

**Earthly
Marriages
As
Revealed
From
Scriptures**

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There are some Christians in Singapore promoting polygamy as a viable option for Christians. They contend that monogamy and polygamy are acceptable to God and as such Christians are allowed to practise polygamy. They justify this teaching by appealing to the Old Testament calling Christians to return to the Hebraic roots to practise the Christian faith. This is because salvation is of the Jews. Moreover Christianity has its roots from Judaism. Judaism is the mother of Christianity so they claim. Salvation is extended to the Church via the Jews and so returning to Hebraic practices is Scriptural and necessary. Polygamy is one such practice of the Hebrews and therefore it is acceptable in the sight of God for Christians to practise polygamy. This may sound persuasive but what do the Scriptures reveal about earthly marriages?

How does God view marriages whether they are monogamous or polygamous? What are the issues faced by people who practise monogamy and polygamy? Does the New Testament encourage Christians to practise polygamy? Is it forbidden in the New Testament for Christian to practise polygamy? What about those who have married more than one wife before they get saved? What should they do with their other wives and children? Should they put them all away because they are now Christians? Is God pleased with them if they practise monogamy again by divorcing their other wives and disowning their other children?

Is it better for a Christian to remain single or get married? Which is more superior? What is the purpose of marriage? Do Christians serve the Lord better in a monogamous marriage or polygamous marriage? What are the dangers of not being married? How does Satan tempt a man and a woman in marriage? Is the New Testament Church a continuation of Judaism? Is the nation of Israel and the New Testament Church the same inheriting the same promises and targeted with the same threats? Are Christians obliged to practise what the Jews practiced concerning marriage and divorce in the Old Testament?

What is really a marriage? When are a man and a woman married in the eyes of God? Are they married after a wedding ceremony or before the wedding? What are the obligations in a marriage? There are many more questions with regards to earthly marriages that can be asked. This book is written to address some of these issues and see how God deals with fallen men in marriages and the attitudes of men in marriages. It is hoped that Christians will get a better understanding of earthly marriages and not fall

prey to propaganda of the world media, especially the western media, as well as false teachings of some self-conceited Christians or enemies masquerading as Christians. Christians should learn to understand the world and issues concerning them and not judge things based on their own prejudices or their own human understanding. May the Lord bless the study of His pure and inspired words!

CHARM

Married 30 times. His secrets? But he's divorced 27 times.

At 78, he still remains very much a ladies' man.

The proof? Married 30 times, divorced 27 times, widowed twice.

And he never tells his wives-to-be about his previous marriages.

Mr Mohamad Zin Hassan has now been happily married to Madam Asma Hadi Ismail, 51, since 1999.

Fondly called Pok Jeng, he has 16 children, 70 grandchildren and 15 great-grandchildren.

No wonder, he can remember only the name of his eldest son. For the others, he needs Madam Asma's help, reported The New Straits Times.

How does he have his way with the women?

He said: 'It all boils down to charm. You have to treat a lady nicely, show her your good side and sweet-talk her.'

He used to work as a driver. That was when Pok Jeng, originally from Kelantan, met many of his wives.

Most of them were either from Terengganu or Kelantan, widows or single women in their 20s.

His first, and longest, marriage lasted 20 years before his wife died.

And his shortest? One day.

He cited problems on the wedding night.

He said that his record as far as marriages are concerned is 'not that great. Some of my late friends had 50 to 70 marriages'.

BUMPS INTO EX-WIVES

He sometimes bumps into some of his ex-wives in Terengganu, where he lives.

'They hold no grudges against me,' he said. They visit him during Hari Raya, but he has discouraged it since his marriage to Madam Asma 'to prevent awkward moments'.

He met Madam Asma when he offered her a lift home after a Quran recital class.

The next day he proposed, as he thought she was a nice, spiritual woman. She was reluctant, but agreed.

He said he has no immediate plans to get hitched again, but has not ruled it out.

'It depends. If she (Asma) does not treat me well, I just might,' he said cheekily in the presence of his wife.

The New Paper
May 21, 2006

NOW THEY'VE BANNED THE WORD MARRIAGE

The word "marriage has been banned by register offices across the country (Britain) to avoid offending gays (sodomites). Rooms where weddings take place have been renamed while signs referring to marriage have been ripped down and replaced with ones using the term "ceremony".

The latest assault on traditional values (decency) follows government advice to local authorities concerning the same-sex civil partnerships. Critics condemn the move as a politically motivated and unwarranted attack on a cornerstone of our society. One said: They are degrading the whole concept of Marriage." The latest example of political correctness-gone-mad was prompted by a checklist sent to register office staff last month by the Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services {Lacors}, a government body which provides advice for councils on a wide variety of subjects.

It asked: Marriage information packs — do you have something similar for civil partnerships? Have you considered changing the name of your marriage room to something that will be suitable for both?

Lacors also advised that information packs could be renamed "Your Ceremony" instead of "Your wedding" and said signs need to read Registrars of Birth, Deaths, Marriage and Civil Partnership. One council said it had been advised by the general Register Office of England and Wales to remove any signs which may offend same sex couples (I wonder if this is the case one finds it most difficult to find a King James 1611 Bible in bookshops? A friend in Britain tried to purchase one and was advised to send to America for one) Councils in Staffordshire, Wolverhampton and Dudley, West Midlands, confirmed that register offices were dropping "marriage" from their signs.

In Wolverhampton the names of two marriage rooms have now been changed to ceremony rooms one and two. In Walsall, West Midlands, the register office has amended its sign saying "marriage ceremony in progress" to read "ceremony in progress". All 11 register offices in Cornwall and all 13 in Lincolnshire will change their marriage or wedding rooms to ceremony rooms.

THE STAND
April/May 2006

Marriage is a subject as old as the beginning of time. We are living in perilous time, awaiting the revelation of the one who will honour the God of forces to bring in events to trigger the time of Jacob's trouble (Daniel 11:38). As such, the institution of marriage will no doubt be attacked like no other time on earth. Because this vile person will neither regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women, nor regard any god, marriage is simply an institution manipulated to further his cause (Daniel 11:37). We are also told that in this latter time, forbidding man to marry is one facet of the doctrines of devils (1 Timothy 4:3).

So the world has been championing a standard one man one woman marriage as though the world is giving honour to God who in the beginning created a one man one woman marriage back in the Garden of Eden. Christians should however learn to look beyond such propaganda. The world is not going to do us Christians a favour by promoting a one man one woman marriage to honour the God of the Holy Bible. The world is actually giving lip service to the institution of marriage as a mockery because the world also promotes fornication and adultery within a one man one woman marriage system. Furthermore, the world promotes alternative lifestyle of same sex marriage as well as killing of innocent unborn babies with their tacit approval of abortion or termination of an unwanted pregnancy usually via agencies of the State.

As far as the world is concerned, marriage is more or less equivalent to a wedding ceremony as though the priest, the minister or whoever who officiates the wedding is given special miraculous power to pronounce the man and the woman husband and wife after their taking of oaths before many witnesses or whatever is required of them according to their culture or custom. This new couple is then recognized as man and wife the moment such special proclamation is issued but any incomplete ceremony will render their marriage null and void. Movies and TV serials are full of such interruptions by third parties to disrupt the wedding ceremony and the couple will then remain unmarried. The world's idea of a marriage is skewed and unbiblical. Marriage is more than just a wedding ceremony before the eyes of God. Marriage is not a license for a man and a woman getting hitched and then they have the right or liberty to commit fornication and adultery outside of marriage while this man and wife still remain married. They may remain married with one marriage certificate and one wedding ring but they have broken God's law concerning the marriage bed:

Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (Hebrews 13:4)

In the Holy Bible, marriage is concerning the original commission to be fruitful and multiply to replenish the earth. Marriage concerns the procreation of the human race and raising of families to populate planet Earth. God is not interested in whether a man and a woman dating each other and then they get married or the man and the woman marry because their parents arranged for them to be married in the past. Prearranged marriages or marriages as a result of dating are still marriages. Originally, it was also a one man one woman marriage. Then polygamy was practiced before the flood. It has been practiced by many ever since. Monogamy and polygamy are practiced by many people in many cultures in many parts of the world and only during the last century that polygamy is attacked by the world media relentlessly. The world promotes dating and fornication before marriage but frowns on prearranged marriages. Espouser of a woman to a man by parents is not acceptable in this modern day and age. So we have dating sites mushrooming all over the Internet for men and women to find their mate! More often than not, such facilities offer fallen men a platform to fornicate rather than becoming husband and wife.

