

Polygamy!

What is polygamy?

What does the term mean?

When did the practice first begin historically?

Is it moral?

Is it evil?

Is it neutral?

Biblical characters and others have practiced polygamy throughout the ages, is it therefore something God has required or desired for us?

These questions are answered and in-depth biblical explanations are addressed in this article. This writer was born and raised in a polygamy group in Utah. As an adult I desired to find an answer to these questions simply because deep in my soul I sensed something was not right with the “principle” of polygamy, even though all the leaders of the group preached that it was God’s will; even though women, including my own mother, taught that polygamy was the only way God would accept people into heaven, and even though some of the seemingly most “trusted” people I knew believed in and/or practiced polygamy, I still couldn’t shake the conviction that there was something dreadfully wrong with the practice.

Most polygamy groups are dogmatic in their belief that God has commanded this principle as a basic part of their religion and necessary in the plan of salvation. Because of that dogma, the Bible and God are used extensively in this article about polygamy. Actually, polygamy is not essentially a religious issue - but the male leadership of polygamy groups use it as a religious requirement simply because doing that makes it easier to entice the women and brainwash the children from birth, to follow their deceptive leading.

DEFINITION:

The term “polygamy” is actually a hypocritical term. It is a word used to describe *‘plural marriage’*. Since the term **marriage** represents the union of two people and is a covenant between those **two** people, there cannot be a proper word to describe something that isn’t. Plural marriage cannot be a marriage because it involves more than two people, therefore it isn’t what the term suggests it is. To make this point even clearer, a biblical covenant was between two parties. In plural marriage, the marriage covenant is not between two parties but between many individuals, therefore it does not correspond with the biblical concept of a legal covenant. The argument that each woman a man marries is between himself and the woman making two people, does not stand, simply because all of the other wives are to be in agreement with each “marriage” and with the other wives.

When God created mankind, He created first Adam and then Eve... He created only two people, a man and a woman. He brought them together in the first God-ordained marriage.... Genesis 2:24 says: **"and the two shall become one"**. This is the original marriage, the one where God gave away the bride. This is the marriage Jesus talked about in Matthew:

Matthew 19:4-6 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his **wife**: and they **twain** shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more **twain**, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

The King James Bible uses words which are far outdated from our modern language. The word "twain" means "two". God joins together two in a marriage - a male and a female. No more, no less. Thousands of years later during His ministry, Jesus confirms this original design and purpose of God as stated in Matthew 19:4-6. Anything outside of, other than, or in addition to that which God has decreed is not from Him and is therefore a violation of His original purpose. Notice that the man is to cleave to his "wife" not "wives".

Jesus goes on to say that what God has made, man should not "put asunder". God made a marriage between two people only, between one male and one female. No human being has the right to destroy or change what God has done. And no place in Scripture do we find that God has made any changes or altered His original design.

Surely, if God's original design for marriage had been for one man to have many wives, the first marriage would have reflected that desire and plan. God did not take many ribs from Adam to make him many wives: **One rib** to create **One wife** for **One man**.

ORIGIN:

The first case of polygamy in the Bible is in Genesis Chapter 4, verse 19, where Lamech married two women. Lamech was from the lineage of Cain. Cain was a murderer who had been cursed by God! In other words, polygamy first came into practice from the cursed line of Cain! Cain had gone out from the presence of the Lord (Genesis 4:16). His family in the following generations was born and raised away from the presence of God. Isn't it interesting that the first incident of polygamy was of the family which had been cursed by God? That fact alone tells us that something is dreadfully wrong with the practice.

In Genesis 6:1-2, we see earth's population growing and men beginning to lust after all the beautiful women: **"..they took them wives of all which they chose...."**

Genesis 6:1-2 **And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. KJV**

This verse is saying that "they" are choosing more than one wife.

There is certainly strong indication in these verses that polygamy had become rampant. It is most significant that it is the first sin mentioned in the chapter which documents God's grief over the sinful, corrupt and violent ways of mankind. See verses 5,11,12,13.

Genesis 6:5 **And GOD saw that the *wickedness* of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was *only evil continually*.**

Genesis 6:11-13 **The earth also was corrupt before God, and the earth was filled with violence. And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth. And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth. KJV**

Several times the words, wickedness and corrupt is used describing that society. All of mankind was corrupt including those who practiced polygamy - which also confirms that living polygamy is a corruption of God's initial marriage plan and is one of the reasons God flooded the earth in Noah's day!

It has been suggested by Biblical scholars, and evidence indicates, that this is most probably when harems first became a part of society. God subsequently flooded the earth to destroy all the evil, saving only the righteous Noah and his family.

Cain's line, from which polygamy first began, was destroyed in the flood!

