

What'S Wrong With 'Here Comes The Groom'?

Dating and Marriage

Martin G. Collins

Given 28-Nov-15; Sermon #1297

There are many things for which we can be thankful. In light of the recent acceptance of gay marriage I wonder how many people are thankful for true marriage between a man and a woman only.

Psalm 100:4-5 Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the Lord is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.

God's truth regarding the marriage covenant between a man and a woman stands immutable despite Satan's effort to destroy it. What happens to a nation that is not thankful for the God-ordained marriage covenant? What will happen to us if we treat marriage lightly? Everything in this society, and the church, especially morality and family, unravels.

Today single men and women are frustrated with the issue of marriage. Single women complain that a good man is hard to find. But at one and the same time, single men claim that a good woman is hard to find. Are they both mistaken? What about husbands and wives, are they also hard to find?

The intentionally instigated battle of the sexes has certainly made relationships worse. Let us look at today's liberated woman from various viewpoints for a moment to see part of what is wrong with today's dating and marriage scene.

Generally speaking men want to love women. They may not know how; nevertheless, they do want to. But men also say women have changed and not for the better. Men wonder, "where did the gentle feminine ladies of yesteryear, who used to show men respect, go?"

They have disappeared because most of today's women are the daughters of feminists or are influenced by the aggressive indoctrination in this society. They have been raised to think that they have to show themselves to be better than men in school, at work, in entertainment, and in sports. A "sexual revolution" has destroyed the integrity of the modern men and woman and social engineers claim that this is real progress.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

They would claim that since they consider themselves to be progressives, as Hillary Clinton so defiantly calls herself. There has been decades of propaganda by TV producers and comedians ridiculing and finding humor in emasculating single men, husbands, and fathers. Journalists and professors promote radical feminism among impressionable young minds as if it somehow empowers women.

The detriment of society and relationships has been catastrophic. And since when does disabling one sex to enable the other add up to something positive and fruitful? It never does. No matter how empowered, liberated, or successful women are, men and women need each other and there is no way around it because that is the way God has designed our relationships.

The sexual revolution and feminist movement over the past five decades has created women who believe that they do not need men, and do not need anything else from the relationship other than sex. Women lowered their standards by changing the way they approach sex and that is a major issue.

Most women have turned their backs on any kind of reasonable modesty, having high standards, and self respect in terms of the way they carry themselves and dress, or how quickly they have sex.

I Thessalonians 4:3 For this is the will of God, your sanctification: that you should abstain from sexual immorality;

Empowering women was supposed to give more freedom, opportunity, and self-esteem, however the opposite has been achieved. Sexual empowerment does not mean sleeping around as this society has come to label it. In reality it shows that empowered women, by the feminist definition, do not think very much of themselves at all. They do not think that they are worthy of waiting for or committing to.

Many women just do not realize that their behavior and attitude has driven men into a different direction. Today, men see women as shallow and materialistic objects. Of course, the entire fault does not fall entirely on the women. Men have a serious problem with not wanting to grow up and being the man that women trust and admire.

Women should reject the way that this reengineered feminist society has pushed women into and women must become true ladies who have learned that they need their men just as much as their men need them. You cannot survive on your own, so to speak, as far as the marriage relationships. It has to be a team.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Men have been hearing for years that women do not need their money, or anything else from them, so many men have just given up and they have stopped trying because many women have sent a signal that they do not need them as husbands and they can find sex anywhere. That is the sad condition the feminists have created in this society, the godless society today.

So in rejection of the status quo, the key to finding the right kind of guy therefore is to become the right kind of girl. If you want a good marriage it does not just happen, you have to be willing to build it and the building of a good marriage begins before marriage.

This subject is not only about finding the right guy, it also points out the essential universal principle that you have to become the right person yourself for any successful relationship. To find and keep the right husband you have to be, and or become, the right kind of wife; to have the right friend you have to be the right kind of friend, and to have the right relationship with God you have to be the right kind of Christian, the right kind of bride for Christ. God has something very important to say about the issue of marriage here in Genesis 2.

Genesis 2:18-22 And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called each living creature, that was its name. So Adam gave names to all cattle, to the birds of the air, and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper comparable to him. And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man.

So up to this point everything that God has done has been good, He has pronounced His own blessing on it and here for the first time we find a negative statement, something that is not good. And God looks at Adam and says in verse 18,

Genesis 2:18 And the Lord God said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him."

Out of this judgment comes the creation of one who is to be Adam's wife and companion. God Himself sanctified the relationship between man and woman. In these

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

verses we learn that the woman was made for man; made from man; given to man, the greatest of all God's gifts. In the next session we find that she was named by man. So God is the essential central point, then comes man as a central point of this relationship.

