

Statement on Marriage and Ethics
Countryside Bible Church
February 2024

At the heart of Christianity and the life of the church is the gospel message of Jesus Christ and the worship of God as our proper response (Rom. 12:1). Such a response demands that we be not conformed to this world, but think differently, according to revealed truth (Rom. 12:2). Our God deserves His glory for all His works (Rom. 11:36).

Because marriage is designed by God to portray this gospel message (Eph. 5:22-33), with the husband representing Christ and the wife representing the church, we are jealous to maintain both His design of marriage and the God-given distinctions of male and female, which came from this design (Gen. 1:26-28; Gen. 2:18-24). The following statement declares our beliefs about marriage and related matters of ethics.

Marriage

Marriage is a gift of God for His glory and for our good (Pr. 18:22; 19:14; Rom. 11:36; Jas. 1:17). By design, marriage is the covenanted union of one man and one woman to be friend and lover in a lifelong, exclusive relationship (Mal. 2:14; Song 5:16). By instituting marriage in the beginning, God established its legitimate form for all cultures in all times (Gen. 2:18-24; Mt. 19:3-8; 1 Cor. 11:7-10; cf. 1 Tim. 2:11-13). As a covenant, marriage is publicly constituted and intended to be permanent, with allowance only for biblical exception (e.g. 1 Cor. 7:15-16). Rightly, Jesus concluded, “What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate” (Mt. 19:6).

Sexual Purity

The sexual union of a man and a woman, the “one flesh” relationship, is lawful only within marriage (Heb. 13:4). As a holy people, Christians are called to abstain from all sexual impurity and immorality, both in mind and in body, regardless of the strength of internal tendency or external temptation (1 Th. 4:1-8; 1 Pt. 2:11; Mt. 5:28; 1 Cor. 10:13). This prohibition includes fornication (such as “premarital sex”), adultery (such as “extramarital affairs”), pornography, all forms of homosexuality, and anything else that deviates from God’s holy standards (1 Cor. 6:9-20; Eph. 5:3-5; Rom. 1:24-27; 1 Tim. 1:8-11).

Sanctity of Life

We believe that all human beings are made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28; Jas. 3:9); therefore, human beings have a derived sanctity and an intrinsic worth that sets them apart from the animals (Mt. 10:31; 12:12). The taking of innocent human life is wrong (Gen. 9:6). We believe that human life and personhood begin at conception; therefore, abortion and all purposed destruction of innocent human life break God’s law and should be mourned and opposed (Ex. 20:13, 21:22-25; Ps. 139:14-16; Isa. 44:24, 49:1; Jer. 1:5; Lk. 1:15, 41, 44; Mt. 2:16-18; 1 Cor. 5:2).

Gender and Biological Sex

In the beginning, God created mankind as male and female, in the same sense that the animals are male and female (Gen. 1:27; 6:19; 7:2-3). Scripture does not allow a distinction between gender and biological sex; therefore, our identity as male or female is rooted in our physical bodies and should not be altered (cf. Dt. 22:5).

Singleness

Singleness is also a gift of God for His glory and for our good, because it is well suited for a life dedicated exclusively to Christ (1 Cor. 7:7, 32-35). Even so, it is still not good for a believer to be alone (cf. Gen. 2:18); therefore, God has given singles fellowship through the church as a spiritual family (cf. Mk. 3:31-35; Heb. 10:25).

Gender Roles

As human beings, created in the image of God as male and female (Gen. 1:27), men and women are designed by God with distinct roles (Gen. 2:18). Therefore, we affirm both the spiritual equality of all Christians (Gal. 3:28; 1 Pt. 3:7) and the responsible leadership of men in church and home (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-33).

As a congregation of sinners saved by grace through faith in Christ, we recognize that we have been guilty of such sins as given here, but that these sins no longer define our identity (1 Cor. 6:9-11). As redeemed children of God, we are called by His holy name—we are *saints*—and we are privileged to proclaim this same forgiveness and freedom to others (1 Cor. 1:2; Ph. 2:15-16; 1 Pt. 2:9-10). To God alone be all the glory!