



The Other Side of the Boat

PART 4: WHAT IS MARRIAGE?

By Gil Vollmering

Christians today are educating themselves on gender and sexuality. As a result, many understand that being LGBTQ+ isn't a choice, and Christians are accepting of gay people more and more. But the rubber meets the road when the subject of same-sex marriage crosses into Christian spaces.

Growing up in the church, I did the whole Ward-and-June-Cleaver thing: got married in a traditional church ceremony, had two kids and a dog, and created a white-picket fence home. I never really gave marriage a second thought. It was just what one does after college to define the rest of your life. All that changed when the United State Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage in 2015. Our son had come out three years before. Suddenly, I had to spend some time figuring out what I thought about him marrying. Turns out that what I thought I knew, I really didn't.

Marriage is a complex legal, societal, religious, personal and spiritual institution that has taken many forms over the centuries. In generalities, marriage is when two people (generally two) separate from their biological family to form a new

family unit of their own. This aspect is important as it is family that is served best by marriage in all of its facets. Family has always been considered the key societal building block upon which advancing civilizations depend. A new union carries on the traditions, values, properties and genetics from one generation to another. It can build a legacy or heritage that overcomes death. Marital union orders society and provides stability. It channels eros love to agape,

This is Part 4 of a six-part series examining both traditional and non-traditional Biblical passages as well as cultural influences that affect how we read those passages. You can access the rest of the series in the archived CP Parents Newsletters found [HERE](#).

mirroring God and Israel, and Christ and the church. Marriage is covenantal and self-giving. It's a means by which property is passed down through generations.

When you examine the graph of Old Testament marriages (pg 2), you can see there are all types of marriage. But in the New Testament, the example we see of marriage at that time was one man and one woman, a decidedly monogamous union. How did that happen? How did we get from Solomon to Jesus?

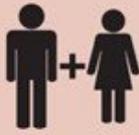
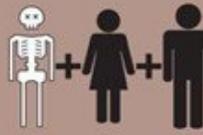
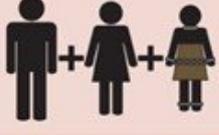
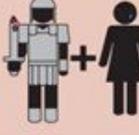
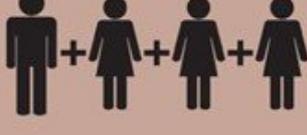
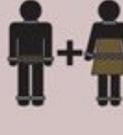
(cont'd on page 2)

PART 4: WHAT IS MARRIAGE? (cont'd from page 1)

Clearly, time and culture have an impact on our understanding of marriage. Why is this even important today? Because 1) marriages have not always looked like what we have today, and 2) they were adapted to meet the societal needs of the day. I believe we are on a new trajectory from the curses in Genesis 3 to Christ's blessings in Galatians 3. Matthew reminds us that there is no marriage or giving of marriage in Heaven. Why? Because there is no need. Why? Many scholars suggest that in our new creation, we will be immortal and not have to give birth, thus having no need for a temporal marriage as it is a shadow of what our relationship with Christ will be in its fullness. So marriages in the here and now are a best case image of the future Glory.

This is important because the same characteristics we find in our marriages: a kinship bond, creating a new family, covenant, monogamy, self-giving love, equal status shares in fact all the characteristics with the Divine: God's relationship with Israel, Christ's relationship to the Church and our future relationship in Heaven.

MARRIAGE =

<p>MAN + WOMAN (NUCLEAR FAMILY) Genesis 2:24</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -wives subordinate to their husbands -interfaith marriages forbidden -marriages generally arranged, not based on romantic love -bride who could not prove her virginity was stoned to death 		<p>MAN + BROTHER'S WIDOW (LEVIRATE MARRIAGE) Genesis 38:6-10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -widow who had not borne a son required to marry her brother in law -must submit sexually to her new husband 	
<p>MAN + WIVES + CONCUBINES</p> <p>Abraham (2 concubines), Gideon (1), Nahor (1), Jacob (1), Eliphaz (1), Gideon (2), Caleb (2), Manassah (1), Solomon (300), Belshazzar (> 1)</p>		<p>RAPIST + HIS VICTIM Deuteronomy 22:28-29</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -virgin who is raped must marry her rapist -rapist must pay victim's father 50 shekels of silver for property loss 	
<p>MAN + WOMAN + WOMAN'S PROPERTY Genesis 16</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -man could acquire his wife's property including her slaves 		<p>MALE SOLDIER + PRISONER OF WAR Numbers 31:1-16, Deuteronomy 21:11-14</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -under Moses' command, Israelites kill every Midianite man, woman and child; save for the virgin girls who are taken as spoils of war -wives must submit sexually to their new owners 	
<p>MAN + WOMAN + WOMAN + WOMAN... (POLYGAMY)</p> <p>Lamech (2 wives), Esau (3), Jacob (2), Ashur (2), Gideon (many), Elkanah (2), David (many), Solomon (700), Rehoboam (3), Abijah (14), Jehoram, Joash, Ahab, Jeholachin, Belshazzar</p>		<p>MALE SLAVE + FEMALE SLAVE Exodus 21:4</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -slave owner could assign female slaves to his male slaves -female slaves must submit sexually to their new husbands 	

Source: ReligiousTolerance.org

So yes, same-sex marriages are a good thing for all the same reasons. The institution of marriage is simply a human construct reflecting the future Glory of God. And same-sex persons, all image-bearers of God, can enter into and have the same blessings of this relationship, not because of some piece of paper or human ritual. No, it's because they invited the Divine into their joint life together surrendering themselves to God and each other. "What God has joined, let no man put asunder." Amen.