Noah and each of his three sons had only one wife each. If God condemned and flooded the earth because of the sin of polygamy which was the breeding ground for the violence, corruption, wickedness and evil mentioned in these verses, then what does God think of polygamy today? There is obviously nothing godly or spiritual in the practice of polygamy - it only hurts and brings great pain to those caught up in its practice.

Throughout human history there have always been wars and tribal hostilities taking place. Often the majority of the men would be killed off, which left many helpless women and children. The women, and young girls, would be taken captive as slaves and concubines. The strongest win! Physically, men are notably stronger

than women - these men could and would populate their harems from captive or abducted women.

No longer was the woman the “help mate” that God had originally created her to be, but she became a sexual slave, something to be used and treated as property, one of many, with no special treatment as a wife. The man has not left his father and mother and cleaved to his wife, but has instead corrupted his home, his family and his God-given heritage by his lustful immorality. Oddly enough, as a result, many are never enough. Once a man tries to be satisfied by many, many are not enough to satisfy.

* * * * *

OLD TESTAMENT POLYGAMY:

Most polygamist groups use the Biblical account of Abraham and Sarah as a prime example that polygamy was God’s idea. Because God has held up Abraham in so many places in the Bible as His friend, and extols Abraham’s faith throughout the Old and New Testaments, those who do not understand Scripture and who incorrectly follow the story as it is told, assume that because Abraham and Hagar cohabitated, that God surely must have okayed it or at the least, allowed it to be within His divine will.

God’s original plan for redemption of mankind was to create a special group of people through whom He would eventually bring forth the Messiah. He would save people from their sins. This people from whom the Messiah would be born would be the Jews.

Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation which God would create for His redemptive purpose. God promised Abraham and Sarah a child, one born miraculously in their old age, proving that it was God’s plan at work - not man’s. But, when God’s promise wasn’t quickly fulfilled, Sarah pushed Hagar into Abraham’s arms and bed - God had nothing to do with this faithless scheme. See Genesis 16:1-4.

Genesis 16:1-4 Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the LORD hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And **Sarai** Abram's wife **took Hagar her maid** the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and **gave her** to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes.

However, when Hagar got pregnant and lorded it over Sarah, she chased Hagar off. God met Hagar in the desert and sent her back "to Sarai to submit to her..." Why didn't God send Hagar back to Abram to submit to him if God considered her his wife?

God sent Hagar back to Sarah, not to Abraham. He did this because of His care and concern for a helpless, pregnant **victim** of Sarai, and of Abraham "who harkened unto his wife" rather than trust God and His promise. Later, when Hagar's son Ishmael was older and they were able to care for themselves, God told Abraham to send Hagar and her son away, which he did!! Genesis 21:8-14.

It never mentions that Hagar had children other than Ishmael and she is never referred to as Abraham's wife but always as the bondswoman (maidservant) of Sarah. God NEVER in the Biblical record, recognizes Hagar as a legitimate wife of Abraham! Abraham did not take another wife until after Sarah died.

Also something to be aware of, not only is Hagar never referred to as Abrahams "wife" but Ishmael is referred to as the son of the bondswoman, not as the son of Abraham. In fact, later in Chapter 22 of Genesis when God tells Abraham to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, He calls Isaac Abraham's "only" son.

Genesis 22:2 And he said, Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of. KJV

God often uses the New testament as a commentary on the Old Testament. Galatians 4:28-31, compares Hagar and Sarah. Hagar is referred to as a slave and Sarah as a freewoman. In fact verse 30 says: "**Cast out the bondswoman and her son**", which is a pretty good Biblical example of what God thinks of polygamy!

With these Biblical facts in mind, how can Abraham be used as an example FOR the practice of polygamy? God never instructed Abraham, Sarah or Hagar to participate in a polygamous affair, but instead instructed Hagar to leave the situation just as soon as Ishmael was old enough to travel away with his mother. So if the polygamists were to actually follow in Abraham's footsteps, they would first provide for their other wives and children, and then send them away.

Isaac, Abraham's son, did not have more than one wife - Rebekah. But both of his sons, Esau and Jacob, lived polygamy. Jacob's life was a miserable one with four wives and at least 13 children. If you ever want to find an example of a dysfunctional family, Jacob's family is it! But such is the case with all multi-wived families. The man can't help but show favoritism. Each woman is left to do her best to protect her children and her own marital rights. There is jealousy within the realm of the wives and the children. There is no domestic tranquility.

Mention needs to be made about Esau. In Genesis 26:34-35 we are told that Esau

took to himself two wives and they were a source of grief to his parents, Isaac and Rebekah. In Genesis 28:8-9 we read that Esau took even another wife making three known wives for him. That is all we know about Esau's sex life. Not another nugget of information is given about Esau's sexual activities.