On the basis of this created order, the later New Testament instructions for the relationship of a man and a woman within marriage and the function of a man and woman within the church, are constructed.

God's creation of Eve is given in the context of the story and the first part of that story is the preparation of Adam for Eve's arrival. Adam is alone and God is preparing him for what is coming in Eve's arrival. Adam had been made in God's image and in his pristine glory he must have had a brain surpassing the great thinkers in human history. The clarity of his thinking must have been crystal clear, a mind that we would all want to have.

Nevertheless God needed to show Adam that in all the created order with all its variety there was still, at this time, no creature suited to be his companion. Adam's first lesson was to learn to appreciate his wife, even before she came. God chose an interesting way to go about.

Apparently God and Adam stood shoulder to shoulder, so to speak, while God caused a great variety of animals and birds to pass before him. As they passed by, from the aardvark to the zebra, Adam was to study and name the animals. God did not give him the names, Adam was to come up with them.

There was no arbitrary naming, as if Adam had merely pulled named out of the back of his mind and slapped them on the animals that went by. Adam was being asked to study the animals, note their nature and relationships, and then named them accordingly. We can say that Adam was the first biologist.

He was to study, categorizing, and see whether among this vast array of animals if there might be one suited to be a helper for him. The results were negative, as God knew, there was not found a helper comparable to him.

The reason for this negative result, as Adam no doubt quickly saw, was that none of the animals had been created in the image of God as he had been. They had bodies and in a certain sense they could be said to have personalities and are aware of their individualities, but the animals did not have the same spirits and so could not communicate with Adam on the spiritual level.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Job 32:8 But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.

There was not that understanding among the animals, they have other natural abilities that God has created. There can be enjoyable basic communication with some animals. They can play games and can show and share affection. Adam undoubtedly saw that an animal can only communicate on its own level as the parade of animals continued to pass by.

He realized that if he was to have a companion, the companion would have to be specially created by God and in the image of God, as he was. So God was taking him through a thought process so that he could arrive at an understanding of how special that helper and companion would be.

There is no question that, in many ways, Adam and the animals were similar. All breathed air and participated in certain basic life processes; all could move, act, relate, and react to certain stimuli but the point of this account is that there were even greater differences. Although similar in some respects, none of the animals was like Adam who was made in the image of God.

So Adam was prepared for Eve, and Eve was now to be prepared for Adam. She was to be made for him, as his ideal counterpart in the world. Every feminist and every woman, most anyway, that has been brought up in this society cringe at this very thought, but God has established it this way.

Let me give you a simple comparison. Children often get into stages in which they are immensely intrigued by riddles and one of the riddles that intrigues them, and which therefore passes down from generation to generation, is “what is most like half of the Moon?” You may have heard that when you were very young, it was pretty common. If a child asks that riddle the thing to do is to guess everything you can possibly think of without actually guessing the answer until the answer finally comes back, “the other half of the Moon!”

That answer is right, the thing most like half of the moon is the other half. So if we asked what is most like a man and the answer, of course is a woman, or what is most like a woman, the answer is a man.

Men and women are different, but they are also more alike than anything else in all of creation. Man, in his original state, must have been a most extraordinary specimen. And

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

what a woman Eve must have been, perfect in physical appearance.

She was not pudgy or feeble, like most Americans think today. Nor was she weak and emaciated. Eve must have been a robust, quick, clear-eyed, and as brilliant as the man. In addition to that she must have had a beauty and grace that excelled him in certain terms. Eve would have made Wonder Woman look withered. We just cannot even imagine what she, or Adam, looked like in their pristine glory.

Yet in spite of this physical, mental, and moral excellence, far surpassing that of any woman today, Eve was made for the man as a helper comparable to him. In this, among other things, the woman has a clue to her unique position in marriage right from the beginning.

This is a point that greatly incenses today's radical feminists and is sometimes a cause for anxiety, even for other women. To speak of women being made for man, even more to speak of her need to be submissive to the man in marriage, seems to such people to reek of prejudice, inequality, and injustice. That is the world's and their viewpoint of the relationship between men and women and marriage.

Now these outmoded and obnoxious ideas, as the world considers them, need to be rejected and cast off. Women, like men, needed become autonomous, as such people feel and believe today. Here we need clear thinking and one of the things we need to think clearly about is the meaning of the word "equality," which has been so perverted in our language today.

You cannot talk about this word in general terms, you have to have specifics. For example, is hot equal to cold? They are both temperatures but beyond this can they really be discussed in terms of the equality? Are men and women equal? It depends on what you are talking about.

There are at least four important ways in which men and women are equal: 1) They are both created in the image of God and is this what makes the woman a fit companion for the man and vice versa. This explains why animals are not fit companions. 2) They are both placed under the moral command of God and thus given moral responsibility, something that the men and women of this world have no clue about, it seems. 3) They were both guilty of disobeying the command of God and were therefore judged by God for their disobedience. 4) Men and women are alike, objects of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

In Galatians 3 we find Paul, referring to the qualifications for baptism and salvation,

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

saying:

Galatians 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Social status, nationality, and sexuality are all irrelevant to our qualifications of being members of Christ's body. Beyond these items however equality is nearly an irrelevant concept.

In the Bible the human family is introduced as a deliberate parallel to the Family of God and the relationships of husband, wife, and children are similar and this relationship is shown, by the apostle Paul, to be parallel to that of the man and woman within marriage.

I Corinthians 11:3 But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

In view of these scriptures it is difficult to see how "biblical feminists" can insist that these relationships are abolished. They argue that submission is part of the curse now abrogated by Christ's atonement. But it is significant that the subordinate relationship of wife to husband is found in Genesis first, not after their first sin, but rather before it, in Genesis 2. So their argument does not hold up. It could not have been removed when they came under the grace of Jesus Christ because it was before they had ever sinned that God established the marriage covenant.

It is important to understand that this relationship is between a man and woman within marriage and because of the deliberate divine parallels within the church, which is the Family of God.

Nothing in Genesis implies that every woman is to exist for every man, still less be obedient to him. Even in the case of marriage the submission involved is voluntary. No woman is obliged to accept a proposal from a man, but if she does and if she is a Christian woman, she must know that the patterns for her relationship to that man is found in Genesis 2, where God said that he would make a helper comparable to Adam.

If she can not be a helper to her man, or does not want to be, the woman should not marry. However the woman is not only made for man, she is also made from man as the account goes on to show here in Genesis 2:21-23 again.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Genesis 2:21-23 And the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. [Now apparently Adam had recognized at once what had happened as verse 23 states.] And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man."

There is something particular poignant and even poetic about this creation. The woman had been made for man and might therefore be thought by us, thinking now in our fleshly state, to be man's servant. Is that correct? But Genesis states nothing of this. Instead Adam immediately perceives Eve to be his companion, the other half of the moon, and so celebrates their essential similarity and union which is made possible by the human spirit in each of us, which makes each more glorious than the animals.

God intends for a husband and wife to be one, in body and spirit. If the marriage is to be all that God intends for them, a union of body with body is a sexual union. This is important because if the physical union does not or cannot take place then the marriage is not a true marriage and it can rightly be annulled.

On the other hand, if the relationship is based on nothing but sex, if it is a marriage of body with body alone and not of human spirit with human spirit, then the marriage is weak and is often headed for the divorce courts.

When the glamour wears off, as it always does if there is nothing more to sustain it, the relationship is finished and there is either total indifference, a divorce, or adultery. This is a result of a marriage that is based purely on physical attraction.

A better marriage is one that is also a union of body with body and human spirit with human spirit. This refers to the emotional and intellectual side of a person's nature involving the characteristics we normally associate with the functioning of the mind. Marriage that involves the union of minds is one in which the couple shares an interest in the same things and establishes a meeting in the minds, as it were, both emotionally and intellectually.

Christians who are married must be careful not to draw the wrong conclusion that because the marriages are also marriages of God's Spirit with God's Spirit they do not need to be concerned as much about a union of the minds. Not only do they need to be concerned about it they also need to work toward it because an emotional, intellectual,

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

and spiritual union does not in itself come naturally. It has to be worked at.

What does a girl have in mind when she marries a man; what is her vision of her new husband? It has something to do with her father and whether she liked him or rebelled against him. That is what the researchers found.

Now what happens when a woman, with a vision of People magazine's 2015 sexiest man alive Chris Hemsworth, and a man with a vision of People magazine's 2015 sexiest woman alive Kate Upton, get married and begin to find out that the other person is not much like their vision? It is a great disappointment if that is what they are basing everything on.

One of two things can happen: either they center their minds on the difference between the ideal and what they are increasingly finding the other person to be like, and then try either openly or subversively to push their spouse into that image. Or, by the grace of God, increasingly come to accept the other person as he or she is, including his or her own standards and how they should be, and then, under God, seek to conform to the best and most uplifting of those standards.

