

What Is A Family?

The most unique and precious of all human relationships, second only to Christianity (Mk. 3:33-34) is that of a family. There is no other relationship on a human level which can provide the love, companionship, friendship, comfort, support, security and edification that can be enjoyed within a family. It is comforting to know that in an age where the definition of “family” has come under incessant attack that God has been clear in His definition of family as well as in His plan for the same.

In the beginning God saw that it was not good for man to be alone so, after Adam named all the animals from among which there was found no helper comparable to him, God created woman, brought her to the man and she became his wife (Gen. 2:18-25). Adam and Eve were brought together, married, by God into a relationship in which they were no longer “two” but, in which they became “one flesh” (Gen. 2:24; Mat. 19:5-6). God could have brought another man to Adam, or created some special animal, but He did not do so. Instead, God saw that only woman could properly fulfill man’s need for intimate companionship. Adam was joined to his wife in such a spiritual, physical, psychological and social way that is utterly impossible to achieve, or even approach, in any other human relationship. No other human relationship, whether it is on the lawful and noble level of the friendship between Jonathan and David (1 Sam. 18:1, 3), or whether unlawful such as between homosexual males or females (Lev. 18:22-23; 20:13; Rom. 1:26-27; 1 Cor. 6:9), can be held as equal to the marriage relationship between one man and one woman: the basic unit that characterizes the true family. The potential for procreation (Gen. 1:27-28, 24) and raising godly offspring (Mal. 2:15-16) are also indelible and unchanging characteristics of the true family. This does not mean that a married man and woman who cannot conceive a child due to medical problems cannot adopt children, because adoption is biblical and they have not violated God’s pattern for marriage. It does mean that homosexual couples, who are entirely incapable of and unsuitable for natural procreation, do not fall within the biblical definitions of marriage or family and cannot raise godly offspring. The homosexual arrangement fails every test. It also means that godly offspring cannot be properly raised by single parents, for this is one of the main reasons that “the LORD God of Israel says that He hates divorce” (Mal. 2:16) and certainly one of the reasons that young widows are instructed to marry again (1 Tim. 5:3-14). Fathers and mothers both make unique, irreplaceable contributions to the proper upbringing of children. There may be human relationships which mimic marriage and family, but there are none which are comparable or equal to the true family, which can meet the needs of intimate companionship better, raise better children, or make a more positive contribution to society and the world at large, than that of the marriage and the family as God would have them to be.

Societies may attempt to redefine honorable, godly estates such as marriage and family in order to accommodate and perhaps placate those who live in relationships which deviate from God’s norm, but the will and word of God remain the same (1 Pet. 1:25; Jas. 1:17). Such deviations can never be more than deficient imitations of true families, regardless of the sincerity with which they are entered into. Those who reject God’s plan and His right to rule among men and women will be judged by what they have rejected (Jn. 12:48) but, no one need be deprived of family’s divine blessing. Every sinner, if properly motivated (2 Cor. 7:10), can change, be forgiven (1 Cor. 6:11) and rejoice in the abundant life of Christianity (Jn. 10:10). God’s arrangement for marriage and family remains the best, and His church is here to help.

Randall F. Matheny
PO Box 911, Warren, PA 16365-0911