Now we go to the New Testament and read what God tells us about Esau there.

Hebrews 12:16 Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

The word "fornicator" means sexual immorality. So we learn that Esau was a sexually immoral person. Since the only thing we know about his sex life is that he had three wives, its obvious that God considers polygamy immoral and commands people not to do live that way!

Polygamy can rightly be blamed for disastrous results. Many people believe and teach that God has ordained polygamy so that they can learn not to be jealous, harbor hard feelings, and other strong negative emotions which naturally occur when a woman shares her husband with other women. But THAT is exactly how God created women to react. He said to Eve that **her desire shall be for her husband**, Genesis 3:16.

**Every woman desires her own husband exclusively
because that's the way God created her.**

Polygamy is morally wrong as seen in the births of babies. Statistically, there are slightly more males born than females. Why wouldn't God create more female babies if His desire and plan was polygamy? It is clear from this information that polygamy is also a crime against God's laws of nature.

Just because the Bible mentions certain things that people did does not signify that God condoned it nor commanded people to do it. Jacob over time **became** a man of God, but early on he often lived outside of God's will. When Jacob began accumulating wives for himself, it was ALL the doing of human beings, not God. Genesis 29:16-30. Genesis 30:1-4, 9.

As you read the account, notice carefully that Jacob was hoodwinked into the marriage with Leah. Jacob did not want Leah, his first and only love was for Rachel. Then as these two women bickered and argued trying to win Jacob's favor over the other, in their fits of jealousy, they gave their own maidservants to Jacob in order to have children. In other words, they used their maidservants as surrogate mothers. And so we see women being victimized, not just by men, but also by other women.

This, and Abraham's experience with Hagar, is not a suitable foundation on which to base a favorable doctrine of polygamy.

In studying the life of Jacob we learn that he:

1. Cheated - God didn't tell him to.
2. Lied - God didn't command him to.
3. Manipulated people and circumstances - God didn't condone this behavior
4. Took four wives - God didn't tell him to nor did He approve of it.

In Genesis 44 there is a genealogical record of Jacobs family. In 44:27 Jacob says: "...my **wife** bore me two sons..." Jacob is referring to Rachel, his precious sweetheart, the only one he truly loved, the only one he ever wanted. He did not refer to her as "one of my wives" who gave him two sons. He himself said he had a "wife". One. .

In Genesis 46, verses 15, 18, 19, and 25 the Bible lists Jacob's children and the mother of each. None is referred to as Jacob's wife except Rachel ONLY. Since the Bible is the Word of God, God Himself is telling us that He considered Jacob as having only one wife - his first and only love, Rachel, the woman he had worked seven years for so she could be his wife.

The other three women were unfortunate victims thrust upon him for another's personal agenda.

Just because Jacob had four women, and children from all four, does not teach that polygamy was a good idea or God's idea.

But why did God allow this behavior? Why didn't He come right out and condemn the practice loud and clear? Why does it seemingly appear as though He may even have approved it by His silence to the men who practiced it?

When God gave the nation of Israel His laws, He was very particular about how His chosen people should conduct their lives. In Leviticus 18:24-30, God warns Israel NOT to partake of the sexual sins that the other nations practiced. The result being that they would be vomited out of the land (verses 25 and 28) which eventually did happen since they disobeyed God in every way.

In Deuteronomy 17:17, God specifically gave a command for the future kings of the nation of Israel: **not to multiply wives to himself...** This is an explicit command from God against polygamy. The king is the representative of the people and the model and example for the people.

Then there was King David and Solomon, two kings that proponents of polygamy use as Biblical "proof" that God approved of polygamy. But, God does not say

something is wrong and then later contradict Himself by saying wrong is right after all. Nor do God's standards change.

David was a king and military leader. He practiced what the leaders and kings of the earth did in those days - collected harems. However, he and his family paid dearly for his lifestyle of sexual immorality. Families often suffer because of the sins of their parents. If a parent follows a foolish path of behavior, the children will often follow closely in their footsteps. David's sexual escapades and appetite were observed and practiced by his sons. His son, Amnon, raped his sister. Another son, Absalom killed Amnon in revenge then later tried to take the kingship from David and ended up raping his father's concubines on the palace roof in view of all the people - 2 Samuel 13 and 16.

A careful study of the life of David will show any honest reader that David did not have a happy or emotionally healthy family.

1. David sinned every time he took an additional wife - Deuteronomy. 17:17.
2. David sinned when he committed adultery with Bathsheba .
3. David sinned when he ordered Bathsheba's husband, Uriah, to be killed in battle.
4. David sinned when he took Bathsheba as one more wife.