If we are to have peace in our marriages we must work toward it by cultivating the interests and aspirations of the other person. A true union must be a marriage of spirit with spirit, which means that both the husband and wife must be Christians.

If you are a Christian, you must marry another Christian or not marry at all. If you marry a non-Christian, you are willfully choosing unhappiness because God's blessing will not be on the marriage and you will be unable to share what is most precious to you.

What will happen to you may be illustrated graphically in the case of Solomon. Solomon had been the recipient of many blessings from God, first because of God's promises to his father David and then because of the fact that Solomon had determined to walk in God's way of life. However after the Temple was finished, and Solomon was at ease in Jerusalem, he began to marry foreign women, one of whom was the daughter of the Pharaoh of Egypt.

This was not God's will for him because the Egyptian princess did not worship Yahweh and Solomon knew it.

II Chronicles 8:11 Now Solomon brought the daughter of Pharaoh up from the City of David to the house he had built for her, for he said, "My wife shall not dwell in the house of David king of Israel, because the places to which

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

the ark of the Lord has come are holy.”

So what Solomon was basically saying here is:” I recognize that this woman doesn’t fit in with the things I know to be true about God. And if I were to bring her around the palace of David or the Temple, I would feel guilty and my conscience would bother me. The only solution is to build her another house and hereafter to live my life in as nearly separate compartments as is possible.”

It is similar to Christian man marrying a woman outside in the world and bringing her, not to his home, but building another house or shed in backyard to put her in because his house is holy and she is not. It is not to that extreme of course, but that is the principle behind this type of thing. So it is quite serious.

If you marry a non-Christian that is what will happen to you. You cannot think that you will lift up the non-Christian; that he/she will become a Christian because of you. That may or may not happen eventually because of God's great gift of grace, but even if it does there will still be years of heartbreak and sorrow.

If you are obeying God make sure that your partner becomes a Christian before the wedding or do not get married. A dunking in water is not always a true baptism if there is not a genuine conviction from the heart and mind, which takes time to discern.

If the other person is not a Christian, or does not become one sometime before the engagement, on the authority of God's word then he or she is not the husband or wife for you. In II Corinthians 6 the apostle Paul was inspired by God to write:

II Corinthians 6:14 Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness?

So you will have a marriage of body with body, and perhaps even mind with mind if you do this, but you will never have a marriage of spirit and spirit, and therefore fall short of true union.

Now if you are not a Christian and you have interests together, you can have a marriage of human spirit with human spirit, but you cannot have a spirit of God relationship without you being two members of God’s church.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Let me shift gears here and ask a question for you to contemplate on. What is wrong with “here comes the groom?” Or what is the trouble with women proposing marriage to men?

In an October 28, 2015, “Thought Tools” article by Rabbi Daniel Lapin, he gives an interesting explanation of the calamity that often follows. He is a very good at taking the Hebrew meanings of Scripture and putting them in today's terminology, as far as applying them to what is happening today. His essay here is entitled “When Abigail proposed to Alan”:

Women proposing to men is rare and when it does occur it is often disastrous. YouTube offers more home videos of conventional marriage proposals, some fairly flamboyant, more than you could watch in a lifetime. There are only a few genuine “woman asking men to marry her” proposals and of those high proportions feature a hurt and humiliated woman whose man just declined her heartfelt proposal. These are almost too sad to watch.

Would not you have thought that in these egalitarian times, with women becoming pilots, plumbers, stockbrokers, sportscasters, as well as farmers and firefighters, that women would propose as often as men? In other words about fifty percent of recently married couples should have reached their state of connubial bliss as a result of the woman proposing marriage to her future husband.

But this is not the case, not even close. Belinda seldom proposes to Ben, and almost never successfully. The big question is why? The garden of Eden suggests an explanation. God did not create man and woman simultaneously and drop them into Eden together.

When Eve arrived she found Adam already a resident, possessing an existing relationship with God. She immediately acquired the name that Adam gave her. Since then her daughters have ideally preferred a husband more grounded and established than they, a man whose name they are proud to bear.

When a man proposes marriage to a woman he displays that he is master of his garden and is eager to welcome his bride into the paradise they will create together. However when a man's indifference drives a desperate woman to attempt a proposal, by his inaction he has already revealed that he is deep down not what she really desires.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Scripture does not even mention a marriage initiated by the woman telling us “when a man takes a wife,” in Deuteronomy 22: 13 and “he who had found a wife has found good,” in Proverbs 18:22.

It is no coincidence that, to this day, in most wedding processions the bride walks down the aisle after the groom. Even couples without a strong religious conviction, who opt for a full-blown extravaganza rather than a dry, legal ceremony in a government office still subconsciously replay that long ago day in the Garden of Eden when Eve arrived after Adam was already there.

