

BIBLE DISCUSSION GROUP STUDY QUESTIONS

In preparation for Sunday, May 5, 2013

Passage: Various

Memory Passage: Genesis 2:23-24

DAY 1 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Gen. 1:26-28 & 2:18-25.** In light of the continuing developments over the last several months concerning “gay marriage,” your elders think it wise for us to visit the issue of marriage from a Biblical perspective and give some guidance and counsel concerning how believers should respond to the political, social, and moral parameters of our current milieu.
- (b) When God created man, in what forms did He create them (1:27)? What commands did God give them when He blessed them (1:28)? Explain these commands: “Be fruitful,” “multiply,” and “fill the earth.”
- (c) **Read Gen. 9:1 & 7, 17:20, 28:3, 35:11, & 48:4.** Write down the setting in which each of these occurrences of the phrase “be fruitful and multiply” are spoken. What can you deduce from these repetitions concerning what God’s plan for His creation might be? Without trying to belabor the obvious, what type of union is required to carry out these commands?
- (d) Why were the animals & birds not fit to be a helper for Adam? Why was Adam so ecstatic to see the woman, and what is the significance of her being made from his rib, bone of his bones, and flesh of his flesh?
- (e) *Family:* Begin by asking, “What is marriage?” Write down some of the responses on your white board as everyone discusses this question. Write this down on a piece of paper when you finish so you can keep it for use on Day 4. **Read Gen. 1:26-27** and explain that the command to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth” is an important command in Genesis and it means that married men and women are to have children so the number of God’s people on the earth will increase. Then look at the other instances of the phrase “be fruitful and multiply” (**Gen. 9:1, 7; 17:30; 28:3; 35:11, & 48:4**) and teach each one in its setting. You will point out that each of these come in blessings, either from God or someone asking God to give this blessing, that the command to have children will result in a great nation or people, and the expectation is that these future generations would be the fulfillment of God’s blessings as they lived to worship and obey Him. Also explain that this week we will be looking at several aspects of God’s covenant of marriage.

DAY 2 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Gen. 2:24 & Matt. 19:4-6.** For what purpose does Gen 2:24 start with “therefore?” What relationship should we see between vs. 22-23 & v. 24? What does it mean to “become one flesh?” Why is it important for the man to leave his parents in order for this one flesh union to take place? Why do you think the woman is not told to hold fast to the man?
- (b) In Matt. 19:1-12 Jesus answers a question from the Pharisees that was intended to trip Him up, a kind of “trick question.” Though there is much to discuss in these verses, we will limit our interaction this week to our topic and look only at vs. 4-6. How does Jesus use and apply Gen. 1:27 & 2:18-24? Does He believe the teaching in Gen. to be true and abiding? How do you know? What does Jesus say about who can be married? What happens to these 2 people when they marry?
- (c) Who, according to Jesus, is the one who exercises authority over the marriage? Why is this fact important to us in our current milieu?
- (d) *Family:* Have your family **Read & Compare Gen. 1:27 & 2:22-24 with Matt. 19:4-6.** Make a list on your white board of all of the ways Jesus’ words in Matt. 19 reflect God’s words in Genesis. Explain that this wonderful truth means that Jesus continues the same ideas of marriage in the NT that God began in the OT so we can be assured that nothing has changed with regard to marriage. Also explain that Jesus affirms God’s authority, both as the creator of the marriage covenant and as one who governs all that marriage is or can be.

DAY 3 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

- (a) **Read Eph. 5:31-32.** (Remember that this week we are not examining every aspect of God’s design for marriage, such as the roles mentioned in this passage.) What does this quote of Gen. 2:24 reveal to us about the ultimate meaning of marriage? Which statement would you affirm as primary & why: “Marriage is intended to be a picture of Christ and His church” or “The church is intended to be a picture of God’s design for marriage?”
- (b) **Read Mal. 2:13-16.** How does Malachi refer to marriage? Why is it important that we know that God views marriage as a covenant (see also Prov. 2:17 & Ez. 16:8-14)? Who was the witness to this covenant? What other roles did God play in this covenant, and what does this tell us about every marriage?
- (c) Given what we have learned so far, is marriage commanded only for believers or for everyone? Upon what basis do you give your answer? If for everyone, does God’s participation in and governing of marriage apply to non-believers as well as believers? Why or why not? How would you teach a non-believer that they are bound by God’s design for marriage if they rejected the veracity of the Scriptures and rejected God’s authority in their life?

(d) *Family*: **Read Malachi 2:13-16**. Teach this passage to your family. Help: Verse 13 poses a question from the disobedient people: Why does the Lord no longer receive our offerings with favor? Verse 14 reveals the answer: you are not faithful to your wives. Within these verses we learn that marriage is a covenant that is both witnessed by God and created by God (“Did He not make them one” in v.15). We also learn that God gives his Holy Spirit to His people when they marry, and that He is seeking godly offspring as they are fruitful and multiply. We learn how precious marriage is to God, and that since it is a covenant that He both initiates and witnesses, that men have no right to redefine it.

DAY 4 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Rom. 1:24-28**. How does Paul describe homosexual acts (vs. 24 & 26)? What does Paul mean by the terms “natural relations” and “nature” (v. 26, but see v. 27 for more clarity)? Why is lesbian activity “contrary to nature?” Why is homosexual activity (v. 27) contrary to “natural relations?”

(b) How would Gen. 1:27 & 2:24 be a corrective to the sinful actions found in Romans 1? Conversely, how do Gen. 1:27 & 2:24 reveal that the actions in Romans 1 are indeed sinful?

(c) Write a definition of marriage. Write it in a way that it could stand as a policy statement for your family or our church or a local organization of which you are a member.

(d) Given all that you have learned about God’s covenant of marriage, would the concept of “gay marriage” be one you would say is possible or impossible? Could it be possible even though it would be considered sin? Why or why not?

(e) *Family*: Review what you have learned about marriage this week. Now read the definition of marriage your family gave on Day 1 and ask, “How would you like to change this?” With input from all, if correction to the original is needed, write down a more complete definition based on your study this week.

DAY 5 – ASK FOR INSIGHT

READ THE PASSAGE

(a) **Read Matt. 5:42-48**. Meditate on this passage, and then answer this question: In light of what you learned about marriage this week, and the fact that there can be no such thing as a “gay marriage,” how will you obey Matt. 5:43-48 as you participate in the world around you that is moving farther and farther away from God’s design for marriage? Consider your answer to these situations: (1) You have co-workers who now, given the growing acceptance of “gay marriage,” are now revealing they are gay and desiring to marry their partner and they want you to accept it with joy. (2) You have co-workers and friends, some of them Christians, who are saying things such as, “What does it really hurt to allow gay marriage? Isn’t it the loving and compassionate thing to do?” (3) In a conversation where you deny any possibility of the reality of “gay marriage” the person with whom you are speaking charges you with hatred and intolerance. (4) An openly gay couple shows up at the Bible Church for worship. (5) You find yourself serving on a committee that is led by someone who is openly gay. (6) It becomes public that a business that you frequent is extending health care benefits to the partners of its gay employees. (7) Your child makes a new friend at the park you are visiting, and you befriend the mom or dad, and you find out as they are leaving that the adult is part of a gay couple and they are raising this child, now a new friend of your child, together. Etc. etc. etc.

(b) *Family*: If your children are old enough, **Read Matt. 5:42-48** and choose one or two examples from the situations listed in (a) and discuss your family’s response based on the commands found in Matt. 5:42-48 and Biblical principles of wisdom.

DATE: May 5, 2013

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Marriage: God’s Creation