

God Defined Marriage

God designed marriage for humanity. As first described in Genesis and later affirmed by Jesus, marriage is a God-ordained, covenant relationship between a man and a woman. This lifelong, sexually exclusive relationship brings children into the world and thus sustains the stewardship of the earth. Biblical marriage — marked by faithfulness, sacrificial love and joy — displays the relationship between God and his people.¹

While commentators, politicians and judges may revise their understanding of marriage in response to shifting societal trends, followers of Jesus should embrace his clear vision of marriage found in Matthew 19:4-6:

“Haven’t you read,” Jesus replied, “that at the beginning the Creator ‘made them male and female,’ and said, ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh’? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

Nothing in the Supreme Court’s *Obergefell v. Hodges* opinion changes the truth about marriage. What has changed is the legal definition of marriage, which is now at variance with orthodox biblical faith as it has been affirmed across the centuries and as it is embraced today by nearly two billion Christians in every nation on earth.

In its role as a moral teacher, the law now misleads Americans about the true nature of marriage. Evangelicals and other followers of the Bible have a heightened opportunity to demonstrate the attractiveness of loving Christian marriages and families. Evangelicals should renew their commitment to the sacrificial love and covenantal faithfulness to which Jesus calls all husbands and wives.

As witnesses to the truth, evangelicals should be gracious and compassionate to those who do not share their views on marriage. Those who continue to embrace biblical teaching on marriage will increasingly appeal to the First Amendment protection not just for abstract belief, but for the practice of their faith. The National Association of Evangelicals calls on Congress to enact laws, on the president to implement policies, and on the courts to render judgments that uphold the freedom and human rights of all Americans.

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¹ *Theology of Sex* (Washington, DC: National Association of Evangelicals, 2012), 10.