problem is not with monogamous or polygamous marriages; it is with the ability of men and women to live within God's laws that regulate marriage.

The Ideal Marital Relationship

Because Genesis 2:24 says, "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to*



his wife: and they shall be one flesh," some people feel that, in the beginning, monogamy was the ideal marital relationship between a man and a woman. However, nowhere in Scripture do we find the polygamous marital relationship shown to be inferior to a monogamous relationship.

The Scriptures are very clear concerning what the ideal marriage relationship should be. The Scriptures also tell us how to accomplish this ideal. However, an ideal marriage has more to do with one's attitude and behavior than whether the marriage is monogamous or polygamous.

When speaking of the ideal in a marital relationship, we should consider that each individual has different needs, desires and circumstances. Jesus said that remaining unmarried is the ideal for some who have been called to salvation during the gospel age (see Matthew 19:12). The apostle Paul said that the ideal for him was to remain celibate, but for some it is better to marry than to burn with passion.⁴ Paul does not say whether the marriage should be monogamous or polygamous:

4. [Editor:] For an in-depth look at this subject see "The Marriage Ideal: Did Paul Permanently Elevate Singleness Above Marriage? (A Brief Survey of I Corinthians 7)," by Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr., *Bible Student's Notebook*, Issue 381.

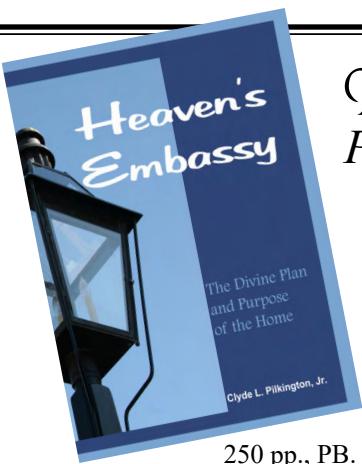
I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift and another has that. Now to the unmarried and the widows I say: It is good for them to stay unmarried, as I am. But if they cannot control themselves, they should marry, for it is better to marry than to burn with passion (I Corinthians 7:79).

Clearly, what is ideal depends on one's needs, attitude and personal circumstance.

THE EXAMPLE

Many well-intentioned individuals believe that, although polygamy is not a sin, it should not be practiced in this age because many people have strong feelings in opposition to it. The problem with this belief is that it is conceptually incorrect. The reality is that people in general hate the things of God, oppose almost everything that is of God, and hate those who practice God's truth and way of truth (see John 15:18-19; 17:14-17).

If one truly believes that they should not practice some of God's law in order to be an acceptable example to the unconverted, then which of God's laws



Heaven's Embassy – The Divine Plan & Purpose of the Home

by – Clyde L. Pilkington, Jr.

Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain who build it (Psalm 127:1).

This book represents many years of work. The author believes that it is one of the most important books that he will ever be privileged to write, simply because it is about one of the most vital scriptural subjects that could ever be addressed.

The home is central to all of God's dealings with man throughout the course of time. It is His Divine "institution" and "organization" on the earth; and for the believer, it is the *Embassy of Heaven*. An embassy is "**the residence or office of an ambassador.**" Since the believer is an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 5:14-21), his home is thus the *Divine Embassy* of heavenly ministry.

Pauline ministry is centered in the homes of believers. This is even the true sphere of the Body of Christ; for this reason our apostle speaks of "*church in thy house.*" This book doesn't focus upon the *external* specifics of the ministry of *Heaven's Embassy* (such as *hospitality*); that will be saved for another volume. Instead, it looks at the inner-workings of the *Embassy* itself, focusing upon its very nature and *internal* purpose and function.

(see order form on back page)





should a true follower of Christ cease to practice to avoid offending the unconverted? Should one cease to practice the Sabbath, start eating unclean foods, or begin to practice adultery in order to appease the unconverted? Obviously, one should teach and practice all of God's law as an example to the world. Therefore, one should not be ashamed to stand solidly behind the biblical practice of lawful polygamous marital relationships as noted in both the Old and New Testaments.

Clearly, if one is intending to enter into or already is in a polygamous marriage, one should be concerned about the effect that this type of marriage will have on one's walk with God the Father and Jesus Christ, as well as the example being set to others in the Father's family as well as the unconverted. However, these considerations must be viewed sensibly and realistically in the light of all Scripture concerning God's law.

CIVIL AND CRIMINAL LAW

Some people use the argument that Romans 13:1-6 instructs the elect to obey all of the civil and criminal laws where they live. Therefore, one should not practice polygamy because many civil laws prohibit it.

