

## Doctrinal Distinctive: Statement on Christian Marriage

**CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE:** *We believe that Christian marriage is a sacred institution ordained by God for the well-being and propagation of humankind. It is a covenant representing the spiritual and physical union into which one man and one woman may enter for the glory of God, symbolizing the relationship of Christ to his church. As the sign of this covenant, sexual activity is reserved exclusively for the marriage relationship. According to the scriptural ideal, marriage requires sacrificial love and faithfulness to each other for life.*

Genesis 1:27-28; Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:1-12; Ephesians 5:21-33; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8; Hebrews 13:4

Explanation:

The complexities of defining marriage in modern culture have continued to grow. Court cases such as Obergefell v. Hodges of 2015, in which the Supreme Court of the United States ruled that the fundamental right to marry was guaranteed to same sex couples, have clouded the definition of marriage. However, we believe the definition of Christian marriage is determined by the word of God, not a human courts' decision.

Christian marriage is a sacred institution. It was God's idea from the very beginning. His purposes for the couple include help, companionship, intimacy, spiritual growth, sexual enjoyment and propagation of the human race. (Matthew 19:4-6, Mark 10:6-8, Eccl. 9:9, Genesis 1:27-28, 2:18, 2:24-5)

Christian marriage is designed by God to be between one man and one woman. It is more than a social contract between two people. God designed man and woman for each other with complementary physiology and for complementary relationship that cannot be attained by any other combination. (Genesis 1:27, 31, 2:18, Romans 1:26,27)

Christian marriage is a covenant. A covenant is a binding relationship that is meant to last a lifetime. The marriage covenant is intended by God to represent Jesus Christ's relationship with the church, his bride. Marriage as a covenant requires faithfulness, perseverance, love, sacrifice and submission. (Mark 10:9, Ephesians 5:21-33, Genesis 2:24)

Christian marriage is exclusive. It is designed to be between one man and one woman for life. Sex was designed for the marriage bed alone and scripture admonishes us to keep the "marriage bed pure". While scripture gives some potential allowances for divorce, this was not the scriptural ideal. (Matthew 19:9, Mark 10:9, Romans 7:2, 1 Corinthians 7:10, 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8, Hebrews 13:4)

Converge's emphasis on Christian marriage is not new. It flows from our affirmations holding to the authoritative nature of the word of God, the reflection of marriage to the relationship of Christ and the church and the need for all believers to submit to the word (Christian conduct). It was first stated in a 1974 resolution on the family unit then again in a resolution in 1977:



*Christian marriage is a sacred institution ordained of God for the happiness of mankind and the propagation of the race. It is a spiritual and physical union into which one man and one woman may enter for the glory of God and, according to the scriptural ideal, is to be broken only by death (Genesis 2:18, 24; Matthew 19:3-9; Romans 7:2).*

START. STRENGTHEN. SEND.