

Doctrine of Polygamy

Introduction

1. The teaching of the epistles is clear that a pastor-teacher must be the husband of only one woman. (1Ti 3:2)

1Ti 3:2 Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach,

1.1 The epistles also make clear a deacon must be the husband of but one wife. (1Ti 3:12)

1Ti 3:12 A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well.

1.2 Every believer is ordered to love his wife as Christ loved the church. (Eph 5:25)

Eph 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ...

1.3 The New Testament therefore obviously prohibits multiple wives.

History of Polygamy

1. Polygamy was never authorized in the Bible but rather seemed to be tolerated as opposed to being sanctioned. The tolerance was found only in the Old Testament.

2. The wife of a man's youth was rather a prize to be forever appreciated said the Scripture.

Deu 17:16 The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for the LORD has told you, "You are not to go back that way again."

Deu 17:17 He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver and gold.

Psa 128:3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table.

Psa 128:4 Thus is the man blessed who fears the LORD.

Pro 5:18 May your fountain be blessed, and may you rejoice in the wife of your youth.

Pro 5:19 A loving doe, a graceful deer--may her breasts satisfy you always, may you ever be captivated by her love.

Pro 5:20 Why be captivated, my son, by an adulteress? Why embrace the bosom of another man's wife?

Pro 31:10 A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies.
Pro 31:11 Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value.

Ecc 9:9 Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun--all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labor under the sun.

3. The New Testament established the sanctity of marriage.

Heb 13:4 Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

4. Polygamy is related to “reversionism” and is an overt expression of a negative mental attitude. The anecdote of Lamech introduces us to the subject.

4.1 Polygamy was pervasive in the line of Lamech, a notorious reversionist.

4.2 Lamech, son of Methushael was our first recorded polygamist. He married Adah and Zillah. Lamech was said to be the father of nomads, musicians, and metal smiths.

Gen 4:19 Lamech married two women, one named Adah and the other Zillah.

Gen 4:20 Adah gave birth to Jabal; he was the father of those who live in tents and raise livestock.

Gen 4:21 His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all who play the harp and flute.

Gen 4:22 And Zillah, she also bare Tubalcain, an instructor of every artisan in brass and iron.

Gen 4:23 Lamech said to his wives, "Adah and Zillah, listen to me; wives of Lamech, hear my words. I have killed a man for wounding me, a young man for injuring me.

5. Polygamy violates the concept of Right Man/Right Woman.

6. By acts of volition and a refusal to conform to God's protocol plan a man can destroy his right woman. You can either accept the woman God has provided or reject God's wisdom.

7. Man is not designed for an intimate relationship with more than one woman; man is not psychologically capable of more than a one woman relationship.

8. Polygamy is a form of self-induced misery for both the man and the woman.

9. Elkanah's polygamy contributed to Hannah's troubles. Hannah was one of the two wives of Elkanah, a Levite of the line of Kohath, who lived in Mount Ephraim.

10. Because Hannah was barren Elkanah had married Peninnah, a second wife, who bore him children.

11. Hannah was a woman of prayer and faith as well as a woman of strong desires. She begged God for a son, and promised that if God provided, she would give him back to the Lord. This she did when Samuel was born.

11.1 Jealousy between Hannah and Peninnah resulted in Hannah's trauma.

1Sa 1:6 And because the LORD had closed her womb, her rival kept provoking her in order to irritate her.

12. Gideon's polygamy caused trouble among his children.

Jdg 8:29 Gideon

Jdg 8:30 ... had seventy sons of his own, for he had many wives.

Jdg 8:31 He also had a concubine, who lived in Shechem ... she bore him a son, whom he named Abimelech ...

Jdg 9:1 Abimelech ... hired vain and light persons, who followed him ...

Jdg 9:5 they slew his half-brothers, the sons of Gideon ...

Jdg 9:6 ... the men of Shechem gathered together ... and made Abimelech king ...

Jdg 9:22 After Abimelech had reigned three years over Israel,

Jdg 9:23 ... God sent an evil spirit between Abimelech and the men of Shechem; and the men of Shechem dealt treacherously with Abimelech:

12.1 The Lord will discipline Abimelech a concubine who dispossessed a rightful heir. The act of Gideon resulted in a problem even for Gideon and his posterity.

13. Now let's look at further anecdotal evidence of problems associated with polygamy.

13.1 David's polygamy compounded his problems with his children and the discipline extended to the second generation.

1Ch 3:1 These were the sons of David born to him in Hebron: The firstborn was Amnon the son of Ahinoam of Jezreel; the second, Daniel the son of Abigail of Carmel;

1Ch 3:2 the third, Absalom the son of Maacah daughter of Talmai king of Geshur; the fourth, Adonijah the son of Haggith;

1Ch 3:3 the fifth, Shephatiah the son of Abital; and the sixth, Ithream, by his wife Eglah.

1Ch 3:4 These six were born to David in Hebron, where he reigned seven years and six months. David reigned in Jerusalem thirty-three years,

1Ch 3:5 and these were the children born to him there: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan and Solomon. These four were by Bathsheba daughter of Ammiel.

1Ch 3:6 There were also Ibhar, Elishua, Eliphelet,

1Ch 3:7 Nogah, Nepheg, Japhia,

1Ch 3:8 Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet--nine in all.

1Ch 3:9 All these were the sons of David, besides his sons by his concubines. And Tamar was their sister.

13.2 The result of Solomon's failure to heed God's warning concerning polygamy is recorded in 1st Kings.

1Ki 11:1 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh's daughter--Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites.

1Ki 11:2 They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love.

1Ki 11:3 He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.

1Ki 11:4 As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.

1Ki 11:5 He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites.

1Ki 11:6 So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

1Ki 11:7 On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites.

1Ki 11:8 He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.