

God Instituted Marriage

God instituted marriage. Moses recorded the institution in Genesis. He wrote, “*The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him’ ... So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man,*” (Gen. 2:18-23). God gave the first man the insight to be able to recognise the gift God had given him. Adam said, “*This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of man,*” (Gen. 2:23). The Lord then said (cf Mt 19:5-6), “*For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh,*” (Gen. 2:24). The primary purpose of marriage, then, is companionship. As Solomon observed, “*He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favour from the LORD,*” (Prov. 18:22).

There was also another purpose that God had for marriage. We read in Genesis, “*God blessed them and said to them, ‘Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it,’*” (Gen. 1:28). Procreation, the producing of children, is also a purpose of marriage. Children are a blessing from the Lord. The psalmist wrote, “*Sons are a heritage from the LORD, children a reward from Him. Like arrows in the hands of a warrior are sons born in one’s youth. Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them,*” (Ps. 127:3-5). In this age when people may look on children as a burden, it needs to be stressed that children are a blessing from the Lord. Procreation is what we call the secondary purpose of marriage.

Since the fall into sin, there is also a third purpose of marriage, and that is for the preservation of the sexual purity of man and woman. God intends sexual relations to be part of the marriage union between one man and one woman. The sexual union is part of the companionship between a husband and a wife. It also has the purpose of producing children. It is to be practiced in the context of a man and woman committed to each other until death separates them, who will also serve as a loving and nurturing unit to raise the children who result from the union. God placed into man and woman by creation the desire for sexual union. This desire is not in and of itself sinful. It is part of God’s creation of which we read, “*God saw all that He had made, and it was very good,*” (Gen. 1:31). The writer to the Hebrews tells us, “*Marriage should be honoured by all, and the marriage bed kept pure,*” (Heb. 13:4).

The Lutheran Confessions also address this issue. They state:

The natural desire of one sex for the other sex is an ordinance of God in nature. For this reason it is right; otherwise why would both sexes have been created? ... We are speaking not about lustful desires, which is sin, but of that desire called physical love. Lustful desire has not removed this physical love from nature, but inflames it, so that now physical love has greater need of a cure. Marriage is necessary not only for the sake of procreation but also as a remedy. (Ap XXIII:12-13)

Some people do not feel the need for marriage. Paul wrote, *“I wish that all men were as I am. But each man has his own gift from God; one has this gift, 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,”* (1 Cor. 7:7-9; cf Mt 19:11-12). The outlet for human sexuality is marriage. Sex is not a recreational activity to be indulged in with anyone a person feels like at the moment. This is not freedom but a slavery to one’s own passions. Marriage is for the preservation of the sexual purity of man and woman. It might sound stale to mention this, but it is well to do it in the face of the “free love” attitude we face in society today. If sex were reserved for marriage, we might see fewer problems with sexually transmitted diseases and the host of other problems that come along with violations of the Sixth Commandment. Free love is never free; there is a huge price to pay for it.