Although being subject to constituted authority and paying various monetary levies imposed by civil governments is the subject of Romans 13:1-6, one must view what is said in the light of other Scriptures that clearly show that God's law takes precedent over laws devised by people.

An example of a civil law that violates God's law is the law in many western countries that require people to swear an oath to tell the truth in a court of law. Obviously, if one follows God's law concerning swearing and oaths (Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12), one cannot obey this civil law.

When one practices the law of God, whether it involves the Sabbath, childbearing, marriage, the swearing or taking of an oath, or any other of God's laws, if these laws are in opposition to the civil laws where one lives, one must deal with this situation as instructed through the Word of God:

Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be you therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and you shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles (Matthew 10:16-18).

Although a polygamous marriage does not violate God's law, it may be a violation of the civil and criminal law where one lives. Therefore, if one desires to engage in a polygamous marriage, one must be careful not to become entangled in the civil laws governing the area where they intend to live. If the practice of polygamy violates the civil and criminal law where one lives, there are basically three options: 1) Do not practice polygamy; 2) Relocate to a geographical location where there are no civil laws prohibiting polygamy; or 3) Be prepared to defend one's right to practice polygamy.

THE MARITAL CONTRACT

Today, most people who profess to follow Christ have a very limited understanding of the marital contract and the instructions concerning marriage contained in the Bible. This fact is substantiated by the extremely large numbers of dysfunctional families and divorces within the professing Christian community. The following is an overview of some of the basic elements of monogamous and polygamous marital contracts as set forth in the Bible.

Property and Choice

In many male dominated cultures (historically and today), a man's children and wives were and are considered his property. In many cultures, children have no say in choosing their husbands or wives.

The Bible clearly shows that both men and women were often given into marriage without their consent. This was the case with Abraham's son Isaac and his wife Rebekah. Abraham sent his trusted servant to his brother Nahor to acquire a wife for Isaac, and Nahor sent his daughter Rebekah (who he had with his concubine Bethuel) with Abraham's servant to become Isaac's wife (see Genesis 22:1-67).



The reason for mentioning this is to show that God allows for cultural and traditional standards and philosophies to be imposed in forming marital contracts if these contacts do not violate His law or if the individuals which are to be married do not resist the specific marital agreement.

The Contract

An essential part of any marriage is the marriage contract. As with any contract, the marriage agreement has terms and conditions. One of the first things to understand about a marital relationship is that, whether it is monogamous or polygamous, it is governed by God's laws of marriage and these laws govern every critical aspect of the marriage relationship from beginning to end. Once one enters into a monogamous or a polygamous marital relationship, divorce is not an option; marriage is intended to be for life unless the relationship is broken under the terms and conditions set forth in God's laws concerning marriage.

Jesus Christ, Who was the Creator God and law-giver, allowed Moses to sanction divorce among the Israelites because of the hardness of Israelite men's hearts. However, Christ, Who is the Mediator of the new covenant, has clarified and modified the law of divorce that He allowed Moses to sanction.

Now the only valid reason for the cancellation of a marriage contact is fornication (which includes adultery; see Matthew 5:31-32; 10:11-19; 19:3-9; Luke 16:18).

The Monogamous Contract

When two people enter into a marital relationship with the understanding that it is to be a monogamous relationship and bind themselves to this agreement, this relationship comes under the terms and conditions set forth in the Bible for such a relationship. Neither party can alter the agreement without dire consequences. The agreement can be terminated only by the death of either party, fornication, or adultery as set forth in God's laws (see Matthew 5:31-32; 10:11-19; 19:3-9; Luke 16:18).

The Polygamous Contract

When people enter into a marital relationship with the understanding that it is to be a polygamous relationship and bind themselves to this agreement, this relationship comes under the terms and conditions set forth in the Bible for such a relationship. Neither party can alter the agreement without dire consequences. The agreement can be terminated only by the death of either party, fornication, or adultery as set forth in God's laws (see Matthew 5:31-32; 10:11-19; 19:3-9; Luke 16:18.)

The following are some of the major problems with the way in which polygamous relationships are practiced today:

- A marriage that begins as a monogamous relationship and becomes polygamous because of the insistence of one of the partners over the objections of the other partner. Without the consent of both spouses, this situation results in adulterous relations between the husband and the other wives.
- The husband takes two living sisters as wives or a wife and her daughter as wives. Neither of these relationships is allowed under the law given to national Israel governing polygamy (see Leviticus 18:17-18; 20:14-17).