The world also promotes monogamy and denounces polygamy. On the surface, this might appear like a righteous decree that comes with approval from above. Moreover, some Christians jump at such joy and fall prey to their propaganda. Christians fail to realize that the world also promotes infidelity in marriage and killing of the unborn babies as a result of fornication and adultery. Raising of families is not the scope of the world media. They rather marriage remains as a one man one woman holding onto one marriage certificate while all unwanted unborn babies killed in their mad pursuit of their most noble cause of upholding their own version of marriage. Such a doctrine is not taught in the Holy Bible and not practiced by people both saved and lost in the Old and New Testaments.

There was this Chinese TV serials appearing to be so desperate in this endeavour that they were ludicrous to the extent to typecast a young woman refusing to marry the king's son during the Qing dynasty in China some two hundred and fifty years ago unless the prince refused to take on other concubines. This woman insisted that the prince married her only and no other women. So this prince promised the woman he would be true to her only and married her but she failed to bring forth fruit of the womb.

Eventually the king forced his son to take on another young woman to be his concubine and this concubine bore him a son. But this prince later ran off with his first wife of his love and refused to return to the palace abandoning his other wife and son in the palace. Would anyone sane enough believe such nonsense was practised in time past in ancient China? Is it right for him to abandon the other woman and his son so that he could practise monogamy? Such brain washing is sadly imbibed by many people both Christians and the lost in this modern day and age where sinners shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection so much so that killing of innocent unborn babies does not move them anymore. This book is not a defence of a one man one woman marriage. This is just a discussion on what the Bible has to say concerning earthly marriages as practiced by fallen men since the beginning of time and how God viewed such marriages and dealt with fallen men.

A wedding is not a marriage but a marriage is usually initiated by a wedding ceremony according to the requirements of the cultures of the people concerned. There was no wedding ceremony recorded for Adam and Eve, the first man and his wife. When Isaac took Rebekah to be his wife, there was no mention of any wedding ceremony that took place (Genesis 24:67). A marriage is more than just a wedding ceremony. Sometime, a wedding ceremony is not the actual marriage one party has in mind. In Genesis 29, Jacob went through a wedding ceremony and celebration. He was looking forward to marrying his first love Rachel whom he had laboured painstakingly for seven years with Laban. Laban however, had some other idea as far as this marriage was concerned. A wedding ceremony took place before many witnesses and they all knew Laban was marrying one of his daughters to Jacob. The ceremony took place and that night Jacob consummated the marriage with the daughter Laban had given him. It was only in the morning that Jacob found out that he had been duped. So the wedding was not a marriage that Jacob had asked for but as far as Laban and all those present at the wedding were concerned, a marriage had been initiated and Laban's daughter Leah was already married to Jacob whether he liked it or not. It was a marriage forced upon him by fraud. While Jacob could dispute the marriage all that he wanted, he was already married and he was in a marital union with Leah. So Jacob had to live with Leah and love the wife he married and not the wife that he loved to marry. It was like the modern day practice of dating and marrying the woman he loved but he ended up with a prearranged marriage behind his back. It was still a marriage no doubt despite his vehement protest.

Arranged marriages are still common even in our day and age unless you are living in the western world and believing that you are the center of the universe. A man either loves the wife he marries or marries the wife that he loves. Poor Jacob married the woman he had no intention to marry but then he had to live with this woman and be responsible with the children she bore for him. Jacob however, had his wish granted to marry Rachel his first love by serving Laban for another seven years. He married Rachel as well and so having two wives at the same time. Not only did he have two wives, both his wives in their struggle to obtain affection from Jacob, requested him to copulate with their maids to bear children on their behalves as well. So in practice and in reality, he had four wives. Polygamy is an acceptable practice in society even now in some parts of the world. Will anyone condemn the children bore by Rachel his second wife and the two other

maids as illegitimate children and bastards not qualified to inherit the possessions of their father Jacob?

While a wedding may not be a marriage but a marriage is in force once a woman is espoused to a man to be his wife while the wedding ceremony is sometime in the future. Joseph and Marry were husband and wife though the wedding ceremony and the consummation of marriage had not taken place while Marry was already with child of the Holy Thing to bring forth the Messiah into this world. When a virgin is betrothed to a man, she is considered to be his wife and no man has a right to marry her. **If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her; Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not, being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you. But if a man find a betrothed damsel in the field, and the man force her, and lie with her: then the man only that lay with her shall die: But unto the damsel thou shalt do nothing; there is in the damsel no sin worthy of death: for as when a man riseth against his neighbour, and slayeth him, even so is this matter: For he found her in the field, and the betrothed damsel cried, and there was none to save her. (Deuteronomy 22:23-27)** She is no longer available while the wedding has not taken place yet. The teaching here is that a woman once betrothed to a man, she is his wife irrespective of whether the wedding ceremony has taken place in this arranged marriage. While the betrothed woman is not available to any other man, the same is not true for the man who may marry more than one wife. Some will be crying out that this is unfair and the Holy Bible promotes male chauvinist policy. But the Bible just recorded what was practiced and how God dealt with men even as they adapted to living in this sin cursed world.

Polygamy has been the accepted norm in society as old as time before the flood. Moreover God did not in any way show any disapproval on polygamy as practiced by the Jews and Gentiles alike. What is exceedingly clear is that adultery and fornication are condemned in no uncertain term in the Holy Bible.

And Lamech took unto him two wives: the name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. And Adah bare Jabal: he was the father of such as dwell in tents, and of such as have cattle. And his brother's name was Jubal: he was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ. And Zillah, she also bare Tubal-cain, an instructor of every artificer in brass and iron: and the sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah. And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. (Genesis 4:19-23)

When this man first mentioned to have married two wives, there was no wrath from heaven to exact punishment for his deviation from the standard norms of one man marrying only one wife. God does not punish a man for marrying more than one wife as far as the Scriptures reveal. But modern men make it an issue and think they can instill their own self-righteous form of morality and punish those who dare to challenge them on such matter. Throughout the Old Testament, there was no punishment for a man marrying more than one wife. Many kings and princes, judges and wealthy men have more than one wife. In fact, polygamy is not only practised by the Jewish race, people in many parts of the world also accepted polygamy especially for the rich and powerful.

It is amazing that Christians believe when the New Testament era arrives, polygamy is somehow outlawed. Is polygamy the perfect will of God for men? Certainly not! Is it the perfect will of God for Adam to fall into sin? No one in his right mind would impute sin to God for willing the fall of man so that billions of souls would be lost and burnt in hell fire for all eternity while God shows how loving He is by sending His only begotten Son to die for sinners to rescue some! Who would accuse God for causing Adam to fall? But Adam did fall and with the consequence of his fall, the world was no longer the same. Had Adam not fall, the Son of God needed not go to Calvary for sinners. But since the fall, God allows men to develop in time and history and God changes His way in dealing with Adam's fallen race from time to time. Polygamy is allowed by God but we cannot claim it

is God's perfect will for men to enter into a relationship of polygamy. Likewise it is not God's will for a Christian to marry an unbeliever but God still allows a Christian to enter into such an unholy union and they face the consequences of such a decision. **Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14)** Who would say that such a union has the blessing of God upon the marriage? Who would say that it is God who joins them together and let no man put asunder? The fact of the matter is that they choose to join themselves together in such an unholy union in spite of God forbidding them in the New Testament.

