**THE DOCTRINE OF CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE FOR UNIFORM PRACTICE**

The greatest delight of men and women on earth is Jesus Christ. To know Jesus and live with Him is the most excellent thing a man or woman can obtain on earth. Love Jesus above a man, a woman, or a child. Love Jesus above your wife, your husband and your child. Desire to live with Jesus in heaven forever.

***Proverbs. 8:35,36;***

***35 For whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord.***

***36 But he that sinneth against me wrongeth his own soul: all they that hate me love death.***

***Philipians. 3:8.***

***Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ,***

**LET JESUS GUIDE YOU TO WHOM YOU SHOULD MARRY**

When you choose to serve God and obey His word, the Lord will also love you and become interested in you to do good things for your life. That will encourage you to continue to obey Him. Repent of your sins, obey and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. Then ask Him for a suitable and good marriage partner for yourself and you will be surprised of the blessed gift of a marriage partner that He will give you. Prov. 19:14. Children of God should not marry unbelievers. Unbelievers are people who are still living in sin. Some are of other religions, while some are Christians by religion, but are disobedient and ungodly. You can know them by their life style and evil dressing. Ask well to know the Christian life of the person.

***2 Corinthians 6:14-16.***

***14 Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?***

***15 And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?***

***16 And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people.***

The following scriptures show that you should not marry somebody who has been in a right marriage relationship with a man or with a woman but later backslided and divorced the man or woman. Hence before you accept to marry someone, check the marital history of that person to avoid fornication and adultery. in marriage. Those ***married, should still confirm this.***

***Luke 16:18***

***Whosoever putteth away his wife, and marrieth another, committeth adultery: and whosoever marrieth her that is put away from her husband committeth adultery.***

***Romans. 7:2,3.***

***2 For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband.***

***3 So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.***

When a man goes into correct marriage with a woman, having followed due procedures, that marriage union remains binding. The individuals in the marriage, the parents, the court of law or the Church can never nullify their marriage. Do not think that divorce letter from the court has authority to cancel a true marriage that God had joined together

***Matthew. 19:6***

***Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.***

Do not take a woman to stay with you in the name of marriage without the consent of her parents. That is sin in the sight of God who sees you as a thief. Go and settle with her parents. Pay her dowry, or request parental consent to marry her and pay dowry later.

**COURTSHIP**

This is a provision made for the intending marriage partners to interact with themselves, discuss and plan how their future marriage and family shall be like. It is a period of time for the partners to know themselves, judge themselves and determine whether or not to continue based on what the individuals deduced during the period. Courtship period is delicate and tempting. The church must supervise the intending partners well during courtship to keep them from acts of defilements and immorality. Keep yourself pure. The dowry should be paid after courtship. Do not wed immoral partners in the church. That defiles the alter of God.

**MEDICAL TESTS**

Many marriages get affected in later time and the eternal life of the marriage partners get jeopardized because some adverse health or physiological conditions of the body were not known due to lack of medical tests before marriage. Medical tests and verification are required to know the availability and fitness of the genitals, HIV Aids status, and genotype to guide against children with sickle cell.

**THE WEDDING**

Church wedding must follow a certified document signed by the appropriate person(s) from the bride's family showing that she has been duly released for marriage. The attire of the bridegroom and especially of the bride and bride’s maids must be holy. It is better sown that rented. Every form of pride and worldliness must be avoided. The decorations, receptions and all activities should give glory to God. No wedding ring or any form of jewelry should be used. The bride's hairdo must be godly. Do all things to the glory of God. Pregnancy test is required to avoid wedding a pregnant lady.

**WHAT MAKES MARRIAGE BINDING**

When a man who has never married and a woman who has never married agree to marry each other, the next thing to do is to seek parental consent, especially of the woman. The lady's parents may require dowry payment. This needs to be settled or proper agreement should be made with the parents to release her for marriage, without dowry or with part-payment of it until later time, if you do not have all their demand now. Next to this is an occasion when the woman should be released to you for marriage. In many traditions, the first marriage celebration is the day when dowry is being paid. During this day the parents of the lady and representatives of the parents of the man assemble together for the bride price or dowry to be paid. During this day the parents receive the full dowry or part of it and enter into agreement to release their daughter to the man for marriage. Some call this traditional wedding. Where church wedding is not intended by the couple, the bride’s parents release their daughter for marriage that day and the man can take her home as a wife to cleave with her in sexual relationship to become one flesh.