In spite of all these sins, God loved David. In fact, in spite of all OUR sins, God still loves us!

We cannot conclude that polygamy is approved of by God just because He didn't immediately punish David and others for their polygamous lifestyle. Oftentimes the consequences of our sins are what God will use to show us the error of our ways. We must know and remember that God's patience towards us gives us time and opportunity to repent of our sins.

Titus 3:4-6 tells us that God is full of kindness, love and mercy toward us. He wants everyone to repent and come to the knowledge of the truth and waits patiently for each of us to respond to His love through repentance.

God tolerated the sin of polygamy (even as He still does). Never once did He command it as a doctrine, He loves women and children too deeply for that. God has always been against polygamy, in fact He calls it sexual deviation.

It may be wondered why David wasn't punished with death since murder and adultery were sufficient cause for execution according to Old Testament Law. But David exhibited **genuine** repentance for his sin with Bathsheba as recorded in Psalm 51, the kind of repentance that God requires for forgiveness.

David's sin was bad, but the grace of God was more than sufficient to forgive and

restore him. God's grace is sufficient for anyone's sins and His forgiveness available to any who will repent from the heart as David clearly did.

Many also come to the wrong conclusion when reading 2 Samuel 12:8, which states that God "gave" David "thy master's house and thy master's wives into thy bosom..."

It was customary for an incoming king to "inherit" the outgoing king's property. The palace, the harem, the stables, the horses, everything the outgoing king owned became the rightful property of the incoming king. God gave Saul's Kingdom to David. What God is saying in this passage is that David had a legal right to Saul's harem, so why lust after another man's wife? Again this story is not advocating polygamy nor is God saying that polygamy is okay with Him. In fact, as already briefly mentioned, subsequent chapters after the affair with Bathsheba prove that wrong sexual behavior by the father (David) resulted in incest and violent sexual deviation in David's sons. See 2 Samuel chapter 13, 16:21-22 and Solomon in 1 Kings chapter 11 as discussed next.

2 Samuel 12:7-8 Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave your master's house to you, and your master's wives into your arms. I gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if all this had been too little, I would have given you even more. (NIV)

Everything whether good or bad is either placed into our lives or allowed into our lives by God. When God says He gave Saul's wives into his arms or would have given him more, He is referring only to His sovereignty in all situations. He is not advocating harems or polygamy. In like fashion, just because God allows the devil to prowl around and cause evil in the lives of people doesn't mean that God is the author of evil nor that He condones evil. But He does allow it to continue. Someday however, God will have had enough of rebellious human beings. He will destroy all evil, and that includes polygamy.

David left his kingdom to his son Solomon. Solomon was the wisest man who has ever been born.

1 Kings 10:23-24 King Solomon was greater in riches and wisdom than all the other kings of the earth. The whole world sought audience with Solomon to hear the wisdom God had put in his heart.

2 Chronicles 1:12 therefore wisdom and knowledge will be given you. And I will also give you wealth, riches and honor, such as no king who was before you ever had and none after you will have." NIV

1 Kings 11:1-11 King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women

besides Pharaoh's daughter-Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, "You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods." Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray.

As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been. He followed Ashtoreth the goddess of the Sidonians, and Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. So Solomon did evil in the eyes of the LORD; he did not follow the LORD completely, as David his father had done.

On a hill east of Jerusalem, Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the detestable god of Moab, and for Molech the detestable god of the Ammonites. He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

The LORD became angry with Solomon because his heart had turned away from the LORD, the God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice. Although he had forbidden Solomon to follow other gods, Solomon did not keep the LORD's command.

In all of Solomon's wisdom, he couldn't stay away from the women. Solomon took hundreds of wives into his harem which ultimately lead to his downfall. As a note, all the women in a harem were not necessarily sexual partners. Women were often used as property to be traded back and forth between kings and despots to confirm and guarantee covenants of peace between nations. This abuse and misuse of women was something God never intended nor designed for women to endure.

Polygamy is unnatural in that the women who are held in harems like Solomon's, were withheld from the rightful pursuit by eligible men who are looking for a wife. In polygamous societies, not only are other males deprived of their natural right to have a wife, but the women are deprived of their rights and privileges of having their own husband.

1 Corinthians 7:2 ... each man should have his own wife, and each woman her own husband.

The position assigned to a woman in polygamous situations is as breeder of children. At least half of her children are likely to be girls, so the mother has little or no hope or ambition for at least half her offspring. This life is degrading for mother, children, daughters and most all of the men who propagate such abominable situations.