But then a marriage is still a marriage and such a union between the believer and unbeliever would very likely bring forth children. It is irreversible and they have to move forward with the decisions they have made in time past. Some people in this world may choose to marry more than one wife. Who would say that their marriages with their other wives are not valid in the sight of God? Who would say that the children from the other wives are not the children of the man who fathered them? God simply allows men to do what they want to do in this fallen world and let them reap the consequences of their choices. It is by God's mercy and grace that He seeks to save the lost people in this world in spite of their disobedience. Lost sinners will be born everyday whether they are from marriages made between the man and his first wife or whether there are proper weddings held for the man and woman. A marriage is between a man and a woman or more than one woman living together, bearing children and raising of families.

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 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? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. (Matthew 19:3-8) What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh. (1 Corinthians 6:16) For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. (Ephesians 5:31)

Marriage had become such a confusing subject that the Pharisees, supposedly the most learned men in the Jewish society, had difficulty grasping the full impact of what a marriage really meant. The Lord had to bring them back to the very beginning when God created Adam and Eve to explain the subject to them. A marriage is between a man and a woman and not a man with a man or a woman with a woman. In the beginning, it was God who joined Adam and Eve together. This cannot be said of many marriages down through history. A man may join together with a woman, but it cannot be inferred that it is God who joins them together. A Christian may marry an unbeliever in marriage but it is definitely not God who joins them together. It is the Christian who joins with the unbeliever in disobedience to Scriptures. This however, does not disannul the marital union between the believer and the unbeliever. But as far as God is concerned, it is not God who wills them to be joined in such a union of flesh joining flesh. Marriage is two flesh becoming one. They are joined together flesh with flesh in marital union having the rights, privileges and responsibility of the marriage bed.

Notwithstanding, flesh joining flesh does not always imply that a marriage has taken place. A man who visits a harlot does not mean he is married to the harlot though the act of marriage of the marriage bed has taken place. Judah unknowingly copulated with his daughter-in-law and resulted in her bearing him two sons (Genesis 38). This does not mean he had taken his daughter-in-law to be his wife. In fact Judah did not marry her

but allowed her to bring her pregnancy to full term when his folly was discovered. Unlike the wicked men in our day and age who will terminate an unwanted pregnancy, the people in time past allowed nature to take its course. Judah could have denied his accidental fling with her and have her burnt to death but he did not. He remarked that his daughter-in-law was more righteous than he because he had not allowed his youngest son to marry her after the death of his brothers according to their custom. Furthermore, it is through one of these sons born to Judah by his daughter-in-law that the Messianic line is continued. Christians have better learned not to be self-righteous because we certainly do not understand the divine mind in allowing events and incidents to take place in this world to glorify His name and redeem fallen men to Him. Would any one suggest abortion for Judah's daughter-in-law to terminate an unwanted pregnancy to cover up this shameful chapter in the Jewish history?

A marriage is more than just the act of marriage on the marriage bed. It is a commitment to live together as man and wife to raise a family when children comes a long. It is a responsibility to care for the family and raise up children as a result of the marital union between the man and his wife. Visiting a harlot has no such ideals in mind but simply a gratification of the flesh. So the act of marriage in copulation between two persons does not imply a marriage but a marriage will come with the responsibility of the union to raise up children when they come along. So according to Scriptural definition, a marriage is a man leaving his parents to unite with his wife as one flesh to start a new family to replenish the earth. The types of wedding ceremony and celebration are secondary as far as the actual marriage is concerned. Whatever form of wedding ceremony and celebration men choose to practise to initiate a marriage is of secondary importance in the sight of God. God knows the heart of men and holds them responsible for what they do in this life. This does not imply that Christians should not follow the law of the land concerning marriage. They may be required to register their marriage with the authorities to certify their marriage. Church wedding or other customs as required of them are their liberty to practise for a testimony before the saved and the lost alike. For a man and woman living together as man and wife disregarding the law of the land and the expectations of the people is not a good testimony as Christians living in this very perverse generation.

There are some Christians who teach polygamy as a viable option for Christians by suggesting that Christians return to the practice of the Patriarchs. They call for a return to the Hebraic movement and practise what the Hebrews practise concerning marriages. They claim that Christianity stems from the Jewish culture and returning to their practice of polygamy as a viable option for Christians is acceptable before God. Such a doctrine sounds persuasive but has no justification from the New Testament. There are many aspects that encompass a marriage for the Jewish people where the Gentile Christians are not obliged to adopt. There are several aspects of marriage concerning the Jews that are exclusive to the Jews. The Gentiles have not been commanded to incorporate the Jewish practices into their own custom and culture.

Circumcision

The Jews perform circumcision on their male and male children but do male Christians have to be circumcised and circumcise their male children as well? In fact, the issue of circumcision was raised during the times of the apostles and the contention that all Christians must adopt such a practice had been settled. Gentile Christians are not required to circumcise their male children. So for those Christians who do not practise circumcision, how can they justify polygamy practised by the Jews as a viable option?

But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command them to keep the law of Moses. Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: (Acts 15:5,24)

Male Christians are not required to be circumcised. Marriage is defined as flesh joining flesh concerning the seeds of man to produce fruits of the womb. Uncircumcised males who reproduced children through their wives are not considered the people of Jehovah God in the Old Testament. Their children have no placed in Jewish society. Even servants of Jewish families or strangers were required to be circumcised before they were allowed the privilege to partake the Passover lamb: **But every man's servant that is bought for money, when thou hast circumcised him, then shall he eat thereof. And when a stranger shall sojourn with thee, and**

will keep the passover to the LORD, let all his males be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it; and he shall be as one that is born in the land: for no uncircumcised person shall eat thereof. (Exodus 12:44&48) Circumcision is an inextricable part of Jewish culture. The Gentiles do not practise circumcision of their males. Should Christians also practise circumcision because they wish to practise polygamy like the Jews?

Divorce

When a man hath taken a wife, and married her, and it come to pass that she find no favour in his eyes, because he hath found some uncleanness in her: then let him write her a bill of divorcement, and give it in her hand, and send her out of his house. And when she is departed out of his house, she may go and be another man's wife. And if the latter husband hate her, and write her a bill of divorcement, and giveth it in her hand, and sendeth her out of his house; or if the latter husband die, which took her to be his wife; Her former husband, which sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after that she is defiled; for that is abomination before the LORD: and thou shalt not cause the land to sin, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance. (Deuteronomy 24:1-4)

The Jews also allowed for divorce. The man has the right to divorce his wife if he no longer finds her pleasing to him. The woman is then available for marriage and is not considered an adulteress if she marries another man. However, once she is married to another man, she is not allowed to return to her former husband should her new husband dies or divorces her. Will these Christians who practise polygamy also divorce their wives whenever their wives do not please them. Some contend that the husband divorces his wife because she has become unclean because of infidelity to the husband. This is untenable because if the wife is found to be defiled because of adultery, the wife and the adulterer would be put to death: **And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death. (Leviticus 20:10)** If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel. (Deuteronomy 22:22) Will those Christians impose this death penalty on adultery that call for a return to the Hebraic roots to practise polygamy? Death penalty on adultery is to put

away evil from Israel and not the Church. As far as the Church is concerned, such sin requires Christians to commit sinning parties to Satan for the destruction of the flesh that the spirit may be saved (1 Corinthians 5)

The man is not divorcing the wife because of infidelity because adultery attracts the death penalty. It is because of the hardness of their hearts that Moses allowed them to divorce their wives rather than to see the wives suffer abuse and neglect because their husbands no longer treat them like wives. Will these Christians who practise polygamy also divorce their wives which is allowed under the Law of Moses? Notwithstanding divorce under the Jewish Law is not allowed in the case when a man humbled a virgin according to Deuteronomy 22:28&29: **If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found; Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.** So if a man forces himself on a virgin who is not married to any man by espouser, he has to marry her and he is not allowed to divorce her for the rules concerning Deuteronomy 24:1-4 does not apply. Will Christians who propose polygamy as a viable option also have a tendency to humble a virgin and then marry her? Will they not consider copulating with a virgin outside of marriage fornication?

