

A STUDY OF MARRIAGE IN CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM AND ITS CHALLENGES TO
CONTEMPORARY COUPLES IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Marriage is a divine institution and the most important of all institution on earth. It was originated by God at the beginning of creation to perfect the created order in the garden of Eden when He gave Eve to Adam as a wife Gen. 2:18-25. The ideal of one man and one wife is a serious business and the responsibility of both to it to be healthy is enormous. Marriage occurs between people of different cultural, social, educational, religions and ethical background. These kinds of marriage have some challenges that will be looked into. The position of women in the two religions – Christianity and Islam makes marriage peaceful and stable. A healthy marriage offers everything one needs for long term happiness, love, hope, laughter, security, purpose, friendship, intimacy, care. Married people have more and better sex. They are healthier and wealthier than their single counterpart do. The venerable institution of marriage has challenges and has changed due to social upheavals that put women and spouses overworked and stressed out. for all its challenges, marriage remains among the sweetiest, happiest and most fulfilling things a person can experience. It is therefore necessary to “keep your eyes wide open before marriage half shot afterwards”. This essay tends to establish factors pertinent to ideal marriage in Christianity and Islam and its challenges with the aim of helping couples and would-be-couples to overcome marital challenges and achieve the joys and benefits that a good marriage can provide. In writing this essay, reading, interviewing, studying and observing cross section of married adults of different ages from diverse background and locations- gushed for more than they griped. The reality is that life is not perpetual bliss, and marriage is not a perpetual honeymoon but the best thing in life is deeply shared lasting love. Marriage can be fun, adventurous, liberating, stimulating, frustrating as survey respondents explained. It was discovered that marriages are very important in the two religions (Christianity and Islam) to lives and the pleasure of matrimony far outweighed the hassles. Finally, this essay will serve as a road map to a greater happiness in marriage by knowing God’s purpose for marriage and your relationship’s real priorities.

5.2 Conclusion

Marriage institution has been established by God, it continues till date all over the world. It is sacred and a natural union which enhances the union of two individual and making them to be one. Monogamous union is encouraged and practiced in Christian marriage husband and wife adhering tightly to each other. Jesus said “for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh, so they are no longer two but one...”⁷³

It is obvious that God cannot be a party to destruction of home, so to have and keep a successful home, one must commit everything into God in obedience to all His instructions for the Bible says in Phil. 4:13.

“I can do everything through Him who gives me strength”

Islam allows man to marry up to four wives at a time, as long as he can take care of them, love them equally, having “complete legal obligation towards his second, third and fourth wives and their children”⁷⁴.

Islam gives room for polygamy, the Qur’an maintains that “marry woman of your choice, two, three or four”

Fadipe noted that, “While the wife might have only one living husband, it was a mark of distinction for her husband to have as many wives as his means would allow”⁷⁵.

⁷¹ Fadipe, the Sociology of the Yoruba, p. 66

⁷² B. Aisha Lemu, A students introduction to Islam Macmillian Edu. Lim 1971 pg. 34

⁷³ Matthew 19:5-6 (NIV)

⁷⁴ Lemu and Heeren, p. 24, 61

The right of divorce is given to both the husband and wife in Islam. A woman can divorce her husband if she can no longer cope with certain habits (bad) or her husband takes another wife. Despite Islam's permission on divorce, certain conditions and limitations is placed on it⁷⁶.

Christian marriage is noted to be strong in that it is permanent and indissoluble. No matter the situation and circumstances that confronts the couple in the journey of their marriage, divorce is not permitted. Jesus rejects the ideas of divorce completely.

Purdah "system is encourage in Islam while in Christianity, women are given freedom to earn a living thereby making them responsible in the home and be able to interact with other people in their place of work.

In conclusion, the writer notes that the issue of polygamy do not go down with most of the Muslim women interviewed. Many suffer untold hardship from the "Purah" for lack of adequate care by the husband.

Divorce: is breaking of the marriage covenant it is an action contrary to the pattern of "one man, one woman, one life time" The concept that divorce constituted sin appeared in mal 2: 14-16.

In matt. 19: 3-12, Jesus stated that God did not intend for divorce to occur. But under the OT law, adultery (sexual immorality during marriage) was punishable by death (Lev. 20:10). An improper divorce would make the divorced wife and her future husband adulterers in their relationship. Infidelity among married couples contributes to a greater extent to many divorce cases witnessed in marriage; this act is common among the so-called elites. The right to divorce has given some couple license to divorce their partners on unnecessary excuses. Some even go to the extent of

⁷⁵ Fadipe, p. 89

⁷⁶ Fadipe p. 90

marrying more than four wives. Deceit and favouritism often characterize polygamy and the love dwindles when things go bad.

5.3 Recommendations

Marriage as said earlier on is central to God's heart and it must be handled with care and cautions. The writer wants to submit that right from the onset children should be given proper orientation on:

1. God's counsel to be sought before marriage relationship is contracted
2. Parental consent should be taken seriously as this will avert future problem
3. Marriage should be between people who share the same interest, focus and intellectually compatible
4. There must be genuine love not infatuation because love is a key to successful marriage
5. Parents must counsel their children on what marriage entails. Do not allow homosexuality and bestiality.
6. Family and home enrichment programmes should be organized to inform young men and women concerning the nature of Christian and Islamic society injunctions or marriage
7. Pastors should preach on Christian home from the pulpit from time to time
8. Same sex marriage must be totally rejected
9. Learn to persevere in tribulation
10. Encourage would-be-couple to have a viable source of income before getting married
11. Make your family a priority
12. Understand each others short coming and adjust accordingly

13. Do not be covetous and sell yourself out for worldly gain.
14. Protect others interest
15. Do not marry outside one's faith and social status
16. Forgive one another
17. Endure all things (in case of childlessness, sickness, loss of job etc_
18. "Purdah" system should be discouraged because of the contemporary economic problems.
19. Marriage should be between matured and consenting adults.
20. Do not marry by proxy or out of pity , but because of love and trust one another.

Virginity should not be a prerequisite to marriage it has been observed that inter-ethnic marriage are supported by many families in theory but not in practice.

Parents and relatives advice is in fact needed but should not impose marriage on their children contrary to their wishes.

Marriage based on caste system is not in the interest of our society (contemporary time) because it makes some members of one community inferior to others.

Educated youth should not allow their knowledge to impair the sancity of marriage and the marriage traditional custom. Men should realize that women's place is no longer or no more in the kitchen. Women want to be fully emancipated. Our young people should realize that keeping sugar daddies / mummies may jeopardize their future either by making them "left over" or get married very late.