It is most interesting that men are always the LEADERS of the polygamy groups and they are the ones insisting and preaching that it is God's will for the practice of

polygamy. They threaten the girls using the emotional tools of guilt, fear and eternal retribution and damnation if they don't comply with their demands. What chance do these innocent and naive kids have under such heavy handed pressure? They teach and threaten that God's only provision for heaven is when the girls submit to the leaders authority and to the practice of polygamy. Only in living polygamy, they are warned, can they ever reach celestial glory. Hell and damnation is threatened for those who turn away from this "holy" command.

Polygamy was practiced in the times of the Old Testament as the Bible truthfully tells us. But was it actually given by God as His preferred lifestyle for us? Because several righteous men practiced it, it is believed by some that God expressly willed and commanded it. They even go to the lengths to say that it is a "higher command" and not everyone is righteous enough in God's eyes to have the privilege of living it! But, nowhere in the Bible will that teaching be found.

Just because many Biblical men lived polygamy does not prove that it WAS God's will. The Bible simply tells "tells it like it is". No where does the Bible excuse or require polygamy.

Isaiah 4:1 is often used as a Biblical verse condoning polygamy. However, no matter how one twists this verse, he cannot get a pro-polygamy doctrine out of it. The context isn't polygamy - it is war. It is God's judgment on the arrogant women of Israel. War always kills off men, leaving more women per man. Just because the Bible predicts what will happen, it does not mean God is saying TO DO IT.

Isaiah 4:1 In that day seven women will take hold of one man and say, "We will eat our own food and provide our own clothes; only let us be called by your name. Take away our disgrace!"

Isaiah 3:25-26 Your men will fall by the sword, your warriors in battle. The gates of Zion will lament and mourn; destitute, she will sit on the ground.

It's a patriarchal society, all the military men are gone. This is God's judgment against wickedness not anticipation of polygamy.

How interesting to note that further in the context of this passage is God's judgment on the women of Israel. Read verses 3:13 through to 4:1. The chapter break does not break the thought. The whole message here is judgment against the people and particularly the women of Zion. The passage is judgement and sorrow for women, not the teaching to live polygamy and receive a blessing for it. The judgement against the women is an awful and fearful judgement as we see in verses 18 - 24. Part of that judgement is that they will be forced to seek out men for protection and provision because they are left destitute, stripped of husbands, family, provision, homes and apparel.

The evil deeds of humanity are prophesied in the Bible but these predictions are not to be taken as commandments. In Deuteronomy 17:17 God has already said NOT to multiply wives unto themselves, it is never right to disobey God!!

There are several other passages in the Old Testament which advocates of polygamy use to justify living the "principle". They claim that because there are laws governing it and that great men of God also lived it, it must be Gods will. Some of these passages are:

Exodus 21:7-11 "If a man sells his daughter as a servant, she is not to go free as menservants do. If she does not please the master who has selected her for himself, he must let her be redeemed. He has no right to sell her to foreigners, because he has broken faith with her. If he selects her for his son, he must grant her the rights of a daughter. If he marries another woman, he must not deprive the first one of her food, clothing and marital rights. If he does not provide her with these three things, she is to go free, without any payment of money. (NIV)

The above passage is not speaking for polygamy. The context is a slave or servant girl whom the master may wish to marry but ends up marrying someone else instead. This man who makes promises to provide for the woman, but decides to marry someone else, is required by law to fulfill his promise to the first one, whether he marries her or not. Providing her with her marital rights could mean he is either keeping her from marrying someone else, or he has married her but rejected her because he had married someone else with whom he is more satisfied. In this passage God made laws to "protect" women.

Leviticus 18:9 "'Do not have sexual relations with your sister, either your father's daughter or your mother's daughter, whether she was born in the same home or elsewhere.

Leviticus 18:11 "'Do not have sexual relations with the daughter of your father's wife, born to your father; she is your sister.

Leviticus 18:18 "'Do not take your wife's sister as a rival wife and have sexual relations with her while your wife is living.

These verses are regulating wrong marriages and they are warning against incest. They are NOT saying its okay to live polygamy but are teaching proper behavior in case polygamy is part of the family lifestyle. For instance if a son has a father who lived polygamy, God is telling the son not to have sex with a half sister, or if a son has a living father but the mother had died and his father remarried and had children, the son is not to have sex with his half-sister.

Leviticus 18:18 is not teaching that taking a second wife is acceptable. It merely prohibits the marrying of a wife's sister. In the New Testament, God regulates a

marriage between a believer and an unbeliever, but He is not condoning such a marriage. He knows that humans will not be obedient to His perfect will for their lives, but He always gives hope to those who repent after being disobedient. He isn't approving disobedience in doing this.

