

Title: THE MARRIAGE COMMANDMENT, 1 JOHN 5:1 – 5
(Chatham, NJ; 05/13/12, AM) [S-P, Topical]

Theme: Of all the things God commands, a solid, loving marriage built on love and sexual purity is at the top of the list.

Purpose: To address contemporary issues surrounding the notions of marriage that denigrate it and that assume marriage is something that can be thrown away or changed.

Introduction:

1. The seventh commandment's prohibition against adultery (Exodus 20:14) does more than restrain sexual impulses; it preserves, protects, and sanctifies the institution of marriage.
2. The New Testament in Hebrews 13:4 establishes the same principle.
3. Today we draw a straight line between keeping God's commandments and developing faithful, strong marriages. (Although not a Mother's Day sermon directly, this addresses the marriage relationship in which mothers play an equal and significant role.)
4. We will do so primarily with biblical injunctions, and secondarily with evidence from the social sciences.

I. Obey the Commandments

- A. Love and obey, the connecting link to God
 1. John 15:10 – Jesus equates abiding in the love of God and obedience; without the second, one cannot have the first.
 2. In 1 John 5:3 repeats the theme: the love of God equals obedience to the commandments.
 3. Furthermore, John states, these commandments are not burdensome.
 4. Several weeks ago – philosopher and deadbeat dad, Rousseau: suggested that man needed to be free of restraints in order to thrive.
 5. John teaches that humans flourish only when lived under the commands of God and when the created order is maintained.
- B. The “restraints” of marriage are actually guidelines to success.
 1. C. S. Lewis (*Abolition of Man*) noted that in a certain era the aim of life was to “conform the soul to reality,” whereas in the modern age our preoccupation is with “how to subdue reality to the wishes of man.” (Quoted in *Touchstone*, May/June 2012, p. 13)
 2. In actuality we are hard-wired to sustain a male/female relationship, but the lure of forbidden fruit deceives us.
 3. In *Witness*, a book by Whittaker Chambers, he notes that despite their philosophy of seeking to destroy the norms of society, Communists had an emotionally trying time when breaking up.
- C. Healthy Marriages, 1 Corinthians 7
 1. The Bible maintains standards for marriage.
 2. Jesus sees it as an institution inherent in the created order, Mt. 19:4-6. (Gay marriage cannot be justified by us or by any government.)
 3. Paul regulates the relationship in 1 Cor. 7.

II. Choosing to Justify Our Sinful Impulses

- A. Here is how the worldly justification occurs when it comes to marriage.
 1. “We don't want to stay together just for the children.”
 2. “Better to experience a good divorce than a bad marriage.”

3. This second assumes that our choices are limited to: a) good divorce or b) bad marriage.
4. But how about: c) make the marriage better.
5. Why not consider doing so for the sake of children?

B. Cohabiting as another bad choice

1. Marriage has been criticized as “only a piece of paper.”
2. Supposedly by living together the relationship is now on a “higher plane” beyond the formality of ceremony.
3. The facts (stubborn things that they are) contradict this thinking.
4. Cohabiting is worse for the relationship than marriage: relationship that do this before marriage tend not to last.
5. Furthermore, marriage is not “just a piece of paper.” It is a covenant.
6. Even more, if you are planning to stay together, say so in the very public ceremony called Marriage.
7. Much of this is just a rationalization to indulge personal impulses and evade moral behavior.

III. The So-Called Good Divorce (*Propositions* published by the Institute for American Values)

- More evidence that God’s way is right.
 - Defined on page 2 (bottom)
 - Children not substantially harmed, 3; adequate substitute for a good or mediocre marriage?
 - Negative effects of divorce not diluted by cooperative parents (see star*)
- A. *Between Two Worlds* (a book, p. 4)
1. Compared good divorces to bad divorces (see definition)
 2. Children of good divorces definitely fared worse than those of happy marriages.
 3. Children of good divorces fared worse even than children in unhappy marriages (as long as they were low conflict marriages, as most are that end in divorce)
- B. Effect on educational attainment
1. Grown children of divorce have lower educational achievements overall than those whose parents remained married; the good divorce did little to prevent this.
 2. Probably this is because parental resources are diluted (see underlined quote)
- C. Effect on future marital success
1. See quote on page 6.
 2. Bottom – offspring are harmed more by divorce of a low-conflict marriage.
 3. In a high-conflict divorce the parents themselves can be blamed, but in a low-conflict divorce the institution of marriage becomes suspect.
 4. See quote on top of p. 7.
 5. Read his conclusion, p. 7.

Conclusion:

1. Mom and Dad together are still the ultimate dynamic duo.
2. Husband and wife are to love one another, God, and the marriage they have created.
3. Marriage was created by God, and it should be treated with the sanctity with which we treat all holy things.
4. Make your marriage work!