

THE "ONENESS" PRINCIPLE OF MARRIAGE

By Dr. Gary M. Gulan, ©1986 (Rev. 98)

Introduction: There are several passages that refer to the "marriage union" as being "one flesh:" "...And they shall be one flesh," (Genesis 2:24); "...They two shall be one flesh," (Matthew 19:5); "...And the two shall become one flesh, so then they are no longer two but one flesh," (Mark 10:8); "...And the two shall be one flesh," (Ephesians 5:31). The "oneness" principle greatly impacts not only marriage, but also church leadership.

In order to fully understand the "marriage" uniqueness, one should understand what the "oneness" principle really means within a marriage.

1. Various Viewpoints On Marital "Oneness"

In reviewing approximately 100 books on Genesis, Matthew, Mark, and Ephesians, I have found at least six commonly given viewpoints concerning marriage's "one flesh" concept.

A. "One flesh" may refer to the "sexual union"

The physical union within the act of sex is two bodies united into one.

B. "One flesh" may refer to "androgynous (male/female) unity"

A male and a female united in marriage makes a complete species of the humankind.

C. "One flesh" may refer to a "kinship relationship"

The husband and wife relationship is closer than any other human relationship.

D. "One flesh" may refer to a "mutual dependence and fulfillment"

The reason the woman was created was to meet a need within the man.

E. "One flesh" may refer to a "personality or soul meld"

There is a synchronization of emotion, intellect and will within the marriage over time.

F. "One flesh" may refer to a "spiritual bond or union"

God attached a divinely appointed result with spiritual ramifications to the sexual union.

2. Other Descriptive Passages On "Oneness"

There are at least four other passages that refer to a "oneness" concept.

A. Christ "one" with the Father, and the Father one with Christ, John 10:30; 17:21,22.

B. The believer "one" with the Father and with Christ John 17:21,23.

C. The believer "one" with other believers, John 17:21,22; (1 Corinthians 12:12-14).

D. The believer "one" with a prostitute, 1 Corinthians 6:16. (not a good example)

3. Applications On What "Oneness" May Mean

Marital "oneness" may be understood by observing "oneness" between Christ and the Father.

A. Two entities drawing from the same single source (John 10:30; Phil. 2:5-11).

There is but one God, yet God is manifested as two separate entities, the Father and the Son.

B. Two entities enjoying a close relationship of shared intimacy (John 17:5)

There is but one God, yet there is interaction and sharing between the Father and the Son.

C. Equal in position but separate in role and function, (John 13:6; 14:28; 5:30).

Both the Father and the Son are equal as God, yet the Father is greater than the son, and the Son can do nothing except if the Father gives the Son authority.

D. Separate persons yet united in purpose working toward one common goal (John 3:16; 17:4,8).

Both the Father and the Son are God, yet as the leader the Father made the plans for creation and redemption and as a submissive servant the Son carried out the Father's plans.

Conclusion: The "one flesh" concept must mean more than the "act of sex." The "one flesh" concept may extend into the "spiritual" realm when we consider the male and female within marriage living out the "image of God" and imitating the "oneness" of the Father and the Son. By understanding the marital "oneness" principle, marriages will develop stronger bonds and into a greater fulfillment of intimacy.