Deuteronomy 21:15-17 If a man has two wives, and he loves one but not the other, and both bear him sons but the firstborn is the son of the wife he does not love, when he wills his property to his sons, he must not give the rights of the firstborn to the son of the wife he loves in preference to his actual firstborn, the son of the wife he does not love. He must acknowledge the son of his unloved wife as the firstborn by giving him a double share of all he has. That son is the first sign of his father's strength. The right of the firstborn belongs to him.

This passage in Deuteronomy is not teaching its okay to live polygamy, it is teaching about the rights of the firstborn. God regulates the offspring of marriages - again, He is not condoning polygamy simply because He doesn't allow favoritism to be shown to the man's offspring. God is simply protecting the rights of the unloved woman and her children in such a marriage.

In the following verses of Scripture, the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel rebuked and warned the men of the nation of Israel concerning their extra-marital affairs. In each case the word **wife** is important to notice. It indicates that polygamy was not the normal way of life amongst the people, but was evidently the exception among the leadership.

Jeremiah 5:8 8 They are well-fed, lusty stallions, each neighing for another man's wife.

Ezekiel 18:6 He does not eat at the mountain shrines or look to the idols of the house of Israel. He does not defile his neighbor's wife

Ezekiel 18:11 He defiles his neighbor's wife.

Ezekiel 18:15 He does not defile his neighbor's wife.

Ezekiel 22:11 In you one man commits a detestable offense with his neighbor's wife, another shamefully defiles his daughter-in-law, and another violates his sister, his own father's daughter.

Ezekiel 33:26 You rely on your sword, you do detestable things, and each of you defiles his neighbor's wife. Should you then possess the land?'
NIV

In each verse, the word **wife** is singular. The whole nation was being addressed by

these prophets of old. None of these verses indicate multiple wives. In fact, if a man had more than one wife, would he not go to each wife successively or even take more wives rather than risk adultery with his neighbors wife? Logically we see that polygamy was not the norm but the exception in much of Biblical history.

Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, (while he personally did some very stupid things), wrote the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes from which God gives some very wise sayings.

Proverbs 18:22 He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the LORD.

Ecclesiastes 9:9 Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love..... NIV

Isn't it interesting that the man who took more wives than any other man of the Bible wrote about the joys of taking "a wife" not the joys of taking "many wives".

Malachi 2:10-15 is a very difficult passage especially how the antiquated English of the King James Version translates it. It is not teaching about the joys of polygamy as many proponents claim but is against a man having more than the one wife God gave him in his youth.

This sums up the subject of polygamy from the Old Testament. Next, the New Testament will be used to, hopefully, convince the reader that polygamy is not Gods will, but is an abomination to Him in every form and is really nothing except "glorified" and "religiously legalized adultery".

* * * * *

NEW TESTAMENT POLYGAMY:

The New Testament is very clear regarding God's design and desire for marriage. In the New Testament, Jesus remarked and interpreted the Old Testament plan and design for marriage. Since Jesus is the One we can totally depend upon for truth, He should be the One to whom we turn first for answers.

Matthew 5:31-32 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever

shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery. (KJV)

Matthew 19:1-11 And it came to pass, that when Jesus had finished these sayings, he departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judaea beyond Jordan; And great multitudes followed him; and he healed them there. The Pharisees also came unto him, tempting him, and saying unto him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?

And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery. (KJV)

The question I would ask pro-polygamists is this: Since Jesus said that Moses gave the law about divorce because of the hardness of their hearts, could it possibly be that God allowed polygamy for the same reason, because the hearts of the men were hard?

If any marriage which takes place after an illegal divorce is called adultery by God, why would polygamy be considered holy? Even when the man sought a divorce - except for sexual immorality - it was illegal to remarry another woman. How then, could marriage to another woman while he was still married, be considered holy? Does God have a double standard? Does God call one thing right and another situation of the same thing wrong? No, He does not! He is not that kind of God.

Another important point in the above verses is that Jesus is verifying that monogamy was God's original plan for marriage and it remains His perfect plan. Surely, if polygamy was something God wanted, Jesus would have taken this opportunity to clearly say so. But the opposite is true. He distinctly tells us that it is two in a marriage which makes one! A man married to two or more women is guilty of adultery just as a married woman sleeping with two or more men is guilty of adultery.

There are several other passages in the New Testament which clearly teach that monogamy is God's only acceptable style of marriage. Some of these verses clearly teach the leaders of the churches that they may have only one wife. The

leaders are to be the examples for the flock to follow.

1 Timothy 3:2 - A bishop of the church was to **only have one wife**.

A bishop is a leader of the people and is an example for the others to follow.

1 Timothy 3:12 - The deacons were to have **only one wife**.

They also are leaders and need to be the example.

