

Always Endure's Biblical Context for Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality

In everything *Always Endure* does, we strive to be guided by the Holy Spirit and God's Word (See *Always Endure's* Statement of Faith). As sinners in need of a savior, we endeavor that all *Always Endure* operations and decisions reflect Jesus Christ's sacrifice for each of us, enabling and guaranteeing our eternal adoption into His kingdom.

Always Endure seeks to live out Jesus' commandment in Matthew 22:37-39; "And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."³⁸ This is the great and first commandment.³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

Jesus commands that we are to love God first, living authentically and obediently following His every word. We're then to love our neighbors, serving and supporting them in accordance to His truth. Every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31). Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be renounced and are not in accord with Scripture nor the beliefs of *Always Endure*.

In an effort to properly articulate *Always Endure's* definition of marriage, the beginning point must be God and His revelation to humanity through Scripture. *Always Endure* believes marriage is the sacred union between one man and one woman, as defined by Scripture. As humans, we bear the image of God. We are made "after the likeness" of God, who by nature of existing as three persons bonded together in eternal oneness (Trinity), created relational counterparts, male and female, to bear his image (Gen. 1:26). Genesis 1:27 states, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them." All is declared good in the Genesis account of creation except the aloneness of the first male (Adam), for which the answer is God's creation of Eve, earth's first female (Gen. 2:18, 20).

The Bible continues, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24). This verse sets forth the biblical pattern for

marriage as instituted by God in the beginning: one man is united to one woman in a marital covenant, and the two form one new family. Within the context of marriage, the dynamic interplay and biological complementarity between male and female is imperative, as deemed “good” by God himself. Jesus confirms all of this in Matthew 19:8, pointing toward marriage’s existence as a male/female, one-flesh union “from the beginning.”

Furthermore, *Always Endure* believes that Scripture is clear that sexual intimacy to occur between a man and a woman who are married to each other (1 Cor. 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb. 13:4). We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marital covenant made between man and a woman.

Throughout the Bible, marriage is used as a reflection of Christ’s relationship to His bride – the Church (Ephesians 5:32). Just as adoption points us to the truth that all born again believers are adopted into God’s family through Christ, biblical marriage and families point us to a greater understanding of the Church as the bride of Christ. Nevertheless, we seek to support and equip biblical families.