

## “AS LONG AS OUR LOVE SHALL LAST?”

The institution of marriage has long been considered sacred and holy, as well it should. Of the three great institutions given by God to man (the home, government, and the church), marriage was the first to be ordained of Him (Gen.2:24). It used to be that those entering into the bonds of matrimony realized the Divine element present in the marriage relationship. But this glorious institution is under attack from many within our society. Some are seeking to redefine the “traditional” (Biblical) idea of marriage, desiring that same-sex unions be recognized in the same fashion as heterosexual marriages. Sadly, more than a few treat matrimony with utter disregard, even disdain. Marriage has been relegated to a matter of convenience over conviction, a union to be broken on the slightest whim. In years gone by, the marriage vows sounded something like this: “For better or for worse; for richer or for poorer; in sickness and in health, till death do us part.” To some degree, at least, there was an idea of permanence in the institution of marriage. It has become rather popular in our day for couples to substitute the expression “as long as our love shall last” in place of “till death do us part.” As if it were not already easy enough through our laws to dissolve the marriage union, now some want to reflect the same flippancy displayed at the conclusion of the marriage at its inception.

The marriage vows did not originate the idea of permanency in marriage, but merely reflect what God declared about this Divine institution. Jesus stated, “Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder” (Matt.19:4-6). Paul by inspiration penned the following words: “For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man” (Rom.7:3-4). It is evident that God considers the marriage relationship to be a binding, permanent covenant. Many are trying to divide what God has united. While the laws of our land and our courts of law may declare husband and wife divided for every cause, or man and man (or woman and woman) united, God’s law does not recognize such.

What should alarm us most in the church is that the divorce rate among Christians is consistent with the divorce rate of those in the world. This indicates that we have not done a good job of teaching our young people about the purpose and permanence of marriage. We must reverse this trend among children of God, and show by example what God intends for marriage to be.

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