

# Part 1: What My God Says

Genesis and the Essence of Marriage

### On your own

Imagine you are talking with a friend about the recent Supreme Court ruling in America legalizing same-sex marriage, or about the new sexual education curriculum introduced in Ontario. Your friend knows you’re a Christian, and knows you believe homosexuality and same-sex marriage is wrong. What questions might you be asked? Try to write down three?

## Marriage Defined

God provides in his word a clear definition of the **essence** of marriage. See if you can glean aspects of it from the Genesis account below.

**Genesis 2:18-24** The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.” Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. 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 then 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.

The man 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.”

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

* What are the ingredients or elements that are part of the essence of marriage?
* Contrast these ingredients of a marriage with what your non-Christian friends and families would say are the ingredients of a marriage.
* What role does romantic love play in a marriage according to Genesis? (Consider Eph 5:25) What roles does it play in a marriage according to conventional wisdom?

### Summary

God defines marriage as one man and woman committed to a life-long monogamous relationship. The husband and wife are called to love each other, even when they don’t want to; that’s why it’s called a commitment.

## Marriage as a Picture

The church father Augustine taught that many things in this world were transient, imperfect versions of the perfect concepts found in God. E.g., fathers in this world are imperfect reflections of our heavenly Father, pastors are imperfect reflections of Jesus the perfect shepherd, etc.

**Ephesians 5:31,32** “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.

* Of what is the husband a picture?
* Of what is the wife a picture?
* When we tamper with the biblical definition of marriage, what else are we tampering with?

### Summary

For the Christian, marriage is more than a promise. It’s one of the most beautiful ways we can reflect our faith. God calls husbands to mirror Christ and wives to mirror the Church. To change marriage is to take away one of God’s pictures of Christ and his Church.

## Marriage Gifts

God has both defined for us the **essence** of marriage as well as the blessings or gifts of marriage. Read the passages below and list the three blessings of marriage:

**Genesis 1:28** God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it.”

**Genesis 2:18** The Lord God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

**1 Corinthians 7:2-5** Since sexual immorality is occurring, each man should have sexual relations with his own wife, and each woman with her own husband. The husband should fulfill his marital duty to his wife, and likewise the wife to her husband. The wife does not have authority over her own body but yields it to her husband. In the same way, the husband does not have authority over his own body but yields it to his wife. Do not deprive each other except perhaps by mutual consent and for a time, so that you may devote yourselves to prayer. Then come together again so that Satan will not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

* What are three blessings of marriage?
* How does changing the **essence** of marriage effect God’s design for **blessing** marriage?

### Summary:

God blesses marriage at times with children, companionship, and sexual pleasure. If a blessing isn’t present, that doesn’t mean the marriage is over; that only happens if the essence is destroyed through sin). Homosexual relationships cannot be complimentary in the way God designed marriage, and so the blessings often fall short, as they do whenever sin is present.

## What can I say?

Read the passages below, and then respond to the following two scenarios.

**Matthew 18:15-18** “If your brother or sister[a] sins,[b] go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over.But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that ‘every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses.’If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector. “Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be[d] bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be[e] loosed in heaven.

**Galatians 6:1,2** Brothers and sisters, if someone is caught in a sin, you who live by the Spirit should restore that person gently. But watch yourselves, or you also may be tempted. Carry each other’s burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ.

* Your Christian friend posts on Facebook, 6/26/2015: “Hooray for the Supreme Court in America! Love wins!”
* Your son tells you he’s gay. “I’m still a Christian, but God made me this way, and I want you to accept how he’s made me.”

### On your own

Remember those three questions you wrote down at the beginning of the hour? Look at them again. How might you answer those questions?

# Part 2: What to Say to My Gay Friend

The Samaritan Woman and Sharing Jesus

### On your own:

The LGBT community, broadly speaking, does not like Christianity. Often Christians are faced with hostility, even when they’re not actively addressing homosexual lifestyles. What are some of the reasons the LGBT community criticizes your faith? List three possible criticisms.

## Witnessing like Jesus

Read the account on the next page of Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well, and then consider the following questions:

* Did Jesus know about the sinful lifestyle of the woman? *Yes*.
* How did Jesus choose to respond to her sinful lifestyle? *He didn’t hide the fact that he knew about it and that it was a sin, but he didn’t dwell on it. He had other concerns*.
* What did Jesus choose to spend his time doing instead? *Sharing the gospel*.

**John 4:7-26**

7When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” 8(His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.)

9The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.)

10Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

11“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? 12Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his livestock?”

13Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, 14but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

15The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.”

16He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

17“I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. 18The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

19“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. 20Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

21“Woman,” Jesus replied, “believe me, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. 22You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. 23Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. 24God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”

25The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.”

26Then Jesus declared, “I, the one speaking to you—I am he.”

## General Witnessing Principles:

* We shouldn’t expect unbelievers to understand or embrace Christian ethics, and we don’t necessarily want to force our ethics upon them.

**Titus 2:11,12** For the grace of God has appeared that offers salvation to all people. It teaches us to say “No” to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age.

* Our chief concern is sharing Jesus, which means law and gospel.
* Our first goal is to use the law to lead someone to a general understanding that they’re sinful and need a Saviour.
* Our second goal is to show that Jesus is the Saviour they need.
* If the Holy Spirit helps us accomplish both goal 1 and 2, then we can turn to God’s specific directives for the lives of Christians (such as heterosexual, faithful relationships).
* Why should your non-Christian friend listen to you if you don’t practice what you preach?

**John 13:35** By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

If your life is marked by love, gentleness, and patience, you will go much farther when sharing law and gospel.

## What do I say?

* Your non-Christian friend tells you, “Heard about the Supreme Court decision in the U.S.? It’s about time they got on board with the rest of the world.”
* Your gay non-Christian relative says to you, “Still a member of St. Paul, where they hate people like me?”
* You and your gay non-Christian neigbour are talking, and he remarks, “The church is always picking and choosing what to call a ‘sin.’ They make a big deal about us, and then turn a blind eye to divorce and gluttony in their own congregations!”

## Addendum: Famous Passages on Homosexuality

**Romans 1:21-32**

21For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like a mortal human being and birds and animals and reptiles.

24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25They exchanged the truth about God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.

26 Because of this, God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural sexual relations for unnatural ones. 27 In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust for one another. Men committed shameful acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their error.

28Furthermore, just as they did not think it worthwhile to retain the knowledge of God, so God gave them over to a depraved mind, so that they do what ought not to be done. 29 They have become filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice. They are gossips, 30slanderers, God-haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful; they invent ways of doing evil; they disobey their parents; 31 they have no understanding, no fidelity, no love, no mercy. 32 Although they know God’s righteous decree that those who do such things deserve death, they not only continue to do these very things but also approve of those who practice them.

**1 Corinthians 6:9-11**

Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men [a] nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

[NIV translation note on [a]: The words *men who have sex with men* translate two Greek words that refer to the passive and active participants in homosexual acts.]