The bride comes last because she is entering his garden or home. Men doing the proposing and the bride bringing up the rear of the procession are not mere customs, and just like the man paying for the meal on an important dates. These behaviors reflect a deep primeval memory of Eden.

Perhaps two hundred years from now things will be different, but not how many imagine. We still do not have women proposing in half of the engagements and tenderly placing engagement rings upon that fingers of their man.

None of us can see into the future so each of us needs decide whether we want to live our lives assuming that human nature is changeable and flexible or whether we would rather except that these types of lessons from the Bible are meaningful, real, and eternal.

Here is one more marriage tip. It helps if both husband and wife invite God into their home. When God-fearing Rebekah married God-fearing Isaac even her idolatry-ridden father and brother recognized the uniqueness of their union and that they could not stand in its way. Bin-Laban and Bethul responded and said, “the matter stems from God we cannot comment to you neither negatively or positively.” We find that in Genesis 24:50

At a time when our culture bombards us with messages that run counter to biblical values, it really pays to know if a tradition is sentimental but unimportant, like cutting the cake and feeding each other a forkful, or whether it can affect the entire foundation of the marriage, the man proposing. It really pays to be able to distinguish between the truly important and those things not worth arguing about.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Our society has turned marriage between one man and one woman into a completely ignorable option. For those of us who see it as the basis for successful marriages civilization, we should approach it with knowledge, understanding, and thoughtfulness.

So now with this in mind let us now take a look at the first recorded wedding.

Genesis 2:22-24 Then the rib which the Lord God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

God brought the first woman to the first man, as we are told here. He did not merely provide Adam with a suitable helper and companion, he also established marriage as the first and most basic of all human institutions. Long before there were governments, churches, schools, or any other social structures, God established a home based on the mutual respect and love of a husband and wife and all other human institutions came from it.

From the authority of the Father there developed a patriarchal, and later tribal systems of human government and these gave rise to other forms of government. And from that the responsibility of parents to raise and educate their children, then came more formal systems of education such as academies, institutes, colleges, centers of higher learning.

From the obligation of parents to educate their children in the knowledge of God and the way to worship Him, in a sense came churches. There is not a contemporary, social, or cultural organization that does not have a derivative relationship to the home and marriage and that is the problem. Today marriage is under attack, it is being destroyed, and if marriage falls then all these other institutions: churches, schools, businesses, hospitals, and governments will inevitably fall.

It is not difficult to discern the directions from which the contemporary attack against marriage comes and there are four. First, marriage is attacked by the rampant pleasure seeking of our age. It has been called the new hedonism, but it is new only in the sense that it is being accepted as never before.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Hedonism says that the chief goal of life is pleasure and that this is to be pursued regardless of what ever long range detrimental affects there may be. Generally it denies them. Sex is for fun, says hedonism, and the more of it with a greater variety of partners there may be, the better. A person does not have to be married to momentarily enjoy a sexual relationship.

In a strange way this new hedonism has been supported by so-called Christian theologians through what has come to be called the 'new morality,' though it is actually no more new than the old hedonism. That is one of the reasons why Mr. Armstrong wrote that book, *The New Morality*, to set straight the hedonism that was so being promoted and is being promoted by the world.

The new morality says that there are no ethical norms except for the one rather vague norm of love. Lust, that is, wrong desire, has been renamed love by the ruling humanists. Anything goes and anything is permissible as long as it does not hurt the other person. That is what we have been hearing for decades if not centuries. It is the same excuse that was used for the closet homosexuals and it has been used for everything since.

Whether it will or not is to be determined solely from the situation and so it is judged right or wrong under the philosophy of relativism. The difficulty of course is that it is not so easy for human beings to define a situation. A couple in the privacy of the living room or bedroom may decide that intercourse, outside of marriage, will not hurt them and that no one else need know, but they are lying to themselves that it will not hurt them.

In a heat of the moment people are blind to the consequences of their sinful actions. It is human nature to deny the inevitable and they cannot foresee the consequences that go beyond their own relationship. If nothing else, their decision will change their attitude toward marriage and that has consequences for the whole of society. As children cannot play with matches without being burned literally, neither can people sinfully play around with sanctified things without being "burned" mentally and spiritually.

The second direction from which an attack on marriage comes is the widespread acceptance of adultery. Actually it is worse than acceptance. There is a sophisticated justification for it in the lying argument that adultery is often a tonic for a lackluster marriage and may well revive it. What lies human nature can come up with.