While it is true that some men and women who are practicing polygamy are living in an adulterous or an incestuous relationship in violation of God's laws that govern marriage and sexual relationships, this does not mean that all polygamists are living in sin.

One Woman, Two Husbands?

Some might think that, because God's law allows for a man to have more than one wife under certain circumstances, women can also have more than one husband. Paul says the following in his letter to the congregation at Rome about God's law and its relationship to the Father's elect children:

Brethren don't you know, (I'm speaking to those who know the law,) that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman which has a husband is bound to her husband by the law as long as he lives; but if her husband is dead, she is not bound to him. Therefore,





while her husband is alive if she marries another man, she is an adulteress: but if her husband is dead, she is free from that law; so that she is not an adulteress, although she is married to another man” (Romans 7:1-4).

The principles of the marital relationship set forth in both the Old and New Testaments clearly forbid a woman to have more than one husband at a time.

Should Everyone Practice Polygamy?

Obviously the practice of polygamy is not for everyone, because not all men or women are comfortable with this concept or practice. Not all of the patriarchs or great men and women of the Bible practiced polygamy, and there is no instruction urging men and women to do so. Clearly, for individuals who adhere to biblical law, a monogamous or polygamous marriage is a personal choice.

Could entering into a polygamous marriage be a mistake? Absolutely. It could be a mistake just as being in a monogamous marriage could be a mistake. Although God’s law allows polygamous marriages, it may be more prudent and practical to remain celibate or enter into a monogamous relationship in some circumstances. However, once one is married, one must obey God’s laws that govern marriage in order to live righteously before God.

Concerns and Problems

Many people feel that, because of the number of family members involved, a polygamist will have more family and marital concerns and problems than a monogamist. Although this could be true it is not necessarily the rule, because family problems and concerns are dependent on many factors other than numbers.

More than one wife in a family could very well have many benefits over a monogamous marriage. In a polygamous marriage wives could share the domestic duties, childcare, provide a greater financial base and provide more stability and help during times of illness and death than provided by a traditional monogamous family structure. These and many more benefits could be realized if everyone within this marital relationship diligently follows the law of God

in attitude and behavior.

A Good Wife or Good Wives?

There are many Scriptures that speak about the benefits that a good wife can provide and the admiration and honor that such a woman should receive. The following are a few of the things that are said about a good wife:

Whoever finds a wife finds a good thing, and obtains favor of the Lord (Proverbs 18:22).

House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the Lord (Proverbs 19:14).

A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that makes ashamed is as rottenness in his bones (Proverbs 12:4).

Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies (Proverbs 31:10).

People who oppose polygamy and use these Scriptures in support of monogamy forget that the man who was inspired to write these words of wisdom concerning the virtuous wife was Solomon, who had hundreds of wives and concubines.

It is difficult to believe that a polygamous family will be less happy or financially worse off than a monogamous family. The argument that polygamy causes strife and poverty may sound good in theory, but falls short in practice for those who are obedient to God’s laws concerning attitudes, behaviors, and work ethics.

SUMMARY

Today, both monogamous and polygamous marital relationships suffer from people’s perverted view of what marriage should be. There is no doubt that many polygamous marriages are beset with adultery, incest, jealousy, hatred, bitterness, unhappiness and immorality. It is little wonder that, when polygamy is viewed and evaluated as it is practiced by most people of the world today, it comes up short of the ideal for the marriage relationship. However, so do most monogamous marriages.





God instituted marriage as a part of His master plan for humanity, and His laws concerning marriage recognize it only as a single institution. Although God's law does not divide marriage into monogamous and polygamous classifications, his law does speak to each of these marital conditions and the interpersonal relationships within each.

Beliefs and Feeling

Most people base their morality and beliefs about marriage on their cultural tradition and past and current theological philosophy rather than the clear fact of Scripture. However, it is an undeniable biblical fact that both monogamous and polygamous marriage relationships were engaged in by righteous men and women.

If we truly believe what the Bible teaches concerning the marital state, then we cannot ignore what it says about polygamy and must admit that God sanctions both monogamous and polygamous marriages as being equally valid.

All Scripture

Some people feel that polygamy may have been acceptable anciently, but it is no longer valid today because we live in a different age under different circumstances. This argument may sound good in theory, but it is without merit because it is in opposition to Paul's instruction to Timothy concerning the validity of all of the Word of God for his elect children:

All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, throughly furnished unto all good works (II Timothy 3:1617).

Clearly "all Scripture" would include the laws that sanction and govern monogamous and polygamous marriages.

