



**What Does the Bible Teach
About Polygamy?**

Polygamy Always Disregards God's Marriage Law

- When God ordained marriage as described in Genesis, there is a set form for marriage: one man for one woman in a stable, lasting, fruitful relationship of mutual support for one lifetime
 - Gen. 2:18 - “And the LORD God said, It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him.”

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- Gen. 2:21-24 - “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

Polygamy Always Disregards God's Marriage Law

- How are we to understand the polygamy (multiple wives) of the ancients such as Jacob, Moses, Gideon, David, Solomon, and many others? Did God approve of this?
- Scripture teaches about sin in various ways:
 - Direct rebuke and condemnation
 - Accounts and examples
- Polygamy caused nothing but trouble, leading to division, jealousy, and murder.

Polygamy Was Common Among Old Testament Men

- Lamech, a descendant of Cain, practiced polygamy - Gen. 4:19
- Abraham had more than one wife - Gen. 16:3-4, 25:6 - they were called “concubines”
 - Concubine - “Female slave who functioned as a secondary wife and surrogate mother, but had lower status than a wife. The Hebrew word for concubine (pileges) is a non-Semitic loanword borrowed to refer to a phenomenon not indigenous to Israel.” (www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary)

Polygamy Was Common Among Old Testament Men

- Nahor, Abraham's brother, had a wife and a concubine - Gen. 11:29, 22:20-24
- Jacob was tricked into polygamy - Gen. 29:20-30
 - Later, he produced children through two servant women, making a total of four wives - Gen. 30:4, 9
- Esau took a third wife to please his father Isaac - Gen. 28:6-9

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- Asshur, descendant of the royal line and founder of the city of Tekoa had two wives - 1Chron. 4:5
- The prophets Obadiah, Joel, Ishiah, and others “had many wives” - 1Chron. 7:3-4
- Shazaraim had four wives, two of which he “sent away” - 1Chron. 8:8-11
- Caleb had two wives and two concubines - 1Chron. 2:18, 46, 48

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- Gideon the Judge had many wives - Judges 8:30
- Elkanah, husband of Hannah, had two wives - 1Sam. 1:1-2, 8 - 2:10
- David had 8 wives and 10 concubines - 1Chron. 1:1-9; 2Sam. 6:23, 20:3
- Solomon, who violated the commandments in Deuteronomy 7:1-4 and 17:14-17, had 700 wives and 300 concubines - 1Kings 11:1-6
- Rehoboam had eighteen wives and sixty concubines - 2Chron. 11:21)
 - He facilitated his sons in multiple marriages - 1Chron. 11:23

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- Abijah, king of Judah, defeated Jereboam, had 14 wives
2Chron. 13:21
- Ahab had multiple wives - 1Kings 20:7
- Jehoram, king of Judah, had multiple wives - 2Chron. 21:17
- Jehoiada the priest gave king Joash two wives - 2Chron. 24:1-3
- Jehoiachin, king of Judah, had more than one wife - 2Kings 24:15

Does God Approve Of Polygamy?

- The silence of God does not connote approval.
- God permitted divorce under the Law of Moses, not during the Patriarchal age, because of the hard hearts of the Israelites
 - Matt. 19:8 - “He said to them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so.”

Does God Approve Of Polygamy?

- Jacob had four wives he clearly loved unequally
- Gideon had multiple wives through whom he had many sons who killed each other
- David had eight wives who produced children who created great sorrow for the king
- Solomon's 1000 women led him and Israel into idolatry
- Abraham's dalliance with Hagar and his concubines threatened his receiving the promises of God

Does God Approve Of Polygamy?

- The Bible teaches against polygamy by examples of its problematic nature
- Matters were different in that God permitted things He did not approve
 - Acts 17:30 - “Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent”

Does God Approve Of Polygamy?

- Jesus taught a return to God's original plan for marriage
 - Matt 19:4-9 - “And He answered and said to them, Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh? So then, they are no longer two but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate. They said to Him, Why then did Moses command to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away? 8 He said to them, Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, permitted you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9 And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery”