

Should a Man Have More Than One Wife?

Polygamy is a common practice in Africa and among Muslim believing people. It is the practice of a man having two or more wives. It has been practiced almost as long as man has been on earth. Since polygamy has been here a long time, many people think it is alright. Is that true? No! Sin has been with man longer than polygamy. Is sin alright? No! Just because something has been here a long time does not make it right. For a thing to be right it has to be accepted by God.

What is God's attitude toward polygamy? God is the one who brought marriage into the world. He made the first man, Adam (Genesis 1:26). He saw that it was not good for Adam to be alone. He then made a "wife" for Adam. Notice God did not make "wives" for Adam. If He had wanted Adam to have more than one wife, He would have made him more than one. One was enough. God knows best.

Man in his different cultures has brought many ideas about marriage into the world. Some of man's ideas agree with God's plan. Some of man's ideas do **not** agree with God's plan. This is true with polygamy. Polygamy is a "man-

made" idea. It is **not** in agreement with God's plan for marriage. Anything that does not agree with what God has done or said is sin. God's plan is one man and woman (wife) for life (Genesis 2).

There are many examples of polygamy in the Bible. The first person to be a polygamist was Lamech (Genesis 4:19-24). He lived six generations after Adam. He was a murderer. Nothing good is said about him.

Abraham was also a polygamist (Genesis 16:1-5). His wife, Sarai, was unable to have children. She gave her slave, Hagar, to be Abraham's wife. Hagar had children for Abraham. Sarah then became jealous of Hagar. This marriage was then full of troubles.

Another polygamist was Esau. He was the firstborn of Isaac and Rebekah. Esau married two Hittite women (Genesis 26:33-34). They caused much grief to Isaac and Rebekah. Polygamist marriages affect more than just the man and his wives.

Gideon was a great and brave leader. He had 70 sons from many wives (Judges 8:30-31). What kind of a father could he be to 70 sons? Not the kind that God wants us to be.

King Solomon had 700 wives, princesses, and 300 concubines. His wives turned his heart away from God (1 Kings 11:3). His downfall as a king was a result of his practice of polygamy.

Nowhere in the Bible can we find

polygamy doing any good. Everything that is said about it shows it causes troubles. That has not changed. Today polygamy still causes many marriage problems for those who practice it.

Let us see some Bible principles that teach against the practice of polygamy. Genesis 2:23-24 says that a man shall *"leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife."* God did **not** say that man was to be joined to his "wives." He said that man was to be joined to his "wife." That is one and only one!

Paul compares the husband and wife to Christ and the church: *"For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church..."* (Ephesians 5:23). In Ephesians 1:22-23 we are told that the church is the body of Christ. There is only one body (Ephesians 4:4) so there is only one church. A man can have as many wives as Christ has churches. Christ has only one church so a man can have only one wife. Nowhere does the Bible speak of a man (one) being over wives (many) and that being right with God.

Matthew 19:3-9 speaks about divorce. Jesus Christ shows that God never wanted man (or woman) to divorce. The same is true with polygamy. God does **not** want a man to have more than one wife. Jesus said that a man shall *"leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh."* Jesus spoke of one man and one woman marrying. He said that marriage

is made up of one man and one woman. The two make one flesh. When a man has more than one wife he is sinning. God hates sin.

In 1 Timothy 3:2 we are told that an elder **must** be the husband of **one wife**. Why not two or more? If it is a good practice, then why should not a church leader be a polygamist? The reason is that God does **not** want that kind of a marriage. Those who practice polygamy are sinning in God's eyes. They cannot be church leaders nor church members.

Let us notice some problems with polygamy in the Bible. First, it causes strife and jealousy. We see it in the lives of those who practice it today. Joseph was sold into Egyptian slavery by his brothers because of jealousy from a polygamist marriage. Second, no man can be a proper husband by being a polygamist. Third, he can't be a proper father as God intended. If a man has many children how can he be a father who brings them up "*chastening and admonition of the Lord*" (Ephesians 6:4)? Fourth, polygamy causes a man to go away from God rather than closer to God. We should do nothing that causes us to go away from God. Fifth, it makes man master over woman. God never intended that in marriage. Man is to be the head of the wife and family. God said that a man is to love his wife as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5). Christ died for the church. A man must be willing to die for his wife. Is a

polygamist going to do that? I doubt it. His main concern is himself. He wants to be the "big" man. He thinks that by having many wives he is that "big" man.

What must a polygamist do if he wants to become a Christian? First, he must realize that he is a lost sinner. He then must **believe** in Jesus Christ as the Son of God (Mark 16:16). Following his belief in Christ, he must **repent** (Acts 2:38). That means he must get rid of all sin in his life. In his marriage, he must get rid of all his "wives" but the first one. After repenting, he must **confess** his faith in Christ as the Son of God (Romans 10:10). He is now ready for **baptism**. This baptism is a burial in water (Romans 6:3-4). It is for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38). This is what everyone has to do to become a Christian. Have you done these things? If not, you are not a Christian. If we can help you to become a Christian, please write and let us know.



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truthfortheworld.org

info@tftw.org

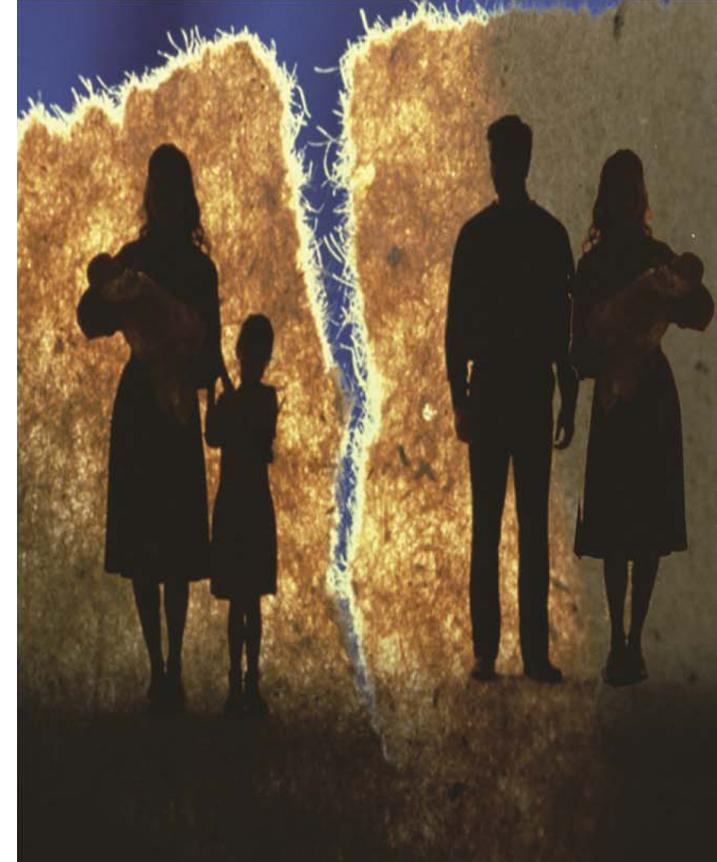
P.O. Box 241

Bethel Springs, TN 38315

U.S.A.



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