

THE HUSBAND OF ONE WIFE

By Jeff Rath 7-2009

1 Timothy 3:1 This is a true saying, If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work.

3:2 A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behaviour, given to hospitality, apt to teach;

The office of a leader in the church of God is a good work, but there are standards that a leader must adhere to as a leader. Here in the King James Version, it states that a leader "must be blameless, the husband of one wife," This means that he is faithful to his one wife. If you track adultery throughout the Bible, you will see that disaster follows. God even uses adultery to describe idolatry. In the Old Testament God will sometimes describe His people as "whoring after other gods." The worst situation is when a leader of God's people thinks of himself as someone who has a right to the sexual favors of women in his congregation. The result will be lies, corruption, false doctrine, and injury to God's people.

How do we handle adultery and clergy? In the Old Testament, in some cases, it was a capital crime. We are no longer under the Old Testament law but it is still wrong today.

Leviticus 20:10 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.

In the Old Testament, Israel was ruled by judges and prophets. Then they wanted to be like the pagan nations and have a king. God told Israel all the evil the king would do but they wanted one anyway. The first king, Saul, got messed up very quickly. He was succeeded by David who was, for the most part, a good king. But he eventually had a man killed so that he could have that man's wife. His son, Solomon, had many wives and women, and this eventually led him into idolatry. The next king was so evil that ten of the twelve tribes rebelled against him.

What is wrong is the system of a king. We can't put too much power into one man's hand otherwise he will let us down. The position of a king can corrupt him to the point that he uses and abuses people. In our day and time we often ascribe too much power and status to a great reverend or spiritual leader. When a man is put in that position, he quite often falls into temptation. The key here is not to make any kings or equivalent positions for our leaders. We need to have leaders to teach the Bible and oversee the church, but we can't deify them.

There are those that teach that it was alright for the kings in the Old Testament to have all the women they wanted. Yet, John the Baptist lost his life because he reproved the king for

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committing adultery. Solomon was the wisest man alive, but his adventures in adultery led him to false gods. It was wrong for the kings to commit adultery.

1 Timothy chapter 3:1-13 New English Bible

There is a popular saying: 'To aspire to leadership is an honourable ambition.' Our leader, therefore, or bishop, must be above reproach, faithful to his one wife, sober, temperate, courteous, hospitable, and a good teacher; he must not be given to drink, or a brawler, but of a forbearing disposition, avoiding quarrels, and no lover of money. He must be one who manages his own household well and wins obedience from his children, and a man of the highest principles. If a man does not know how to control his own family, how can he look after a congregation of God's people? He must not be a convert newly baptized, for fear the sin of conceit should bring upon him a judgement contrived by the devil. He must moreover have a good reputation with the non-Christian public, so that he may not be exposed to scandal and get caught in the devil's snare. Deacons, likewise, must be men of high principle, not indulging in double talk, given neither to excessive drinking nor to money-grubbing. They must be men who combine a clear conscience with a firm hold on the deep truths of our faith. No less than bishops, they must first undergo a scrutiny, and if there is no mark against them, they may serve. Their wives equally, must be women of high principle, who will not talk scandal, sober and trustworthy in every way. A deacon must be faithful to his one wife, and good at managing children and his own household. For deacons with a good record of service may claim a standing and the right to speak openly on matters of the Christian faith.

This translation clearly states, "Our leader, therefore, or bishop, must be above reproach, faithful to his one wife," This is one of the qualifications for a Christian leaders.

1 Timothy 3:1-13 New Living Translation

1 It is a true saying that if someone wants to be an elder, he desires an honorable responsibility. 2 For an elder must be a man whose life cannot be spoken against. He must be faithful to his wife. He must exhibit self-control, live wisely, and have a good reputation. He must enjoy having guests in his home and must be able to teach. 3 He must not be a heavy drinker or be violent. He must manage his own family well, with children who respect and obey him. 5 For if a man cannot manage his own household how can he take care of God's church. 6 An elder must not be a new Christian, because he might be proud of being chosen too soon, and the Devil will use that pride to make him fall. 7 Also, people outside the church must speak well of him so that he will not fall into the Devil's trap and be disgraced. 8 In the same way, deacons must be people who are respected and have integrity. They must not be heavy drinkers and must not be greedy for money. 9 They must be committed to the revealed truths of the Christian faith and

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must live with a clear conscience. 10 Before they are appointed as deacons, they should be given other responsibilities in the church as a test of their character and ability. If they do well, then they may serve as deacons. 11 In the same way, their wives must be respected and must not speak evil of others. They must exercise self-control and be faithful in everything they do. 12 A deacon must be faithful to his wife, and he must manage his children and household well. 13 Those who do well as deacons will be rewarded with respect from others and will have increased confidence in their faith in Christ Jesus.

This translation clearly states, "He must be faithful to his wife."

Romans 13:9 For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

In the Old Testament, Israel was held to the Ten Commandments and the Mosaic Law. In the New Testament, Christians are held to the standard of love. In our day and time, we must ask ourselves, "What is the loving thing to do?" For a clergy, one of the most unloving things that he can do is to become a sexual predator of the flock of God that he is supposed to oversee.

Romans 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

The word "dissimulation" should be translated "hypocrisy." It is a great act of hypocrisy for a clergy to preach the Word and then use and abuse his congregation for his own sexual desires. The clergy should be faithful to his one wife. That is the standard of the Word.

Leaders in the church should be held to the standard of the Word. The Church of God deserves the best, and not the worst, from its leaders.

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