People who are having affairs readily buy this argument as a defense of their own evil activity and they claim they are better lovers or at least happier and that they are more interesting spouses to be married to. But when they discover that their spouse has

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

been doing the same thing they are shocked, outraged, wounded, and quickly on their way to the divorce courts. What hypocrisy is the sin of adultery.

It does not require a great deal of effort to think clearly on this matter. A person simply has to put the burgeoning divorce statistics next to the justification of adultery to see what is wrong. If adultery is good; if it is a tonic to faltering marriages; if it helps to hold homes together as is so often claimed; if it is as acceptable in society, as we know it is, then why are there so many divorces if it is supposed to be so good for marriage? Nothing makes sense, it is just an insane way of thinking.

You do not have to be brilliant to see that the fault is in the lame excuse of false justification of desire and sin. Of course it is not true that adultery helps faltering marriages, the opposite is true. Adultery actually destroys them. Although by the grace of God particularly in the case of Christians who sometimes also sin along these lines, it does not have to. Nevertheless trust has been totally destroyed by that point.

No doubt those who want to sin this way and need to justify their despicable conduct will go on believing the lie. Eve believed Satan's lie, "you will not surely die," when she wanted to eat the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, but Christians have spiritual strength, through the use of God's Spirit, to resist such lies and enticements by Satan and his pop culture.

Notice how the *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery* contrasts sexual overtones of idolatry with faithfulness by using two female figures to represent "lady wisdom" and "dame folly."

The book of Proverbs, while also describing idolatry as a form of illicit sexuality, has an especially interesting development of the sexual metaphor for the relationship between God and His people. This may be seen in the personification of wisdom and folly as two women.

The addressee of the book of Proverbs, especially notable in the first nine chapters of the book, is a young male. Life is likened to a path, and his parents are instructing him on the best way to live life. They advocate a life of wisdom and a rejection of folly. To make the point explicit, here wisdom is personified as a woman."

Proverbs 3:16-18 (ESV) Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to those who lay hold of her; those who hold her fast are called blessed.

This is certainly the type of woman a man would want to marry. The wisdom theme comes to a climax in Proverbs 8 and 9 in which the excellence and the way of wisdom is described. Proverbs 8 is the better known of the two, but our focus will be on Proverbs 9, which presents the two female figures, wisdom and folly. Now continuing on with the quote here:

In Proverbs 9, both lady wisdom, shown in Proverbs 9:1-6, and dame folly, shown in Proverbs 9:13-18, are seated by their houses, overlooking the path of life. Both call to the men walking by with the same invitation: "Let all who are simple come in here!" The invitation has sexual overtones. The women want the men to come into their homes and dine with them, sharing moments of intimacy.

Who are these women? Their homes are situated on a hill, where only the homes of the gods could be found. Lady wisdom is clearly the personification of Yahweh's wisdom, which is a metonymy for Yahweh himself. Dame folly stands for all the false gods who seduce Israel into unfaithfulness against their true God.

In other words, Proverbs 9 presents a fundamental religious choice to the Israelites through a sexual metaphor: With whom will they join themselves, Yahweh or the gods of the nations?

So a man would have to be foolish to choose dame folly over lady wisdom. Now a third source of attack on marriage is the ease of divorce itself, for which our changing social mores and laws are responsible.

A generation ago, when divorce was still considered a disgrace, it was not nearly as easy to get a divorce and there was enormous social pressure to hold the home together. No one could be so foolish as to say that all such homes became happy homes. Many were terribly unhappy but the homes did hold together and the children did grow up with the benefit of both parents.

Besides, in other cases, the need to live together and work things out, in spite of what may have been their first desires, did lead many couples to do precisely that with the result that their home became stronger emotionally, financially, and morally.

Now which is better of these two ways: an approach to marriage that recognizes that it

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

is often hard to live together and that therefore determines to work hard to make the marriage viable, or an approach that demands easy perfection and that is prepared to dissolve the marriage if the perfection is not immediately forthcoming? The second way is increasingly more common but it is not good—not for the good of the couple or society.

The fourth attack on marriage is more recent and more subtle. It is the legalization of abortion, especially on demand, in which abortion is made an exclusively private affair between a woman and her doctor.

Now why is this detrimental to marriage? It is because it excludes the father from a decision affecting his offspring as well as the woman's offspring, and even more importantly excludes him from the time-honored obligation and the right to defend and protect his child. Each human life, however small, is precious.

Abortion causes the family to be dissolved. By the command of the U.S. Supreme Court which decided, under false pretenses, to deny the natural right of the father to defend his child, and if he has been denied then he cannot be saddled with any other responsibility toward it to the societies detriment.

