



# **The Sinaitic Light**

## **The Question of Marriage & Divorce**

### **Study Article No. V**

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This article uses the English terms for Elohim (God), Yah (Father) Yahoshua (Christ).

## **Objective and Learning Outcome**

### **Objective:**

The objective of this article is to better understand the constitutionality of marriage and what God expects of married couples.

### **Learning Outcome:**

Upon completion of this study, the reader will:

1. Understand when and how God ordained marriage;
2. Understand the number one reason for divorce;
3. Understand how God feels about divorce;
4. Understand why God rejects many marriages;
5. Understand the effect divorce has upon children;
6. Be able to identify characteristics in a person that could result in a failed marriage and;
7. Be able to construct a marriage template that will create a healthy marriage;

## Introduction

**M**arriage is the most important decision a person will make in their lifetime. The union of two human beings of the opposite sex is a phenomenal act, an act ordained by God. Sadly, the institution of marriage is not well cherished or regarded by many people, especially those in the western world. This postulation is sustained by the number of divorces that are reported on an annual basis. According to Wilkinson & Finkbeiner, Family Law Attorneys, nearly 50 percent of all marriages in the United States will end in divorce (Wilkinson & Finkbeiner, 2018), which is one out of two marriages. This is a staggering number, and it is safe to deduce that this is not what God intended.<sup>1</sup>

God ordained and sanctioned marriage when He created the woman Eve for Adam. The author of Genesis records Adam's sentiments towards God's gift made, especially for Him. "Then the man said, 'This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.' Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:23-24). These sentiments are expressed by Christ himself. "And Pharisees came up to him and tested him by asking, 'Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?' He answered, have you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? So, they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate" (Matt. 19:3-6).<sup>2</sup>

It is God's will for a man to take a wife and for them to live their lives together as one being, not two. Yet, this is a challenge with many marriages today. Two people should come together forming a union to live as one in mind, body and purpose; however, statistics demonstrate that nearly 50 percent of these couples continue to see themselves as two separate persons. This is to say, that couples still view themselves as two separate individuals or a dichotomy instead of one unit, monistic. Thus, the primary impetus for divorce.<sup>3 4 5 6</sup>

## Marriage Failures

There are many reasons that marriages fail. One is that people marry for the wrong reasons. Some people marry for money, physical relations, love, and status. Secondly, they have not learned to love one another. Love is not something that develops when we first meet a person, that emotion is lust, and it is often mistaken for love. Love is a deep passionate feeling that develops overtime after learning to appreciate a person's strengths and weaknesses, their

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1. What percentage of marriages will end in divorce?
  2. When did God sanction marriage?
  3. When two people come together in marriage they should become as \_\_\_\_\_.
  4. Define dichotomy as it relates to marriage.
  5. Define monistic as it relates to marriage.
  6. What is the primary impetus for divorce?

overall character. Sadly, many people do not develop this emotional attribute before they marry and soon learn that certain characteristics and behaviors are not in line with one's idea of a spouse. Thirdly, they have not learned to respect one another as opposite beings. Men and women are different genders composed differently who, *at times* see life differently. Genuine respect for these differences is rare, which causes disrespectful statements to ensue as well as disrespectful behaviors undergirded, with inconsideration. Nevertheless, the number one cause for disenchantment in a marriage that ultimately leads to divorce is selfishness.<sup>7 8 9 10</sup>

Selfishness is defined as “concerned excessively or exclusively with oneself: seeking or concentrating on one's own advantage, pleasure, or well-being without regard for others”. Yah ordained marriage to be a selfless institution which means, “having no concern for self, or the act of being unselfish.” Hence the number one reason marriages dissolve is because one within the union typically is focused upon how they feel, what they want, and what they need with little to no regard about the spouse's feelings pertaining to such matters. Dr. Richard P. Fitzgibbons, Director of the Institute for Marital Healing writes, “Many popes have described selfishness as the major enemy of marital love. In my clinical experience it is the leading cause of divorce. Selfishness turns spouses in upon themselves, thereby seriously damaging their ability to give themselves cheerfully and fully in marriage” (Fitzgibbons: 64). This marital disposition creates distance, and feelings of inadequacies that will inevitably cause the injured party to seek an exit. Marriage is always about the other person, their happiness, their comfort, their security and their pleasure. When these are the focal points within a marriage, a couple will find themselves enjoying what Yah intended for man and woman to enjoy. When these things are absent, relational erosion materializes, which will terminate in divorce, an act that Yah despises.<sup>11 12</sup>

God hates divorce, it was not within His perfect will. God's perfect will is that a man and woman come together to form an alliance that will glorify Him. When there is a selfish disposition within the marriage, the union will not glorify God, it will blaspheme Him. Malachi concurs with this supposition. He writes,

You cry out, ‘Why doesn't the LORD accept my worship?’ I'll tell you why! Because the LORD witnessed the vows you and your wife made when you were young. *But you have been unfaithful to her*, though she remained your faithful partner, the wife of your marriage vows. Didn't the LORD make you one with your wife? In body and spirit, you are his. *And what does he want? Godly children from your union.* So, guard your heart; remain loyal to the wife of your youth.' *For I hate divorce!*' says the LORD, the God of Israel. *'To divorce your wife is to overwhelm her with cruelty,'* says the LORD of Heaven's Armies. *'So, guard your heart; do not be unfaithful to your wife'* (Mal. 2:14-16, NLT) [emphasis added].