Another situation where the man is not allowed to divorce his wife is when he falsely accused her for not being a virgin when he married her. **If any man take a wife, and go in unto her, and hate her, And give occasions of speech against her, and bring up an evil name upon her, and say, I took this woman, and when I came to her, I found her not a maid: Then shall the father of the damsel, and her mother, take and bring forth the tokens of the damsel's virginity unto the elders of the city in the gate: And the damsel's father shall say unto the elders, I gave my daughter unto this man to wife, and he hateth her; And, lo, he hath given occasions of speech against her, saying, I found not thy daughter a maid; and yet these are the tokens of my daughter's virginity. And they shall spread the cloth before the elders of the city. And the elders of that city shall take that man and chastise him; And they shall amerce him in an hundred shekels of silver, and give them unto the father of the damsel, because he hath brought up an evil name upon a virgin of Israel: and she shall be his wife; he may not put her away all his days. But if this thing be true, and the tokens of virginity be not found for the**

damsel: Then they shall bring out the damsel to the door of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her with stones that she die: because she hath wrought folly in Israel, to play the whore in her father's house: so shalt thou put evil away from among you. (Deuteronomy 22:13-21) Will those Christians who suggest polygamy as a viable option also practise this Jewish Law? Will they put their wives to death if they are found not to be virgin on wedding night? If not, why not? Why such selective adoption of Jewish practices concerning marriage?

Jealousy in Marriage

Under the Law of Moses, when the man suspected his wife for being defiled but there was no evidence to prove his case, he was supposed to bring his wife to the priest to determine whether she was indeed defiled by other men.

Speak unto the children of Israel, and say unto them, If any man's wife go aside, and commit a trespass against him, And a man lie with her carnally, and it be hid from the eyes of her husband, and be kept close, and she be defiled, and there be no witness against her, neither she be taken with the manner; And the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be defiled: or if the spirit of jealousy come upon him, and he be jealous of his wife, and she be not defiled: Then shall the man bring his wife unto the priest, and he shall bring her offering for her, the tenth part of an ephah of barley meal; he shall pour no oil upon it, nor put frankincense thereon; for it is an offering of jealousy, an offering of memorial, bringing iniquity to remembrance. And the priest shall bring her near, and set her before the LORD: And the priest shall take holy water in an earthen vessel; and of the dust that is in the floor of the tabernacle the priest shall take, and put it into the water: And the priest shall set the woman before the LORD, and uncover the woman's head, and put the offering of memorial in her hands, which is the jealousy offering: and the priest shall have in his hand the bitter water that causeth the curse: And the priest shall charge her by an oath, and say unto the woman, If no man have lain with thee, and if thou hast not gone aside to uncleanness with another instead of thy husband, be thou free from this bitter water that causeth the curse: But if thou hast gone aside to another instead of thy husband, and if thou be defiled, and some man have lain with thee beside thine husband: Then the priest shall charge the woman with an

oath of cursing, and the priest shall say unto the woman, The LORD make thee a curse and an oath among thy people, when the LORD doth make thy thigh to rot, and thy belly to swell; And this water that causeth the curse shall go into thy bowels, to make thy belly to swell, and thy thigh to rot: And the woman shall say, Amen, amen. And the priest shall write these curses in a book, and he shall blot them out with the bitter water: And he shall cause the woman to drink the bitter water that causeth the curse: and the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter. Then the priest shall take the jealousy offering out of the woman's hand, and shall wave the offering before the LORD, and offer it upon the altar: And the priest shall take an handful of the offering, even the memorial thereof, and burn it upon the altar, and afterward shall cause the woman to drink the water. And when he hath made her to drink the water, then it shall come to pass, that, if she be defiled, and have done trespass against her husband, that the water that causeth the curse shall enter into her, and become bitter, and her belly shall swell, and her thigh shall rot: and the woman shall be a curse among her people. And if the woman be not defiled, but be clean; then she shall be free, and shall conceive seed. This is the law of jealousies, when a wife goeth aside to another instead of her husband, and is defiled; Or when the spirit of jealousy cometh upon him, and he be jealous over his wife, and shall set the woman before the LORD, and the priest shall execute upon her all this law. Then shall the man be guiltless from iniquity, and this woman shall bear her iniquity. (Numbers 5:12-31)

For Christians who call for a return to Hebraic roots, does the Law of Jealousy apply to their own marriages? If not, why not? Will the Christian man bring his wife to a priest or a pastor before the church to carry out this rite of jealousy offering? Will the priest or pastor burn some papers and make the woman drink the bitter water and issue the curse? Will Christian women protest such ridiculous practice imposed on them for which the Lord has already saved their souls and granted them eternal life in Christ? It is amazing that Christians champion a return to Hebraic roots without regards to New Testament teachings concerning the Church and not the nation of Israel.

Raising a Seed for the Deceased

If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed. (Deuteronomy 25:5-10)

Under the Law, when a man dies leaving behind his wife, his brother or next of kin is supposed to marry her and raise up a seed for the dead man. So it is possible that the man already has his own wife and marrying this widow will make him a polygamist. Are those Christians who champion polygamy as a viable option prepared to adopt this practice of raising up a seed for the deceased? This requirement of raising up a seed for the dead was practiced before the Law and Judah enforced it but he did not allow his youngest son to marry his sister-in-law fearing he might die like his older brothers. If those who contend that Christians must return to the Hebraic movement, then why are they not practicing what the Hebrews practise? If they claim they will practise this custom, will they insist the widow of the deceased marry the dead brother in the flesh who may not even be a Christian to raise up a seed for him? Or will she be forced to marry with another Christian brother to raise up a seed for the dead brother in Christ? Which Christian brother will volunteer to do national service to raise up a "Christian" earthly seed for his dead brother in Christ? If no Christian brothers in the church come forward to help, what should this widow do? Should she spit in the face of all these Christian brothers in the church and walk off to join another church? Such folly is indeed unthinkable! This shows the tragic failure in understanding the difference between the nation

of Israel and the Church. That is why it is so important to rightly divide the word of truth.

What about their dress code? Will they also adopt the dress code of the Hebrews and if not, why not? What about cheering up a new wife according to Deuteronomy 24:5: **When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business: but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.** Will these Christians who call for a return to Hebraic practice keep this commandment? This new wife could even be his second or third wife. Will such a Christian stay at home and do nothing but cheer up his new wife? Such selective adoption of certain Hebrew Laws and customs is untenable especially in the light of New Testament teaching. The folly in confusing the nation of Israel with the Church is simply mind-boggling.

