

Marriage and Family in the Bible

Note how the various models of marriage, relationships and family groups vary within the 66 books of the Protestant Bible. In the Hebrew Bible, marriage usually results from a contract which binds families / clans. Jesus makes marriage a more individual matter, and a permanent relationship overseen by God. Paul in Corinthians recommends against marriage, particularly as history is about to end, but (pseudonymous) 1 Timothy takes a different tack.

Comment on the various forms of marriage and intimate relationships and families which are found in these texts. Given the variety, how do we use the Bible in building an understanding of marriage and family relationships today? *Each Group will report on one insight in response to this question.*

1. Genesis 2:18 to 24: Adam and Eve. Particularly Gen. 2:24: Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. As a prototype, an explanation of why a man and a woman become one.
2. Genesis 16: 1 to 6 and Genesis 21: 9 to 14: Abraham and Sarah, Hagar and Ishmael (i.e. *God hears*). Hagar is given “as a wife”.
3. Genesis 29:15 to 31 and 30:1 to 13: Jacob, Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah.
4. Exodus 20:17: Commandment Ten, the property that belongs to your neighbor which you will not covet...
5. Exodus 21:7 to 11: If he takes another wife to himself...
6. Numbers 36: 5 and 9: Marriage within a clan of the father’s tribe...
7. Deuteronomy 25: 5 to 10: Levirate marriage.
8. Ruth 1:16 to 19, and 4:9 to 10: Ruth and Naomi, and Boaz.
9. Esther 2:2 to 4, and 8 to 17: Queen Esther and the King.
10. 2 Samuel 11:1 to 5, and 14 to 17, and 26 to 27: David and Bathsheba.
11. Ecclesiastes 9:9 and 10: Enjoy life with the wife whom you love...
12. Matthew 1: 16 to 25: Mary and Joseph, with Jesus.
13. Matthew 5: 31 to 33: Divorce and remarriage.

14. Matthew 19: 3 to 12: Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate; and words on eunuchs.
15. Matthew 22: 23 to 30: ...his brother shall marry the widow...
16. Mark 3:31 to 35: Jesus on kinship relations.
17. Mark 10: 10 to 12: Divorce.
18. Luke 14:25 to 33: Whoever comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children...
19. Romans 7: 1 to 3: Thus a married woman is bound by the law to her husband...
20. 1 Corinthians 7: 7 to 16: ...remain unmarried...
21. 1 Corinthians 7: 25 to 40: The unmarried and the widows.
22. 1 Timothy 3:1 to 3: A standard for church leadership: in literal Greek “married only once” means not to practice polygamy.
23. 1 Timothy 4: 1 to 5: ...deceitful spirits and teaching of demons...forbid marriage...
24. 1 Timothy 5: 9 to 16: ... for when [younger widows’] sensual desires alienate them from Christ, they want to marry...