

- This oneness that God has decreed in (Genesis 2:24) - “Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.” This decree of oneness is showing us that when a person becomes married, they leave their father and mother as the primary relationship and their spouse becomes their primary relationship.
- To cleave unto your husband or wife is to become closer and more devoted to them.
- To become one flesh means that they become a single unit in society and they begin to function as one, not two.
- In the marriage relationship, God’s arithmetic is one plus one equals one. The husband and wife are supposed to make sure that they try to give their spouse everything that they would want themselves. We should want our spouse to be as happy and fulfilled as we want ourselves to be.
- A marriage relationship is not a competition to see what one person can get out of the relationship. When we compete, we are working against our competitor, but in marriage you are giving all your effort to make sure that your spouse is happy and fulfilled. If both husband and wife are doing this then the marriage is going to be successful. Both parties of the husband and wife relationship should be trying to out give the other.
- This oneness means that you are sharing a life together. You are sharing the good times and the hard times. And the reality is that if you are making your spouse happy and fulfilled then you will be happy and fulfilled because part of you is your spouse.
- The husband wife relationship is the picture of unity, two people joined together to make one person.
- Jesus echoed this command in (Matthew 19:5-6) “And said for this cause shall man leave his 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 no man put asunder.”
- As we began to speak earlier about the oneness of husband and wife being represented by the exclusive physical intimacy that they are given to share, we need to realize that the bible tells us that this gift that God gives husband and wife is given so that they can represent their oneness to each other and strengthen their relationship.
- (1 Corinthians 7:1-5) This passage speaks about sex in the marriage relationship. Notice (vs 2) “to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband.”
- Notice here the use of the word “own” when we have something of our own. We claim it as ours, it is part of our personal property - “It’s mine”, “It’s nobody else’s”.
- This is also a command against polygamy or spouse swapping or open marriages. The spouse belongs to the other spouse.
- How many of us are comfortable in saying “My wife owns me” or “My husband owns me”? It makes us cringe to say such a thing, we would more likely say, “I am my own person, nobody owns me.”
- Notice as we go through these verses how God lets us see that in order for the marriage relationship to stay strong and beautiful, we have to unselfishly give up total ownership of ourselves because in marriage you have given yourself to your spouse. (vs 3) “Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband.”
- Due benevolence means - What you are supposed to or are required to give the person who owns something.

- In this case the bible is speaking about physical intimacy or sex in the marriage. This scripture as we will see is telling us that married believers are not supposed to sexually deprive their spouses.
- We will see that the bible says that celibacy is right for the single, but celibacy is wrong for married people.
- So we see this command in (vs 3) that tells the husband and the wife that they are supposed to give their physical selves to each other as an expression of their oneness and because they owe it to the other person based on their commitment to give themselves to their spouse.
- Now listen to (vs 4) as this is explained in even more detail. (vs4) “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.”
- Are you shocked that we see this in the bible? We are clearly told here that when you give yourself to someone in marriage you are giving them power or authority over your physical body, not to abuse it but to enjoy it.
- We need to realize that in the marriage union the wife and the husband do not own their own bodies, they have agreed to share their bodies with the other person that owns them too.
- Now listen to (vs 5) and we will see the danger of disobeying this teaching of God, and realize that God knows us, he made us and he is giving these instructions so that we can have healthy marriage relationships (vs5) “Defraud ye not one the other” which means do not deprive your husband or wife of your physical body.
- Now we see an exception, we have a stipulation in this instruction. “Defraud ye not one the other except it be with consent for a time.” This means except by mutual consent and for a limited time.
- So what kind of time is the bible speaking about?
- (vs 5) goes on to say that the only time that you are supposed to keep yourself from one another is during a time of fasting and prayer.
- During the act of fasting a person is supposed to deprive themselves from any thing that gives them pleasure or fulfillment so that they can show God that they are focusing on him and him alone. During this time the married couple is supposed to mutually agree that they will not give themselves to each other so that they can devote themselves to their priority relationship which is their relationship with God.
- But notice the end of (vs 5) we see that when the time of fasting and prayer is over the husband and wife are instructed “and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency”
- This is an important instruction - We are told that after the spiritual interruption of fasting and prayer, the husband and wife are supposed to come together again and give themselves to each other. So that Satan will not bring temptation into the marriage because of one of the spouses lack of self control - incontinency means lack of self control.
- There has never been a marriage that was broken by adultery unless one of the spouses lost their self control and gave into the temptation of being with someone else. What God is trying to tell us is to make sure that we are fulfilling the physical and sexual needs of our spouse because the devil is looking for any area to tempt the husband or wife to break the oneness that God has given them. (Ephesians 4:27) “Neither give place to the devil” - do not give the devil a foothold in your life or your marriage. The devil is looking for an opportunity to break up the union of husband and wife. (1 Peter 5:8) tells us that our enemy the devil is walking around seeking whom he may devour. We are given those instructions because God wants to protect us.
- The bible tells us that marriage is honorable and we should treat it honorable. The husband and wife are given the gift of sexual intimacy so that they can strengthen their marriage and continually unselfishly give themselves to each other as a reaffirmation of their oneness.

- We need to be careful to keep the marriage relationship strong and secure and this area of sexual intimacy is one of the key areas. (Hebrews 13:4) “Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled, but whoremonger and adulterers God will judge.” God is telling us how important our marriage relationships are to him.
- We don’t have to physically be with someone else to damage our relationship. The devil knows that men and women can damage their marriage relationship by fantasizing in their mind about another man or woman.
- Jesus says in (Matthew 5:27-28) “Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, thou shalt not commit adultery. But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”
- This is for women as well as men.
- I believe this is speaking about the fantasy thoughts that a person has about someone who is not their spouse or someone that is someone else's spouse.
- Pornography is the most common vehicle that is used to promote this kind of adultery and fornication. The devil knows if we feed our mind something that tempts us and we continue to focus our mind on it then we are going to fall into his trap.
- Jesus says that this fantasy or lusting is an act of adultery also. There is no marriage that is going to be strengthened by a husband or wife lusting after someone they are not married to.
- I know some would say, I just don’t have that desire because me and my spouse don’t even communicate, so I don’t have that strong desire to communicate with them physically.
- The bible addresses this also, so we need to see how the bible tells us to conduct ourselves in the marriage relationship so that the husband and wife will desire to be with each other and want to give themselves to each other.