***Matthew. 19:5***

***And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?***

However, when there is agreement between the parents and the intending partners that their marriage should consummate in church wedding, then dowry payment or traditional marriage, as it is called by some cultures, is not the consummation of the marriage process, but the church wedding. In this case, after dowry payment the bride remains under the authority of the parents until the church wedding day when she shall be released at the church to her husband. Before then, they must not have sex with each other. If that happens, it is sin because they are not yet married. Up to this point, the marriage can be dissolved and the dowry returned, because church wedding where the marriage process should be completed, has not taken place.

**ONE FLESH IN MARRIAGE.**

***Genesis 24:6.***

***And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her...*** (They became one flesh after sex)

After the wedding, sexual intercourse engaged in by the newly wed makes them one flesh. They cannot be separated again for marriage to another till one of them dies. However, in the event that the man or woman has no sexual parts or impaired sexual parts that defy medical treatment, but has deceived the partner, the marriage union must be disannulled because of the place of sex in marriage. This does not apply to ill-health in a husband or wife after many years of marriage.

***Matthew 19:12***

***For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from their mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men...***

***1Corinthians. 7:1-5***

***Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman.***

***2 Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.***

***3 Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.***

***4 The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife.***

***5 Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.***

Such matters should be made open to a godly church authority for investigation and conclusion.

***Matthew 18:18.***

***Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.***

**THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE**

God did not make provision for more than one wife for any man. Polygamy is a sin. From the scriptures God ordained marriage for the following:

i. Fellowship, friendship and love***. (Gen. 2:18).***

ii. Sexual pleasure in righteousness and purity. ***(Prov.5:18,19).***

iii. Child bearing. ***(Gen. 1:28).***

iv. Purity in human society and the church. ***(1Cor. 7:2).***

v. Mutual protection. ***(Gen. 20:16).***

vi. To work together in Gods commission. ***(Gen. 2:18).***

vii. Because two are better than one. ***(Eccl. 4:9-12).***

Do not deny each other sex, neither should sex be carried out in uncleanness against the law of decency. Do not imitate ungodly sexual approaches from those possessed by evil spirits, as in blue films, nor watch it to defile your heart before God.

**THE ROLE OF THE WIFE IN MARRIAGE.**

***Eph. 5:22-24.***

***22 Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.***

***23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.***

***24 Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.***

The scripture instructs the wife to submit herself to her own husband as she submits to Christ. She should accept the authority and leadership of the husband over her and obey him with respect and reverence, as Sarah obeyed Abraham. The wife and all that she has gotten in the marriage belong to her husband and he must not be denied of them. The wife should submit her body to her husband. Women should learn to do good to and please their husbands. Submit to your husband in everything and God will bless and promote you, and give you life eternal in Jesus name He will make you enjoy peace.

***1 Peter. 3:1,5,6.***

***1 Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives; 5 For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:***

***6 Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.***

Do not be soon angry, rude or stubborn to your husband. Do not lie to him. However, marriage to a man does not mean the woman’s soul is under the man's control. No! Her soul is under the control of God, Love God above your husband. Anytime the rule or demand of your husband goes against the word of God, you must politely, humbly but firmly refuse to obey him and be ready even to separate from him and stay aside to serve your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, if the man insists on your disobedience to God. The woman is to take good care of the children and the home.

***Acts 4:19,20.***

***19 But Peter and John answered and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye.***

***20 For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.***

***Acts 5:28-29***

***28 Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.***

***29 Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.***

**THE ROLE OF THE HUSBAND**

***Ephesians 5:25-28.***

***25 Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; 26 That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,***

***27 That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.***

***28 So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.***

The scripture instructs the husband to do the following in the marriage and family.

i. Love your wife so much as Christ loved the church.

ii. Provide the needs of your wife and family.

iii. Sacrifice for your wife to make her glorious to your satisfaction and joy.

iv. Never be bitter, angry or frustrating to your wife. Do not speak roughly or despitefully to your wife

v. Cherish and honor your wife. Learn to forgive her failures. Learn to engage in friendly discussion with her.

vi. Teach and educate your wife for better understanding and holy living before God.

vii. Never exalt yourself above your wife, but see her as co-equal with yourself before God in all ways.

A good husband will not treat his wife as a slave, or want to bring her to shame before the children or in public. It is evil to beat your wife either by cane or by hand. Ask God to tell you what you can do to make your wife happy so that she may love and bless you more. Protect your wife from your relations, neighbors and friends. Jointly bring up your children for God in good education. Follow these rules and God will bless you.