The call to return to the practice of the Hebrews is nothing new. It was a big issue during those days when the gospel was preached by the apostles to the Gentiles. The conversion of the Gentiles to Christ diluted the custom and culture of the Hebrew Christians. Some Jews believed that it was needful to bring the Gentile believers into their fold to be in line with their customs and traditions. This will ensure cohesion and homogeneity of all believers in Christ so that they can speak with one voice concerning this newfound faith in the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. However, it was not God's will for the Gentiles to conform to the Jewish custom and culture. There are no requirements for the Gentiles to behave like the Jews and adopt the Jewish practice for their faith in Christ. Even when the apostle Peter failed to live up to this truth, he was soundly rebuked by the apostle Paul: **But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews? (Galatians 2:14)**

In the New Testament Church, which is the Body of Christ, there are neither Jews nor Gentiles. They have been made free in Christ and the practice of their faith in Christ is not subject to just one custom and culture, especially those of the Jews. The decree passed down by the Jewish apostles for the Gentile Christians to observe was reduced to just four points. **That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well. (Acts 15:29)** The Gentile Christians are not required to abstain from pork or any other foods, which the Jews regard as unclean. The Gentiles are also not required to circumcise their males let alone marry the widow of the dead to his kin to raise up a seed for him on earth!

So for those Christians who suggest that Christians should return to the Hebraic movement have no biblical support for their view. Citing polygamy in the Hebrew culture is selective adoption of the Jewish laws and customs. In fact, the Gentile Christians need not use the Jews to justify polygamy. Polygamy is also practiced by the Gentiles as well. Why the need to use the Jews to adopt this selective practice of polygamy is past finding out. While it is true that polygamy as practiced by both Jews and Gentiles did not suddenly become unpopular with the dawning of the New Testament era, the believers in Christ are not encouraged to practise polygamy. No where in the New Testament is the child of God exhorted to marry more

than one wife or is given instruction on how to manage a family of more than one wife like the Jews in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the rights of the first wife and the firstborn son of the man are guaranteed regardless of whether this son is born by the first wife or other wives. **If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn: But he shall acknowledge the son of the hated for the firstborn, by giving him a double portion of all that he hath: for he is the beginning of his strength; the right of the firstborn is his. (Deuteronomy 21:15-17)**

As much as some dislike polygamy and vehemently oppose this practice, God accepted it and recognized the children born in a polygamous marriage. Such children are not considered bastards. A bastard is a child born by a woman who is not fathered by the man in his family. The woman had played the whore and bore a child that is not of her own husband but raised in the home masquerading as one of his children. This law concerning the rights of the firstborn irrespective of which wife is given to the Jews, which the Gentiles are not obliged to follow. No such admonition is found in the New Testament with regards to the Christian family. The emphasis in the New Testament is not on the rights of the firstborn. The New Testament governs the behaviour of the born again child of God being members of the Church of the firstborn who are not to mind earthly things but heavenly things. Marrying many wives on earth is definitely not within the scope of the walk for the child of God in Christ.

While it is true that the New Testament does not condemn polygamy in any explicit form, Christians are certainly not encouraged to adopt such a practice. In the Old Testament, the Lord was dealing with an earthly people with a promise of a land and blessing to the Jewish people to be the light of the world as an extension of the original commission to be fruitful to multiply and replenish the earth. In the New Testament, the focus has changed. The Lord is now dealing with a called out group of believers in the Body of Christ also known as the Church to populate heaven where the child of God is now sitting in heavenly places: **Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding**

riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus. (Ephesians 2:5-7)

Marriage as such is an earthly institution to procreate the human race to replenish the earth with families living under the Kingdom of Heaven with blessings from above. Marriage is not an institution for spirit beings in heaven for there are no such commission and requirement to replenish heaven in procreation of the angelic race. **For in the resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven. (Matthew 22:30)** Christians are called out with a high, holy and heavenly calling to inherit the many mansions from above prepared by Christ. **But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: (1 Peter 2:9)** The only way Christians can reproduce such a race is to win the lost in this world to become citizens looking for a city which hath foundations whose builder and maker is God.

Christians do not reproduce many earthly children by marrying many wives to fulfill the overall plan of God to redeem Adam's lost and helpless race. Christians can only reproduce a race of called out people by giving the life saving gospel to this lost and dying world destined to be burnt up in a ball of fire in the future. To justify polygamy as an acceptable option in the sight of God for Christians is not only misplaced but unbiblical. Instead of finding Scriptures to support polygamy for Christians, we find the exact opposite admonition.

I suppose therefore that this is good for the present distress, I say, that it is good for a man so to be. Art thou bound unto a wife? seek not to be loosed. Art thou loosed from a wife? seek not a wife. But and if thou marry, thou hast not sinned; and if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned. Nevertheless such shall have trouble in the flesh: but I spare you. But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none; And they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away. 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: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, how he may please his wife. There is difference also between a wife and a virgin. The unmarried woman careth for the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit: but she that is married careth for the things of the world, how she may please her husband. And this I speak for your own profit; not that I may cast a snare upon you, but for that which is comely, and that ye may attend upon the Lord without distraction. But if any man think that he behaveth himself uncomely toward his virgin, if she pass the flower of her age, and need so require, let him do what he will, he sinneth not: let them marry. Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 7:26-40)

The idea of marriage is acceptable before God but there are trade offs in a marriage. There is a difference between those who are single and those who are married. Those who are married usually find themselves unable to attend unto the Lord without distraction. Paul warned Christians about such distractions for our profit and not that he wanted to cast a snarl upon Christians and discouraging Christians from getting married. Notwithstanding, it is better for a Christian to remain single so that he or she can serve the Lord without distraction. So it is more superior for a Christian to have less distraction in his walk and service of the Lord compare with a

Christian who is tied down in marriage having to attend unto many earthly affairs. In the light of such admonition, how then can polygamy be justified for Christians and superior in the eyes of God? Moreover, the apostle Paul reiterated that the wife is bound by the law to her husband. Paul did not suggest that many wives are bound to their one husband. In the Old Testament, a man can be a husband to several wives and such marital union is not considered adulterous in nature. In the New Testament no such family structure is recommended for Christians.

Christians being members of the New Testament Church are given a different perspective in living out their earthly lives. Christians are not given a land grant to live in Israel as a nation to procreate and populate that piece of land. Christians are members of an holy nation going to a better country which is not of this world. So earthly marriage is not the top priority let alone marrying many wives. Of course this does not rule out marriages for Christians which are perfectly acceptable before God to raise up godly family as a testimony of God's goodness and grace to the lost people in this dying world. But to suggest that polygamy for Christians is acceptable has no Scriptural support for such a practice.

Moreover, the emphasis in the New Testament has been changed by the Lord. As far as the Kingdom is concerned, there are much forsaking as a requirement to prove one's sincerity and loyalty to Christ. Christ promised these people who forsake all to follow Him with eternal life.

And Jesus said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life. (Matthew 19:28&29)

As far as the list of forsaking goes, many personal relationships are at stake including that of a man's wife. If the wife stands in the way for him to accept the lord and follow Him, he is admonished to forsake the wife. However, the Lord also promised to recompense this man many folds for what he has lost and that being rewarded with many wives after forsaking his one wife is not taught in the Scriptures. He may receive many more brethren, sisters and children but many more wives are definitely not in the

equation. It is also definitely out of question if his motive is to be rewarded with many wives for his sacrifice to follow the Lord to obtain eternal life but some suppose it is to obtain eternal wives.

Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life. (Mark 10:28-30)

Under this passage, recompense of a replacement wife for the one he has forsaken is not even suggested for a man to follow Christ. How then can polygamy be recommended as an acceptable option for Christians to adopt in the light of Scriptures in the New Testament? The New Testament Christian is not given the same perspective as an Old Testament Jew. To call for a return to Hebraic practices imply a reversal of the heavenly vision given to a New Testament Christian. A New Testament Christian is a follower and a disciple of Christ moving forward to the celestial land and waiting to rule and reign in the Kingdom. A child of God in the New Testament is not sinking roots on this earth by marrying many wives to produce many children to replenish this sin cursed world. A child of God being a member of the Body of Christ is supposed to set his affection on things that are above and not on things that are in this world. Marrying many wives is the exact opposite of setting one's affection on things that are above.