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7. What are at least to ignoble reasons people marry?

8. What is the primary reason couples divorce?

9. True or False. Most marriages will end in divorce because couples have not learned to truly love and appreciate one another.

10. What do many people mistake for love?

11. How does selfishness in a marriage make a spouse feel?

12. Marriage is always about the other \_\_\_\_\_.

When a woman married a man in antiquity, normally it was not out of love, but out of necessity; many marriages were arranged, and the couple had to learn to love each other over time. Wives were dependent upon the husband to earn an income that would take care of her and the family. Still, divorce rates were high in Israel. Men were leaving their spouses to marry other women (Mal. 2:11), which left the divorcee financially destitute and vulnerable to rape, kidnapping, enslavement, murder, prostitution, etc. Thus, Yah rebuked the man for divorcing his wife which reveals something very telling to the reader. Remember, God says, “*For I hate divorce!*”. He then says that for a man to divorce his wife is an act of betrayal and cruelty, this is the reason their sacrifices and their worship were rejected. Not only did it have an adverse effect on the wife, but the children suffered also.<sup>13 14 15</sup>

Children of divorce parents have an increased probability of suffering low self-esteem, lack of confidence, (increased) promiscuity, anger, rebellion, suicide, etc. In addition, as adults, they are destined to repeat the same behavior learned from their parents that will create a generational curse of selfishness and divorce. Fitzgibbons writes, “Also, children of divorce can unconsciously model this selfishness as a trait learned from one or both parents, making it difficult to maintain a lifelong marital commitment. Recovery from modeled behaviors is very challenging.” (Fitzgibbons: 64). Yah desires to see His image replicated. This also represents His perfect will, which is often inhibited by failed marriages due to selfishness, inconsideration and disrespect for one another.<sup>16</sup>

## **The Good Marriage**

Marriage is a holy ordained sanctified union created by God that should never be taken lightly. This means that the believer is to always marry a person who fears and loves God just as much as they do. Paul writes that “a wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. If her husband dies, she is free to marry anyone she wishes, *but only if he loves the Lord*” (1 Cor. 7:39, NLT). Establishing a good marriage begins with making sure that one’s potential spouse loves Yah just as much as they do, because marriage should be viewed as a gift given by God.<sup>17</sup>

Marriages are successful when the couple knows God and are married within a godly framework (selflessness, love, respect, consideration, care, support, honor, commitment and trust). These elements are necessary to sustain and strengthen the union when there are adversities. Part of the ownership is upon the man to create a safe comfortable environment for his wife that will inspire her to be what God created her to be. Peter writes, “Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be

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13. What was the impetus for marriage in antiquity?

14. What condition did men leave their wives in after they divorced them?

15. Why did Yah reject Israelite men’s sacrifices?

16. What emotional state could a child of divorced parents find themselves in?

17. Who should a believer and worshiper of Yah marry?

hindered” (1 Pet. 3:7). Husbands are commanded to love their wives (Eph. 5:25, 28, 33; Col. 3:19) but before this is enacted one needs to know what love is.<sup>18</sup>

Paul says, “love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things” (1 Cor. 13:4-7). This is the type of love that spouses must display to each other to follow God’s will and ensure a successful marriage.

The second attribute needed to ensure a successful marriage is respect. While mutual respect is important, it is essential for a wife to have respect for her husband. This is the reason Paul says, “So again I say, each man must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband” (Eph. 5:33, NLT). Notice, Paul commands the man to ensure that his wife feels loved, but to the woman he says to ensure that the husband feels respected. Why not love? Because love is mostly germane to women. Women love the idea and concept of love and so do men, but not nearly to the degree as women. Therefore, men are commanded to make sure that his spouse always feels loved and Paul commands the woman to make sure that her husband always feels revered and respected because this is what men need, respect. Thus, it is the task of the woman to always convey this feeling of respect towards her partner.<sup>19 20</sup>

In closing, a successful marriage is predicated upon the desire to fulfill God’s will and to honor Him first. We achieve this by finding the right partner, preferably one who loves and fears God. If we are to be a part of the marriage statistic that glorifies the Creator it must begin with the desire to do right by Him and by our spouse based upon the formula(s) He has laid before us. Marriage is a job and at times, an arduous task because we are frail human beings who sometimes make bad decisions. Yet, we can overcome the missteps and bad decisions through prayer, faith, love and appreciation for what God did for us at Mount Sinai. He has given us a culture that shows us how to live-in righteousness in the faith of Christ who gave his life at Calvary to atone for our mistakes and transgressions in order to bring us back into right standing with Yah.

There is much more to discuss on this subject. If you have questions about this study or others, join us in fellowship, prayer, praise and study every Saturday at 11:30 am, or call us for consultation pertaining to this subject and any other you may find intriguing. We are a Messianic Judaic assembly teaching the doctrine of Messianic Sinaiticism, which means keeping God’s word in the faith of Christ (Rev. 12:17; 14:12-13). We are NCCI, proclaiming His gospel to the world and to those who are seeking His truth without interpretation or church tradition. May the blessings of Yah be with you and thank you for reading our article.

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18. Explain what a godly framework looks like?

19. What do women require in a relationship to feel viable, needed and secure?

20. What do men need in a relationship to feel revered?

## References

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