"All of you together are Christ body, and each of you is a part of it." - 1 Corinthians 12:27

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GAIL & JOHN BLAYLOCK

It was an ordinary day in life until it wasn't.

I got up, made breakfast, got ready for work, saw my two boys off to high school and then as I headed out the door, I saw it. The letter that would change everything. My youngest son Jack, 16 years old at the time, had left a letter to me in the kitchen sealed in an envelope for "my eyes only." The letter was long but the only line I really had seared into my brain was "Mom I am gay, and I would do anything in the world to change it but I can't." He explained how he was tired of living with the secret.

Our son was known as a free spirit "hippy" type person by all that knew him. Jack was a leader at his high school, athletic, a homecoming candidate, baptized believer...and he had a secret. He realized he was gay in middle school when all the boys started taking interest in girls and he didn't feel the same but kept the secret to himself. He tried everything to change his sexuality, including dating girls. Despite all efforts, every day he woke up lonely, anxious, depressed and faking happiness.

He was constantly asked at school if he was homosexual, and he would reply, "Do people ask you if you're heterosexual?" This went on for years until one day he couldn't do it anymore. His anxiety and depression were just too much. Hence, the letter.

"The best gift you are ever going to give someone - the permission to feel safe in their own skin. To feel worthy. To feel like they are enough." - Hannah Brencher

Jack's coming out was actually a relief for me as a mother. I had spent many years worrying about his mental health and what was causing him to struggle so much when his life seemed so perfect. I now had the answer. Eventually, he gave me permission to tell his dad and he told his brother about a year after that. I am not going to say the news was easy to hear because I did struggle with



my church upbringing, which was very legalistic. But I can and will say that all of us in our family embraced him in our own way immediately with unconditional love, regardless of the consequences or opinions of other people.

I still didn't know what to do with what I had been taught all of my life, so I spent a solid year or so reading everything I could get my hands on. I needed to reconcile my Biblical questions with my precious son's sexuality. In time, with a lot of reading and a lot of prayer, I did.

Now I am completely at peace with my son and who God made him to be. He is truly the most compassionate and kind human being I have ever met. He may not be ready to step into a church building again but his daily actions are closer to what Jesus teaches us than the actions of any Christian I have ever met. I am proud to call him my son and so thankful to be his mom.

UPCOMING EVENTS

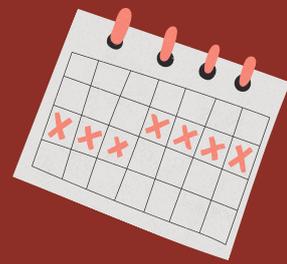


PeacePrints Retreats

A safe place for parents to express their feelings with fellow believers in Christ

[More information](#) on PeacePrints

- Mar 25-27, 2022 - Nashville, TN



Group Spiritual Direction for Parents

A place to help grow your awareness of God's work in your and your family's life and to share this spiritual journey with others

[More information](#) on Group Spiritual Direction

CenterPeace Conference

- Nov 3-5, 2022 - Wilshire Baptist Church, Dallas, TX

[More information](#) about Conference

REVIEW: "LOVE MAKES ROOM, AND OTHER THINGS I LEARNED WHEN MY DAUGHTER CAME OUT" BY STACI FRENES

Although every family's story is unique, most parents share a set of feelings, fears and questions. One common experience is how differently spouses process it all. I spent lots of time slogging through theological and geeky books; I was determined to figure all of it out. While I was being intellectual, my wife Lorie was being smarter; she was getting to the commonsense bottom line of what loving our gay son meant. "Love Makes Room" is a book that we both enjoyed.

If you are looking for a theological tome, this book isn't it. Instead, the author shares a very personal story of a multi-year journey toward acceptance of their gay daughter.

The Frenes family are faithful Christians, active in the church – Staci was a professional Christian singer and worship leader – and as she says early in the book, "This wasn't supposed to happen in a family like ours." Staci chronicles the private fears that parents often wrestle with, and does so in a clear, engaging writing style. The book includes many conversations with her gay daughter, her husband, their son, and their friends at church. She recounts the inner turmoil and pivotal moments of progress on their path toward peace with their daughter, themselves, and God. As she puts it,

I learned to live in the tension of uncertainty, and to my surprise discovered a richer, truer relationship with my daughter and with God because of it."

Each chapter is themed as making room for necessary steps on the journey, things like questions, awkward conversations, laughter, new community, differences, and expanding faith. The "differences" chapter describes a familiar challenge: dealing with folks at church that now view your child (and you) differently.

Wherever you are on the journey with your child, I'd recommend you "make room" for this book. It is both an easy read and a hard look at a familiar faith struggle.

By Andy Harbert



We are excited to announce that Staci will be speaking at the next [CenterPeace Conference!](#)

A recommended resource list can be found on the [CenterPeace Resource Page](#)



CenterPeace

A place to belong

10805 Walnut Hill Ln, Dallas, TX 75238

469-955-2407

info@centerpeace.net