The Old Testament Jews are allowed to divorce their wife whenever the man is not pleased with her. Such abuse had reached crisis proportion that the Lord pronounced His furious indignation on those who abuse this Law given by Moses because of the hardness of their hearts towards the wives of their youth in the closing of the Old Testament canon. **Yet ye say, Wherefore? Because the LORD hath been witness between thee and the wife of thy youth, against whom thou hast dealt treacherously: yet is she thy companion, and the wife of thy covenant. And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For the LORD, the God of Israel, saith that he hateth putting away: for one covereth violence with his garment, saith the LORD of hosts: therefore take heed to your spirit, that ye deal not treacherously. (Malachi 2:14-16)** There are Christians who suggest that polygamy offer stability to society by maintaining the family structure. Polygamy was not even the issue when the Lord condemned those Jews who abused the wives of their youth. Divorce and polygamy were allowed back then but they still dealt treacherously with the wife of their youth. Polygamy was not even a cure to the sad malady of the deterioration of the family structure let alone a stabilizing institution of marriage in society.

When the Lord Jesus Christ showed up on earth, He was challenged by the self-righteous Jews on this matter of divorce. They were soundly reproved and the Lord offered them only one condition whereby a man may put away his wife. This only condition for divorce is fornication.

The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause? And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 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? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder. They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her

which is put away doth commit adultery. His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry. (Matthew 19:3-10)

The loophole in the Law of Moses for which wicked men who had abused the Law all those years had been tightened so much so that even the disciples of Christ remarked sarcastically that it was not good to marry if that be the case. So for those Christians who propose to return to Jewish practice of marriage and divorce, do they have the same mindset concerning putting away the wife other than for the case of fornication? What about the penalty of death for adulterers and adulteresses? Where do such Christians stand on this matter? Can Christians put adulterers and adulteresses to death? Will they pressure the State to put them to death for their sake? Are such Christians trying to institute the Jewish Law for Christians all over the world to practise regardless of their own customs and culture?

Not surprising, such Christians will use the law of the land to justify polygamy if such law suits their ideals of marriage. But such Christians forget that the law of the land in which he resides is not necessarily moral or biblical. The law of the land may allow abortion. Do Christians kill their own unborn babies even if the law of the land allows such a practice? The law may not consider adultery as a crime to be punished. Do Christians commit adultery because the law of the land has no laws that regard adultery as a criminal offence? Actually Christians often forget that they are now ambassadors for Christ. They are citizens of a far away country whose laws are above the law of the land in which they temporarily reside on earth. The law of the land in fact is too lax as far as citizens of heaven are concerned. Christians are not called upon to administer justice on the people in this world unless they are also law enforcement officers as citizens of the land in which they temporarily reside.

So while the world of sinners practise monogamy or polygamy, Christians do not derive the practice of their Christian faith from the norms in this world. The main focus of a Christian is to please the Lord in all things. Marriages are irreversible and children born into this world cannot be unborn again. Of course the people in this world also practise divorce according to their own whims and fancy as the law of the land allows. Christians must never follow such practices that are not biblical and not pleasing to the Lord. So very often when a sinner comes to know the Lord, he has already gone through many scars in this life and some decisions made

in the past are already permanent such as having more than one wife and children from such marriages. Becoming a Christian cannot undo what he did in the past. Those wives that he had married cannot be unmarried. There is no scriptural support from the New Testament for him to put away all the other wives in order for him just to stay with the first wife. He has to be responsible for all his wives and their children. Christ did not come to save him so that he may abandon the rest of his wives and kick all his other children from under his roof. Christ's salvation is not meant for him alone so that he might practise polygamy but for all sinners including his other wives and their children as well. He has an added responsibility to live a life that is circumspect before all his family members for the Lord and try to lead them to Christ.

However, such a man is disqualified from holding office in the local church, namely, the office of a bishop and a deacon. This is because he has a large family to attend to and it is not possible for him to attend unto the Lord without distraction. Even for those men who marry only one wife, the apostle Paul had already warned of the consequence of the need to please the spouse what more for a man who has more than one wife to take care of? How can such a man possibly take care of the church of the living God, which is the pillar and ground of truth? How can he be a good example to the flock in which he is called to lead? However, there is no scriptural support to suggest that a Christian must serve the Lord by giving all his time so much so that he loses his family. If a man neglects his family, he is actually a liability to the church and a bad testimony for other Christians to emulate. While God expects a Christian to put Christ first and foremost in his life, the New Testament also admonishes him to attend to his family, love the wife and nurture his children in the Lord. Serving the Lord by putting the Lord first and his duty towards his own family do not conflict or contradict with each other. These two duties are equally important if he is to be effective in being a good leader in the church.

For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city, as I had appointed thee: If any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children not accused of riot or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre; But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate; Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by

sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers. (Titus 1:5-9) A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well. (1 Timothy 3:2&12)

The apostle Paul gave very clear instructions with regards to church office holders. These office holders are supposed to be husband of one wife and not many wives because polygamy is also practiced by the Gentiles. It is irresponsible to teach Christians that polygamy is a viable form of marriage and elders and deacons are to set good examples as far as their own marriages are concerned. If a man has more than one wife who is an elder or a deacon, he is already being disobedient to the words of the living God. It is understandable why he teaches polygamy for Christians is acceptable before God because he wants to justify his own position and practice. He is no longer blameless in his outright disobedience to the words of God. He cannot be a man for Christians to look unto for guidance in holy living and temperance in this life because he is self-willed who has exalted himself above the words of God for not being the husband of one wife.

Because polygamy is practiced by sinners in this world, Christians must be careful not to pass unsubstantiated judgment on such people. It is better that such a man have more than one wife and be responsible to raise up a large family than for such a man having only one wife and commits fornication and adultery and then terminates an unwanted pregnancy. The standards for the Church and for the world are not the same. God's expectations from the Church and from the world are not the same as well. Having more than one wife is not a sin in itself. There are many more heinous sins a man can commit. A man is not sent to hell because of his sin because it is his nature to sin being born dead in trespasses and sin. A sinner is sent to hell because he has rejected God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to be his Saviour. Polygamy is not an issue as far as God is concerned as Scriptures reveal. Polygamy is still acceptable in some parts of the world according to the custom and culture of certain people. Of course there will be abuse in marriages whether in monogamy or polygamy. In some ways, polygamy is superior to the modern culture of indulgence of the flesh with no moral responsibility to bring up children as a result of the act of flesh joining flesh whether in marital union or otherwise.

As far as Christians are concerned, a marriage is to raise up a God fearing family having children in subjection growing up under the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Marriage is only meant to be in the Lord: **The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. (1 Corinthians 7:39)** Marrying an unsaved person cannot be said to be marrying in the Lord. Marrying an unbeliever is being disobedient to Scriptures: **Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? (2 Corinthians 6:14)** Marriage is not a sin because: **Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge (Hebrews 13:4).** Marriage is perfectly acceptable in the sight of God. Marriage however can be a distraction if it is not managed well and it will hinder both the man and wife in serving the Lord.

Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well. So then he that giveth her in marriage doeth well; but he that giveth her not in marriage doeth better. The wife is bound by the law as long as her husband liveth; but if her husband be dead, she is at liberty to be married to whom she will; only in the Lord. But she is happier if she so abide, after my judgment: and I think also that I have the Spirit of God. (1 Corinthians 7:37-40)

Marriage can be a source of distraction even between just a man and his wife. What more when a man marries more than one wife? How can polygamy be justified as a viable option for Christians? Paul's admonition was that a Christian would be happier to abide like him who is unmarried. Notwithstanding, Paul was only giving a recommendation for Christians to remain single because of distraction in marriage. However, he also suggested that Christians should marry for the reason given in 1 Corinthians 7:9: **But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn.** While it is a good idea to remain single to serve the Lord without distraction, it is not always possible. **For I would that all men were even as I myself. But every man hath his proper gift of God, one after this manner, and another after that. I say therefore to the unmarried and widows, It is good for them if they abide even as I. (1 Corinthians 7:7&8)** Not everyone can remain single having no need to marry. It is a gift from God like the apostle Paul. Remaining single cannot be forced. It

requires much more than just a strong will. Most Christians indeed will marry and raise up family in the Lord. This does not imply polygamy in any way, shape or form.

As far as divorce is concerned, fornication is the only ground for divorce as given by the Lord Jesus Christ. Under the Law of Moses, fornication and adultery attract the death penalty. Under the law of grace, it is a ground for divorce rather than death. That is why when the Lord came into this world, God had to choose a righteous man and a virgin to bring Christ into this world. How to cause a virgin to conceive and then find a man who will take her to be his wife is an extraordinary task. For abuse in marriage was already so rampant under the option of easy divorce and polygamy, who would want to marry a woman who is already pregnant before the wedding? Who would not be suspicious of the woman playing the whore and then put her to death for conceiving before marriage? But Joseph was a righteous man who was not willing to make Mary a public example for carrying the holy thing in her womb. This allows the marriage between Joseph and Mary to go through while she was carrying the baby Jesus. Will Christians commit fornication and adultery? It happens many times when a man or a woman is led away by sin of the flesh. What is done cannot be undone. While fornication is the only ground for divorce, the Lord Jesus did not insist that the man or the woman must divorce the sinning party. The Lord Jesus Christ was only giving the only ground for divorce in order to tighten up the whims and fancy of sinful man putting away their wives for whatever nonsensical reasons.

However, the Lord did not address the issue of divorce between a believer and an unbeliever in Christ. This is because He was dealing with the Jews who were supposed to be the people of God. When the gospel was preached the world over, this issue of divorce between a Christian and an unbeliever needed to be addressed. Many a time when the gospel is preached, one party within a marital bond may get saved and believe in the Lord while the other party may remain in unbelief of the Lord Jesus Christ. Under such a situation, what should the Christian do? Should the Christian divorce the unbelieving party? Is this sufficient ground for divorce under such circumstance? The apostle Paul gave his take on this matter.

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. And the woman which hath an husband that believeth not,

and if he be pleased to dwell with her, let her not leave him. 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. 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. For what knowest thou, O wife, whether thou shalt save thy husband? or how knowest thou, O man, whether thou shalt save thy wife? (1 Corinthians 7:12-16)

So an unbelieving party is not the ground for the divorce but if the unbelieving party chooses to initiate a divorce, the Christian is not at fault in such a case. Under such a situation, a Christian is qualified to remarry but only in the Lord. Nowhere is the Christian given the blessing to marry more than one wife. Of course Paul's preference is that the Christian remains single but then again, marriage is not a sin. The Jewish law concerning marriage and divorce has been superceded in the New Testament. No Christian should go back to the Old Testament to justify polygamy and divorce. This is not moving forward in the Christian faith but a reversal to be put under bondage of the Law. Therefore to justify polygamy for Christians under the new arrangement in the New Testament is incongruent under the law of grace. Old Testament law of divorce is no longer valid concerning families for the nation of Israel. Christian families are no longer commanded to inherit an earthly nation in Israel. Christians are now made up of all nationalities living as citizens of their respective countries of birth fulfilling obligations as citizens of that nation. Moreover, New Testament law of divorce has been fine tuned for situation between one party who might be a Christian while the other party might remain in unbelief. Such a situation is unknown under the Old Testament Jewish nation where the Jews are the people chosen by God. Divorce for Christians is actually not recommended at all while the only ground for divorce because of fornication is given by the Lord for the transition to the Law of grace. **And unto the married I command, yet not I, but the Lord, Let not the wife depart from her husband: But and if she depart, let her remain unmarried, or be reconciled to her husband: and let not the husband put away his wife. (1 Corinthians 7:10&11)** Whenever there is trouble in a marriage, reconciliation is the ultimate objective for Christians who are married. This is not the case in the Old Testament. Putting away the wife is an option and marrying more than one wife is commonly practised.

Under a polygamous marriage, more trouble can be expected in the home. Jacob had trouble in the home not only between sibling rivalry and treachery among his sons; he even had to deal with his wives' constant fighting for his attention. The family of Elkanah had similar trouble as well. Hannah was mocked for failing to bear fruits of the womb. Gideon had many wives who bore him seventy children. Abimelech, the son of his concubine, killed all his brethren except one after the death of Gideon. Polygamy does not mean a more harmonious marriage as those Christians who suggest as a viable option for Christians to manifest Christian love in Christ within the family setup. It is easier said than done. The Old Testament saints have more understanding on this matter than these modern day Christians championing polygamy within the Christian home.

And Rehoboam loved Maachah the daughter of Absalom above all his wives and his concubines: (for he took eighteen wives, and threescore concubines; and begat twenty and eight sons, and threescore daughters.) And Rehoboam made Abijah the son of Maachah the chief, to be ruler among his brethren: for he thought to make him king. And he dealt wisely, and dispersed of all his children throughout all the countries of Judah and Benjamin, unto every fenced city: and he gave them victual in abundance. And he desired many wives. (2 Chronicles 11:21-23)

King Rehoboam understood the trouble within a big family very well. The Bible recorded that he dealt wisely by dispersing all his children to prevent rivalries among his sons. For those Christians who claim that a big family with many wives and children is a good opportunity for his wives and children to overcome jealousy and love one another within the family are simply deceived and living in denial of the nature of the flesh. Salvation changes nothing to the flesh and the old man is not eradicated when a person is saved. To expect all his wives and children who might not even be saved to manifest Christian love and harmony in the home is simply a flight to fantasy.

Troubles in the home are many even within a one man one woman marriage. What more in a polygamous marriage? Those who suggest otherwise are not being honest as the nature of the flesh does not change even for a person who is saved. There will be endless trouble in the home and the Christian will surely be distracted to no end in a polygamous marriage. Recommending polygamy for Christians to adopt as a viable option definitely does not have Scriptural support from the New Testament. Since marriage is defined as a man leaving his father and mother and cleave unto his wife where two flesh shall become one, the greatest attack to break the marital bond is the refusal to be join in one flesh by either one party. The apostle Paul warned of the nature of this attack when he wrote to the Church in Corinth.

Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband. Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. 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. 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. (1 Corinthians 7:1-5)

One main purpose of marriage is to prevent fornication. Not everyone can remain single because it is a gift from God. Deliberate attempt to force celibacy upon man will result in trouble in the flesh because it is against the law of nature to force man to remain single: **But if they cannot contain, let them marry: for it is better to marry than to burn. (1 Corinthians 7:9)** So it is better to marry than to burn and it will surely lead to perversion and fornication if celibacy is enforced. As such, it is God's will for every man to have his own wife and every woman her own husband. No polygamous marriage is suggested here by the apostle Paul. The marriage union is supposed to prevent fornication. In a marriage, no one can claim one's body to be one's possession anymore. It concerns the control of the body. The body also belongs to the other party in a marriage. But what happens if one party refuses to render due benevolence to the other? This allows Satan to enter the marriage to tempt one party to break the marital bond by seeking release elsewhere. Fornication with another party will sooner or later take place and this will provide the ground for divorce. This is how Satan

destroys the family unit. Christians will be most foolish for disobeying the Scriptures by being selfish and self-will in keeping their own body to themselves in marriage and refuse to render due benevolence to their spouses.