Titus 1:5-6 - Directions and instructions are again given to church leaders and the elders are to have only one wife.

In Romans 7 Paul teaches us:

Romans 7:2-3 For example, by law a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, but if her husband dies, she is released from the law of marriage. So then, **if she marries another man while her husband is still alive, she is called an adulteress**. But if her husband dies, she is released from that law and is not an adulteress, even though she marries another man. (NIV)

The context of the above passage is the "law". (Paul is talking about the law of marriage and is NOT referring to any gender based teaching. God does not show favoritism but considers men and women equal. He doesn't hold one moral standard for the man and a different moral standard for the woman.) Just as a married woman is bound to her husband as long as he is alive, so a man is bound to his wife as long as she is alive. Therefore should either marry another while the spouse is still living, God considers it adultery!

Any sex outside of the marriage covenant is considered ADULTERY. Jesus even goes further by teaching that even if a man looks at a woman lustfully he has already committed adultery in his heart. How much more so if he entices her into an illegal polygamous marriage, into his bed and has several children by her!

Matthew 5:27-28 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (NIV)

Finally in **1 Corinthians 7:1-2** - Every man is to have **his own wife** (not wives) and every woman is to have **her own husband** (not share her husband).

God blesses sinners. Abraham, Jacob, David and Solomon all were polygamists against God's will. But God is a merciful, good, kind and patient God the One who waits for sinners to repent and turn to Him for salvation. When they do, He freely forgives their sins - and His blessings will multiply in their lives.

However, any man who remains stubborn, who refuses to admit he is a sinner and

that he needs the Savior, who continues on in his sinful ways, will one day be judged accordingly. Then God will no longer show kindness and patience and mercy to unrepentant sinners. The day will come when it will be too late and His wrath will prevail rather than His grace and mercy.

The Bible is full of warnings and curses for disobedience and blessings for obedience. Isaiah particularly issued some WOES to those who go against God's will:

Isaiah 5:20 Woe to those who call evil good and good evil, who put darkness for light and light for darkness, who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter. (NIV)

Polygamy is evil, it is a fruitless deed of darkness, it is a bitter way for women to live their lives. Woe unto those who cause others to sin because of the lusts of their flesh and unhindered sexual desires.

Polygamy is not a matter of religion simply because God did not design it for a man and a woman or for the family unit. Polygamy is a matter of men who want control of others. It is a matter of greed because the men use the women to fulfill their own lusts of the flesh and for material goods. Polygamy is a matter of ego for the male - and is not beneficial for the woman.

Modern polygamy in the various polygamy groups use women to breed children, and to put them to work for their own personal benefit. The leaders use guilt, fear, threats of the wrath of man and of the wrath of God to bring about the female's subjection to the heartbreaking practice of polygamy. The benefits of the polygamous communities are only to the groups' leaders and are not to the poor women or the young naive girls caught up in the web of fear and threat of ultimate damnation if they don't submit to the men's decrees.

If I could clearly and successfully get across one message through this article it would be this:

Women and girls: God does not want you in polygamy! You will not be loved by God more if you live it and hated or rejected by God if you don't live it.

Living polygamy is no way connected with going to heaven. Nowhere in the Bible is there a single word, phrase or passage which teaches that a person must live polygamy in order to go to heaven. If you are currently living in the awful tangle of polygamy, you **can** leave. God, who specially looks out for the downtrodden, the hurting, the orphan, the alien, the widow will help you if you seek Him and His help. There are people outside of your group who are aching to help polygamists escape. There is hope. If you desire relief and release from the bondage of the life of polygamy, just ask God to provide you a way for a safe escape - and then take it

when He provides it!! You can use the contact information at the end of this article for help and advice to begin your journey to a new life.

Psalms 119:45 I will walk about **in freedom**, for I have sought out your precepts.

Jesus Said:

Luke 4:18-19 "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach **good news** to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim **freedom for the prisoners** and recovery of sight for the blind, to **release the oppressed**, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Romans 8:21 that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the **glorious freedom** of the children of God.

God came to set us free - don't be yoked any longer in the bondage of polygamy and its burden of rules and regulations from the doctrines of men.

...but, most important of all....

.....most important of all, as we come to a close of this Biblical study on polygamy, is the need to provide Biblical teaching about the way to heaven. The only way the BIBLE tells us that we must be saved.

1. Isaiah 57:12, "I will expose your righteousness and your works, and they will not benefit you."

Our own righteousness and works will not help us in any way to get to heaven, they are utterly futile in obtaining God's favor; God will expose them as if they were shameful, as in fact, they are.