The fact is that polygamy is noted throughout the Bible as an approved marital state. If God had intended for there to be only monogamous marriages, he would have reflected this in His laws for human behavior. However, in God's marital laws we see terms, conditions and rules set forth for both polygamous

and monogamous marriages.

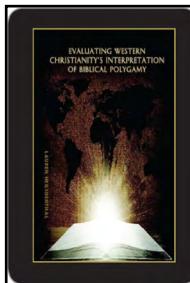
Polygamous marriages are not sinful, wrong or less than the ideal; they are what they are. They are relationships sanctioned by God which can lead to much happiness and prosperity, if the participants truly follow God's laws for such relationships with righteous attitudes and behaviors.

Those Seeking Truth

One who is truly seeking truth cannot ignore the many references to lawful polygamy throughout the Bible and the important lessons that are taught through this marital relationship. Moreover, one is obligated to embrace those of the elect who have determined that this type of marital relationship is the one that they have determined is best for them. **J**

(edited)

— bibleresearch.org



Evaluating Western Christianity's Interpretation of Biblical Polygamy

by — Lauren Heiligenthal

88 pages, PB. \$10

This book demonstrates that the popular Western worldview regarding marriage affects biblical interpretation. While most Western societies uphold monogamy as God's ideal form of marriage, a number of other cultures practice polygamy. Western Christianity often perceives polygamy as a threat to the monogamist ideal; therefore, this book evaluates whether the Bible clearly advocates that polygamous men should become monogamous through divorce.

After interpreting Scripture through the lens of the biblical audience, this book then applies the interpretations from the five biblical texts to a modern situation involving polygamy. Since there is no biblical text that explicitly prohibits polygamy or promotes monogamy, this book argues that the interpretation of the monogamist ideal tends to derive from one's worldview rather than the Bible.

(see order form on back page)





Plural Marriage.... IN THE NEWS

A Brief Filed with the US 10th Circuit Court of Appeals

by — Professor Jonathan Turley

The very notion of a state today criminalizing the right of consenting adults to maintain certain private relationships is a regression to a prior century of state-enforced morality codes. Not surprisingly, the government relies on cases like *Reynolds v. United States*, 98 U.S. 145 (1878), which has been widely condemned for its openly prejudiced and ill-tempered rhetoric against social, racial, and religious minorities.

Modern cases have consistently rejected the criminalization of private relationships, see *Lawrence v. Texas*, 539 U.S. 558 (2003), as well as rejected barriers based on moral and social bias, see *United States v. Windsor*, 133 S. Ct. 2675 (2013) and *Obergefell v. Hodges*, 135 S. Ct. 2584 (2015). By only striking the cohabitation provision, the District Court left Utah with the same law maintained by most states in the Union prohibiting bigamy.

What was lost to the state is precisely what is denied to all states: the right to impose criminal morality codes on citizens, compelling them to live their lives in accordance with the religious or social values of the majority of citizens ...

From the rejection of morality legislation in *Lawrence* to the expansion of the protections of liberty interests in *Obergefell*, it is clear that states can no longer use criminal codes to coerce or punish those who choose to live in consensual but unpopular unions. This case is about criminalization of consensual relations and there are 21st century cases rather than 19th century cases that control. **J**



Professor Turley is a nationally recognized constitutional legal scholar who has written academic articles that have appeared in a variety of leading law journals at Cornell, Duke, Georgetown, Harvard, Northwestern and other schools. After a stint at Tulane Law School, Turley joined the George Washington faculty in 1990 and, in 1998, was given the prestigious Shapiro Chair for Public Interest Law, the youngest chaired professor in the school's history. Turley's articles on legal and policy issues appear regularly in national publications with over 750 articles in such newspapers as the New York Times, Washington Post, USA Today, Los Angeles Times and Wall Street Journal. He is a columnist for USA Today. He also appears regularly as a legal expert on all of the major television networks. Since the 1990s, he has worked under contract as the on-air Legal Analyst for NBC News and CBS News. He has had over two-dozen appearances on Meet the Press, ABC This Week, Face the Nation, and Fox Sunday.

Fantasized Birthright

2500 years of Western Civilization propaganda has convinced (even the nicest of) women that anything less than having 100% exclusive rights to a husband is the equivalent of cheating them out of their birthright. Thus, most husbandless wom-

en are willing to accept a long-term life of loneliness as long as they can hold onto the fantasy that they might be one of the lucky ones who, at the right time, will run into a Prince Charming whose wife has just died.

— Keith Martin



As Seen on Public Blogs ...

Responses to Polygamy Objections

Tolerated?