This kind of problem is very prevalent in a marriage between husband and wife. In the Old Testament, if the husband is not pleased with his wife, he can just divorce her. He can even marry other woman and take more than one wife. In this setup, sometimes the wives will fight for attention from the same husband to sleep with them. Rendering due benevolence to all his wives fairly are not always possible. Leah even had to trade commodity with Rachel in order to spend a night with her husband (Genesis 30:15-17). In the New Testament where the rules for divorce have been revised, it is not so easy for a man to divorce his wife. Even the disciples of Christ remarked that under such stringent requirement for divorce, it was no good to marry. So when the wife does not please her husband, the man is commanded to love his wife and not be bitter against her: **Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. (Colossians 3:19)** This is cross bearing for Christ's sake and not the easy way out by divorcing the wife and marry another.

It is very easy to become bitter against the wife when she refuses to submit to her husband and please him especially when polygamy is not recommended in the New Testament for a Christian to practise. He cannot seek release when his wife refuses to render due benevolence and he is still commanded to love her and not be bitter against her. This is also a picture of the Bride of Christ where members of this Bride very often do not please the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the Body. While Christians often have been disobedient to Christ, yet the Lord still loves His Church and will not divorce His Bride.

Wives refusing to submit to their own husbands is very common in a marriage. As such, there are several verses in the New Testament to command the women to submit to their own husbands. **Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband. (Ephesians 5:22,24,33) Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. (Colossians 3:18) 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; (1 Peter 3:1)

The women are supposed to submit to their own husbands as unto the Lord. Submitting to their own husbands is equivalent to submitting to the Lord. Refusing to submit to their own husband is tantamount to refusing to obey the Lord and not submitting to the Lord. The Church is subject unto Christ and so likewise wives are to subject to their own husbands in everything and not in something that they like or felt like submitting in certain areas in their lives. Wives submitting to their own husbands are also fit in the Lord. This is especially the case when the husband of the woman is an unbeliever. It is possible for the believing wife to win her unbelieving husband to the Lord by her behaviour in submitting to him by trusting in the Lord to deal with him. Submission to husbands is no small matter and it must be taught because there is great tendency for women refusing to submit to their husbands in all things. Women of faith will not be afraid to submit to their own husbands even as Sarah submits to Abraham by calling him lord. **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: 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. (1 Peter 3:5&6)**

Older women who have been so taught by the words of God and reaped the benefits of obeying God by submitting to their own husbands are commanded to teach younger women to love their husbands and children. This is not something that comes naturally to younger women. Fallen men and women are self-will and selfish. **The aged women likewise, that they be in behaviour as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed. (Titus 2:3-5)**

Obedience to their own husbands will prevent the words of God to be blasphemed. By disobeying the husband, it gives cause for the husband and others to blaspheme the words of God when the woman is a Christian who is supposed to be obedient to God's words. She will give the enemies occasion to blaspheme God's words by her disobedience. Refusing to obey God's

words for a woman in not submitting to her own husband is such a common problem that the man has been constantly told to love his wife in spite of her disobedience. The man is told that the woman is a weaker vessel and the man is to give honour unto the wife. **Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered. (1 Peter 3:7)**

This will in some way prevent the breakdown of the marriage. However, the breakdown of a marriage is a real, constant and present danger whenever one party refuses to render due benevolence in a marriage. Flesh refusing to join flesh will result in breakdown of the marriage. However, polygamy is not a solution to such problem anyway. It is not a cure to the malady of the wicked heart that is still present in a Christian. The devil no doubt delights to create havoc in the home by stirring up trouble whenever one party in the marriage is disobedient to God's words in a marriage.

While monogamy and polygamy are practised by people in this world, Christians are not commanded nor encouraged to enter into a polygamous marriage. This will not solve the problem of any one party disobeying God's words whether in a marriage situation or in other areas of a man's life. Disobeying God's words is very common. The Holy Bible does not teach a Christian should marry an unbeliever but it happens all the time. Marriage is irreversible and to get out of a marriage, other than death, divorce is the only way to go in this life. Fallen men however, will come up with fanciful scheme to disannul a marriage so that both parties remains single again rather than having to bear the stigma of being a divorcee. Christians must not practise what fallen men allow when it is not biblical. Divorce is certainly not God's will for man though the ground for divorce is fornication. God will allow fallen men to choose and do what they like and bear the consequences of their choice.

The Holy Bible reveals the practice of marriage by fallen men and the trouble and blessing of marriage. The Bible also warns of trouble in the home for disobedience to the words of God. The purpose of marriage is less than romantic for those who have been brain washed by propaganda of the world. Falling in love and out of love like the movies stars are not reality in this world. Many people still get married whether it is a result of dating or a prearranged marriage. Marriage is still a marriage whatever the means that get people to become married. It is to prevent fornication and to replenish the earth. While polygamy is not a sin and is acceptable to some people in this world, it is never taught in the New Testament for Christians to adopt as a viable option to raise a family.

For a man who has already married more than one wife before he believes the Lord, getting saved does not change his status of a polygamous marriage. Salvation in Christ does not disannul his marriages in time past just like a man who lost an arm during a gang fight will not grow a new arm after he has believed in the Lord Jesus Christ. Certain things happened in this life is permanent and salvation in Christ changes nothing except the fact that his eternal life in Christ is now a present and permanent possession. The same goes for those Christians deceived into marrying more than one wife will not absolve him of his responsibility towards his other wives and their children born to him. He will be disqualified for church office and he has to live the rest of his earthly life dealing with many distractions and obligations.

So should Christians adopt the practice of polygamy like those people in the Old Testament? The New Testament does not condone this practice. On the contrary, Christians are warned of the earthly entanglement in marriage where they will be distracted in serving the Lord in this life. Moreover, the apostle recommended that a widow is not to expect the church to relieve her if she has not been the wife of one man. **Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man, Well reported of for good works; if she have brought up children, if she have lodged strangers, if she have washed the saints' feet, if she have relieved the afflicted, if she have diligently followed every good work. (1 Timothy 5:9&10)** How then can polygamy be taught to be an acceptable option for Christians? As for the Old Testament, a widow should be married to the next of kin to raise up a seed for the dead. However in the New Testament, a widow is commended for being the wife of only one husband. Church office holders are also expected to be husbands

of one wife. As such, Polygamy is never recommended for Christians. Christians are destined to move upward to their heavenly homes for they are looking forward to a better country and a city, which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. They are not interested in sinking roots on earth expanding their earthly possession with regards to territorial inheritance promised to the Old Testament Jews in Israel. Marrying just one wife is more than sufficient to keep him occupied with family affairs and finding a right balance in serving the Lord while raising a family is already a very delicate task. Marrying many wives would definitely keep him away from the most important mission in this earthly life to perform God's perfect will in being a good and faithful witness of what the Lord Jesus Christ has done for him.

They are many things in this life that the Bible does not openly condemn. There many things a Christian can do which does not amount to sinning against the Lord in his walk with God. The apostle Paul tells us: **All things are lawful unto me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but I will not be brought under the power of any. All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. (1 Corinthians 6:12&10:23)** There are many things that fall under the category of being lawful but not necessarily expedient nor edifying for a Christian to practise. Polygamy is certainly one such issue. The Christian life is not what he can or cannot do but what he will or will not do for the sake of the gospel and of Christ. Therefore, Christians should not adopt polygamy as a viable option to raise a family. What the world practices is of no consequence for Christians whether they are monogamous or polygamous for all are in need of the saving grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. As such, Christians should live out a testimony befitting that of a pilgrim and a stranger trying to reconcile sinners to the Lord. There is too little time on earth to do God's work and will and so polygamy is definitely not for Christians to adopt for their marriage.

<p>If you have been blessed with the reading of this book and you wish to contact the author, you may write to him at charles@kjbv-asia.com.</p>