2. Isaiah 64:6, "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all of our righteous acts are like filthy rags."

God doesn't say our sins are like filthy rags but it is man's attempts at righteous acts, good works that are as filthy as rags. In the Hebrew, which is the original language of the Old Testament, the word "filthy" means menstruation-stained garment. It's a figure of the best deeds of a guilty person. The word for "rags" is a covering, clothing or garment, from the filthy clothing of the leper to the holy robe of the High Priest.

3. John 6:28-29, "What must we do to do the works God requires?" Jesus answered, "The work of God is this: to believe in the One He has sent."

The only good work a man can do is to believe in Jesus as his Lord and Savior; man cannot contribute to the saving of his soul. It is what God has done for us through Jesus that gets us into heaven, not what man can do for God.

4. Acts 16:30-31, ““Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”” They replied, ““Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-you and your household.””

The Philippian jailer asked the same question as the crowd asked in John 6, and again the scripture is clear, ““Believe in the Lord Jesus and you will be saved.”” If good works were required to be saved, surely Jesus or Paul would have declared that to the people and to the jailer. There is no other way to be saved than to simply believe, putting all your faith and trust in Jesus for salvation, and in Him alone.

5. Romans 3:28, ““For we maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.””

Observing the law is doing good works, earning one’s way into heaven. But good works are never to be relied on as a means of justification. Man could never by any works of his own, gain acceptance with God, it is only through faith in Jesus.

6. Romans 4:5, ““However, to the man who does *not* work but trusts God who justifies the wicked, his faith is credited as righteousness.””

The justified man is the one *who does not work for it*. The faith that is counted as righteousness is the faith that doesn’t work for righteousness. Righteousness comes through faith in Christ alone.

7. Galatians 2:16, ““Know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.””

Three times this verse states that man’s justification, his right standing before God, does not come by observing the law but by faith in Jesus Christ. The word “justified” is a legal term that means, ““to declare righteous.”” It’s opposite is ““to condemn.”” Since God is holy and mankind is sinful, how can people be justified? Only by faith in Jesus Christ. Compare Genesis 15:6.

8. Ephesians 2:8-10, ““For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God-not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.””

Nowhere is it clearer in the bible than in these three verses that good works will not save a man and help him into heaven. This passage states that a Christian is

created to do good works, not that the person creates good works to become a Christian. Also, God is the one who prepares in advance the good works for His children to do.

9. Philippians 1:6, ““Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.””

God begins the work in the believer; He carries it on and finishes it. Man never begins by doing good works; and how would he ever know when he has performed enough good works that will save him?

10. Philippians 2:12c, ““Continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.””

Paul says to work out your salvation, not work for it. The work comes after salvation.

11. Philippians 2:13, ““For it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose.””

God is the one who works in us after we’re saved to do the good works that please Him.

12. 2Timothy 1:9, ““Who has saved us and called us to a holy life- not because of anything we have done but because of His own purpose and grace.””

It is not anything man has done to earn salvation but it is because of God’s own purpose of goodness and grace that we can be saved. This verse says we are saved *first*, and then we are called to live a holy life. We cannot try to be holy in order to be saved.

13. Titus 3:5-6, ““He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us by the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit.””

Another fatal verse to the “works gospel” showing that man is saved because of God’s mercy alone, and more specifically, by the washing of rebirth through the Holy Spirit; being born-again is the only way to obtain salvation.

There is only one way to heaven. It’s not through a group - but through Jesus.

It’s not through doing good works - but through the works Jesus has already done for us.

It’s not through keeping the Biblical law - Jesus did that for us too.

If you want to go to heaven when you die there is only one thing you must do: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you believe Him that means you are to trust Him, by faith, to do what He came to do - be your Savior.

If you want Him to save you, He will do so right now - just ask Him to. Just talk to Him and tell Him you would like Him to come into your heart and life. That you know you are a sinner in need of forgiveness and a personal Savior. Ask Him to forgive you of your sins and lead you in the way everlasting. If you do this by faith, believing in Him to do what He has promised to do - you will be saved in that same moment.

Jesus died on the cross for your sins. That means He has paid your penalty for your sins - that's what the cross was all about. The Cross proves to us that God hates sin. The Cross proves to us that God loves us.

If you have decided to pray and ask Jesus to become your personal Savior, please let me know by contacting me at the address below. If you have questions or would like further information, let me know, I will be happy to help.

All responses will be held in strict confidence.

Bibliography: Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary.
Strong's Concordance
Various bible dictionaries. Various bible commentaries.
The Holy Bible KJV and New International Version

For More Information, comments or questions contact:
To Each Her Own; PO Box 651292, Salt Lake City, UT 84165
choosethetruth@comcast.net

 2002, 2006