If a man, by law, cannot do anything to save that child it cannot be his fault that the child is being killed of course, but the sin is if the pregnancy was out of wedlock. But how can a man be held responsible when he is not allowed to have a say in the issue? Now if he does have a say in the issue of abortion, then it does become his responsibility.

The conclusion is clear. By upholding the right to murder, by abortion, the newest member of the family, the court makes the state a vicious enemy of the family. Marriage, pregnancy, and childbirth act as cohesive holding the family together and this is not only a problem for the father of course, it concerns the mother too in a case involving the pregnancy of an unmarried minor daughter.

According to many state laws a daughter who is a minor has a right to an abortion without even the requirements of informing or obtaining the consent of her parents. In this case parents are put in an inferior position even to the murdering evil abortionist.

The effects of these decisions are very clear now. We see them in an intensifying, weakening, and often destruction of the family and other social relationships. What does God say about such abominable practices such as aborting, that is sacrificing our children for the sake of sexual pleasure? Here is God's warning in Leviticus 20.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Leviticus 20:1-5 Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Again, you shall say to the children of Israel: ‘Whoever of the children of Israel, or of the strangers who dwell in Israel, who gives any of his descendants to Molech, he shall surely be put to death. The people of the land shall stone him with stones. I will set My face against that man, and will cut him off from his people, because he has given some of his descendants to Molech, to defile My sanctuary and profane My holy name. And if the people of the land should in any way hide their eyes from the man, when he gives some of his descendants to Molech, and they do not kill him, then I will set My face against that man and against his family; and I will cut him off from his people, and all who prostitute themselves with him to commit harlotry with Molech.’”

Now according to *The Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*: “Molech was the Canaanite deity to whom Israel, in times of apostasy, sacrificed children. Molech appears approximately fifteen times in the Old Testament, and is a striking image of what the Bible finds utterly abominable in idolatry. Israel is explicitly commanded not to give any children to be sacrificed to Molech. The penalty for this behavior is to be “cut off” from Israel. No contempt is spared for Molech, who is called “the detestable god of the Ammonites.”

And in Josiah's reform at Jerusalem, the places in the Valley of Ben Hinnom where Israel had sacrificed their sons and daughters to Molech are desecrated. It is this grisly image of a god who devours sons and daughters, the dearest things in life, which is most memorable.”

Now notice what God says He will do to the children of Israel because of the abomination of murdering their sons and daughters, here in Jeremiah 32. Molech is considered under the umbrella of the Baals.

Jeremiah 32:35-36 And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination, to cause Judah to sin.’ “Now therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, concerning this city of which you say, ‘It shall be delivered into the hand of the king of Babylon by the sword, by the famine, and by the pestilence.’”

This same type of sin is now on the Israelite nations. God's judgment is coming on this nation by war, starvation, disease, and death for this very sin at least, if not dozens of

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

others. The effects of all the many sins of this nation will come upon this nation so fast and so hard that it will be literally breathtaking.

It is interesting to note that in astrology, Molech is the sun, as the mighty fire, which in passing through the signs of the Zodiac burns up its own children. The goddess Ashtoreth, also know as Astarte, which is another name for Semiramis, was Molech's consort, and ritual prostitution, which was considered an important form of worship. Sexual-fertility rites usually accompanied pagan sacrificial worship.

So here is the tie-in with the sexual side of worship. The sexual/fertility worship of ancient Israel is no different, whether it be the sexual sin of getting a woman pregnant out of wedlock, abortion, or sacrificing children in the fire to Molech. The results are all the same.

We are in a society now that is performing the same detestable religious acts as the Israelites did. Killing children is not just a physical act, it is even more so an act of spiritual idolatry with sexual allusions. The effects of the decisions regarding abortion are manifesting themselves publicly now. We see them in the intensifying weakening of the family and other social relationships.

Given the fixed set of historical circumstances, it does not look like our society can recover, unless there are universal righteous changes. But despite what goes on in the world, Christians must recover a sense of what God intends marriage to be and then set about to achieve that in our own lives and church groups.

Sadly, right now, many professing Christians have marriages and families that look identical to the pagan world's marriages and families. Even in the church we suffer children born out of wedlock and marriages ending in divorce. The apostle John warns you and me in I John 2 saying:

I John 2:15-17 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.

The main thing wrong with marriages today is the love of self as a result of enmity against God, which today's culture encourages. We often put ourselves first and consequently think that if the other person does not contribute to "my" sense of well-

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

being, serve “my” goals, and bolster “my” ego, then they are ready to dissolve the relationship. So goes the thinking of the world!