God gave David at least two wives in addition to what he already had, according to Nathan the prophet, so to say that it was merely “tolerated” rejects the very actions of God Himself. ...

Actually, it's the manmade religion of westernized social Christianity that teaches what is contrary to the Bible as if it were fact. My dad taught me to read the Bible for what it says, and because of him, I've long since walked away from the blinders of pop-Christianity to actually live and breathe the Word of God. ...

Being freed from the conventions of mere religion, more people begin to experience the freedom of which Jesus spoke. But, there are many who like the confines of religion. It helps to keep them in line, or so they think. For many, the show must go on. ...

Gross?

Hmm. ... The Lord didn't consider it gross to have commanded a surviving brother to take his dead brother's wife as his own, and to have vicarious children for the dead brother through his dead brother's widow.

Disrespectful?

To whom?

Legality issues?

What legalities? The law only prohibits acquiring more than one license at a time. Nowhere does the Word of God attach a moral crisis to the absence of a marriage certificate from the government. At no time did the Lord command that the definition of marriage is in the hands of any other than Himself!

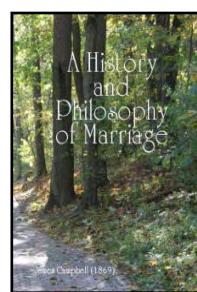
Not socially accepted?

When did social sensibilities become a defining authority for morality? Society accepts women murdering their unborn on the basis of so-called “women's rights.” More than 50% of professing Christians are divorcing and remarrying, therefore living out serialized polygamy, adultery and fornication! That seems to be acceptable to most church organizations whose preachers say not one word about any of what's going on under their noses, and they will poo-poo polygyny? That, my friend, is hypocrisy.

Although some can think up benevolent-sounding reasons and intriguing justifications for government intrusions into marriage and its definition, I still cannot get one of those people to show me where the Lord ever dropped the ball of His authority over marriage and its definition down to mankind, our traditions, our governments, our rules, our misconceptions, our dogmas, or our assumptions about what constitutes marriage. 

(edited)

— Swordman, Jr.
christianforums.com



***A History and Philosophy of Marriage:
Polygamy and Monogamy Compared***

by — James Campbell
(originally published in 1869)
142 pages, PB. \$20

A reprint of Christian philanthropist James Campbell's classic work, originally published in 1869 in Boston, Massachusetts.

(see order form on back page)





Why the Modern Woman Now Wants to Be a Second Wife

by – Anne Muiruri

Last weekend the strangest thing happened to me. I went on a blind date on Saturday with a man who was a friend of a friend of a friend; and thirty minutes into my date I got my first marriage proposal, but not the kind you are thinking. I was offered the role of second wife.

Apparently, my date had a wife of twelve years and three children, and was currently on the prowl for a second wife.

I can tell you for free that after that second wife proclamation the date took a turn for worse, and I ended up walking off in a huff.

How dare he?

I was so mad and insulted, I mean what kind of man thought that I was only good enough for number two, or that any right-thinking, modern woman would willingly line up to be second and not first?

But after I was done with being outraged and disgusted, I really started to think about it, and I realized that there is a strange paradigm shift that has been taking place on the matrimonial scene of late, with modern and independent women increasingly electing to become second wives.

Personally, I know of two friends, all independent women with their own career and money, who happily choose to be second wives.

Of course, I judged them harshly; I mean, everyone assumes that being a co-wife or second wife to a man is something a desperate woman does.

A woman who is desperate for money, a social upgrade, or better yet desperate to have a man, and any man will do, even one who is already taken.

Basically, polygamy is demonized especially amongst educated women, because no one can understand why any self-respecting woman would accept second-wife status.

In fact, most people believe that polygamy was invented by men so they could have more sex, and that women get nothing out of it, and in fact spend their time alone and crying when their man is at the other wife's house.

However, upon investigation I have come to learn that polygamy is in fact the perfect solution for a career-driven woman, a woman who does not want to sacrifice her life for a man, who has no delusions about her capabilities to be the submissive, subdued and a domesticated superstar that most first wives aspire to be.

An independent woman who has no delusions about taking care of a grown man as if he were a helpless child, all in the name of having a husband.

An ambitious woman whose career and ambitions comes first, but because she needs the security that comes with having a husband and does not really want the responsibility of being [an only] wife, she chooses to be a second wife.

So in essence she is a part time wife, she does not have to deal with the hard-core stuff that a first wife deals with.

You get to put up with the joys and shenanigans of having a husband twice or thrice a week, and after, you get to return him to his other wife and proceed to live like a single woman. P

(edited)

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