If children are not born to the marriage, do not see the fault as coming from your wife alone; it may come from you too, hence; cooperate with your wife in prayers and medical efforts, where required, for the problem to be solved. Both of you must learn to be patient before God like Serah and Abraham, Elizabeth and Zachariah, until God visits you with fruitfulness. Do not yield to societal shame. Do not deny your wife sex. Look for solution for sexual dysfunction in your marriage. Give yourself to prayers. Seek good marriage counsellors to help your marriage and family. Give attention to the welfare of your children. Do not abandon them to their mother.

**FAMILY PLANNING**

***Proverbs 25:16.***

***Hast thou found honey? eat so much as is sufficient for thee, lest thou be filled therewith, and vomit it.***

Family planning is essential for birth control. It is not wise at this time to have too many children. Feeding, medication, education and training of too many children can make life bitter and frustrating. Use good family planning method suitable for your body and control the number of children in the family. It is not a sin to do so as many people think. Do not use any method that will kill a child already formed in the worm. That is murder!

***Proverbs. 4:7,11.***

***7 Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding.***

***11 I have taught thee in the way of wisdom; I have led thee in right paths.***

**NO DIVORCE AND REMARRIAGE**

1 Corinthians. 7:10-16.

***10 And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband:***

***11 But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife.***

***12 But to the rest speak I, not the Lord: If any brother hath a wife that believeth not, and she be pleased to dwell with him, let him not put her away.***

***13 And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not, and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him.***

***14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy.***

***15 But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.***

***16 For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife?***

A scripturally certified married couple is one flesh and cannot separate to get married to another person, until the death of one of them. However, the Bible allows separation because of unbearable wickedness that may come from one of the marriage partners, which is witnessed by the church and the society. In such a case, the separated person must remain unmarried or be reconciled again to the other partner. Know that adultery does not separate marriage, only fornication does. ***(John 8:3-11). (Matthew 5:32).*** Adultery is sexual immorality committed by a married person, while fornication is sexual immorality committed by unmarried person. All those who divorce their partner because of adultery and married another are committing adultery in the sight of God, ***(Romans 7:2,3).***

If one of the partners refuses to return but gets married to another person who has never married, they are into fornication and adultery and will end up in hell fire. When the Bible says, “If the unbeliever departs let him or her depart,” it does not release the other partner to remarry. That will still be adultery. The believing partner should remain unmarried and should know that he or she is not hindered from engaging in the service of God because of the departure of the marriage partner. He or she should be available before God for His service according to His will. Use your single life to serve the Lord wholeheartedly.

***1Corinthians 7:27,32.***

***27 Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife.***

***32 But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please the Lord.***

**MARRIAGE AND MINISTRY**

***1Tim. 3:4,5,11.***

***4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;***

***5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)***

***11 Even so must their wives be grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.***

It is required in ministry that the minster should keep a good and well controlled family, having the wife and children living righteously before God so that the name of the Lord be not blasphemed. Proper godly dressing and character is expected of them, ***(Gen. 18:18,19).***

**RESTITUTION IN MARRIAGE**

***Genesis 20:2-7.***

***2 And Abraham said of Sarah his wife, She is my sister: and Abimelech king of Gerar sent, and took Sarah.***

***3 But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife. 4 But Abimelech had not come near her: and he said, Lord, wilt thou slay also a righteous nation?***

***5 Said he not unto me, She is my sister? and she, even she herself said, He is my brother: in the integrity of my heart and innocency of my hands have I done this. 6 And God said unto him in a dream, Yea, I know that thou didst this in the integrity of thy heart; for I also withheld thee from sinning against me: therefore suffered I thee not to touch her.***

***7 Now therefore restore the man his wife; for he is a prophet, and he shall pray for thee, and thou shalt live: and if thou restore her not, know thou that thou shalt surely die, thou, and all that are thine.***

If a man leaves the first legal wife which he married properly in scriptural way, and marries another woman, he has offended God. The same thing applies to a woman. The judgment of God for this is hell fire.

***Mark10:11,12.***

***10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same matter.***

***11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.***

What God requires is restitution. This means the marriage should be dissolved, however long it has taken place and whatever number of children are involved. Many people do not know this truth. Some argue against it. But without restitution in this sinful relationship in marriage the Christian cannot make it to heaven. Seek counsel for your case, if you are not clear. Let the man or woman go back to the former partner or remain unmarried. This is practiced by true Christians till today.

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**Tract # 3**

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