Only we, having God’s Spirit, have a way of life adequate to do what needs to be done. We must break the innate selfishness of the human heart. As long as we put ourselves first, all relationships will suffer, especially in marriage.

When we see ourselves as still having a tendency to sin in rebellion against God and we bow before Him in repentance, something happens that inevitably spills over into other relationships. We become much less self-centered.

Another thing that Christians have, and others do not, at least not to the same degree, is a proper sense of service. We live to serve, not to be served, and for this reason we are willing to submit ourselves to one another within marriage.

When the apostle Paul was inspired by God to write about marriage in Ephesians 5, he instructs wives to be submissive to their husbands.

Ephesians 5:22-24 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything.

So Christ’s headship over the church is founded in love. He has outgoing concern for His betrothed wife, the church. That is what men must base their leadership on, that love. Now continuing on in Ephesians 5, God, through Paul tells husbands that they are to love their wives.

Ephesians 5:25-28 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

Clearly this is a relationship in which husbands are to love their wives and notice that it is repeated over and over again there. It is repeated more that husbands are to love their wives, than it is for wives to be submissive to their husbands.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

There is a true headship, as Christ is the head of the church; and there is a true submission, as the church submits to Christ. Nothing can deny this. It is significant that verse 21 calls on Christians to submit “to one another in the fear of God.” The NIV words it this way:

Ephesians 5:21 (NIV) Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Now is this contradictory? Are we faced with two different models from which we may choose, taking one and rejecting the other? Not at all! It is merely that the husband and wife submit to and serve one another in different ways.

The husband serves his wife by loving her as Christ loves the church, building her up, and leaving his father and mother in order to live with her exclusively. The wife serves her husband by submitting to him as head of her home.

The place husbands and wives learn to do this is in fellowship with Christ, who served us by taking the nature of a servant, assuming human likeness, and humbling himself and becoming “obedient to death, even death on a cross” as Paul points out in Philippians 2:7-8.

If love, humility, obedience, and self-sacrifice were the supreme characteristics of the life of Christ, they must also be the traits of the Christian. Selfishness, self-seeking, and self-display destroy our likeness to Christ and our fellowship with each other. This is ever so true in marriage as well. This is why Paul can say, continuing in Ephesians 5,

Ephesians 5:32 This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.

A marriage within God’s church is of the highest physical and certainly a high spiritual covenant with God. Because of Christ, Christians understand service differently from non-Christians.

To most non-Christians service means servility; it implies that the one serving is of little or lesser worth. Christians must never think this way. This is the thinking of the world. Christ, who has the greatest worth of all, is at the same time, the servant.

Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Christ, who is worthy of worship, is also the greatest servant example ever. We remember that in the upper room, at the very time He was giving his last instructions to His disciples, Jesus took off his outer clothing, wrapped a towel around his waist, poured water into a basin, knelt down, and washed His disciples' feet. He then said:

John 13:14-15 If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you should do as I have done to you.

This was done in humility and love and as an example to each and every one of us on how to serve. We are being most Christ-like when we serve the other person. We can sum up by this statement: "A marriage does not exist for me, but for us; for the children, for society, and for the glory of God."

Now that brings us to the last point which is that marriage exists for God's glory. God created sheep so that Christians might understand how they act and what they are. God had created sheep with this goal in mind so that Jesus would have the illustration when He would come to this important part of His teaching.

The point is, that if this is true of sheep, it is even truer of marriage, because the Bible tells us explicitly that God created marriage in order that, by marriage, we might understand the most importance of spiritual relationships, and that is of Christ and the church and the Family of God.

That is why Jesus is portrayed to us in the Bible as the great Bridegroom and Husband of the church. It is why we, who have been called into His church, are portrayed as His bride. Now how are we going to communicate this greatest of all relationships if we who are Christians do not demonstrate it in our marriages, and in our personal lives (if we are not married)?

On the other hand, if we do demonstrate it in our personal lives and in our marriages, then the world will have a real-life illustration of how God works toward us in Christ to bring us to faith and save us from our sins.

What's Wrong With 'Here Comes the Groom'? by Martin G. Collins (<http://www.cgg.org>)

Colossians 3:15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.

Colossians 3:17 And whatever you do in word or deed [you could say dating and marriage], do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Marriage between a man and a woman, as God personally ordained, is something for which we can be deeply thankful, especially at the end of this age when everyone does what is right in his own eyes.

May we be thankful for the marriage covenant which God has ordained for our good and for His glory!