

You Belong To Me

The title of this chapter was also the title of a very popular song in the early '60s. The singer urged her boyfriend to see the world but to always remember, “You belong to me.” While this is not exactly true of a boyfriend or girlfriend, it is certainly true in marriage.

In Bible times the woman was looked on as property. The father was the owner of an unmarried woman and that ownership passed to the husband at marriage. Paul's description of God's intention for husband and wife was revolutionary.

In Paul's description of marriage (1 Corinthians 7:1-40), the wife is still the property of the husband, but the revolutionary part of the arrangement is that the husband is also the property of the wife. In the words of the New International Version, “The wife's body does not belong to her alone but also to her husband. In the same way, the husband's body does not belong to him alone but also to his wife.” (1 Corinthians 7:4).

The idea of the husband living by the same rule as the wife was not entirely new. It had always been implied in the two becoming one flesh (Genesis 2:18-25), but man applied this in a one sided way. Since woman had been taken out of man, and God had said her desire would be to her husband, man took this to imply that he owned the woman while no one owned him. Only in the latter part of the 20th Century have husbands been held to the same rules as the wife. This is particularly true in regard to morality. A wife who was unfaithful to her marriage vows was a “scarlet woman”. A husband who did the same thing was only “acting naturally” in the eyes of many. God never had a double standard.

Hosea was probably the first to state matters as God intended when he told Gomer, “Thou shalt abide for me many days; thou shalt not

play the harlot, and thou shalt not be for another man: so will I also be for thee.” (Hosea 3:3).

The wise man said, “Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love. And why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? For the ways of man are before the eyes of the LORD, and he pondereth all his goings.” (Proverbs 5:18-21).

That a woman would “play the harlot” being unfaithful to her husband was almost unthinkable in Bible times. Modern “liberation” has given woman the same lusts and vices that were always possessed by men. She has not been liberated, but enslaved by the same sins that man has always found to his liking (Romans 6:16).

Lust of the flesh is the reason that Paul admonished both husband and wife not to refuse sex with each other. The Contemporary English Version reads, “Now I will answer the questions that you asked in your letter. You asked, 'Is it best for people not to marry?' Well, having your own husband or wife should keep you from doing something immoral. Husbands and wives should be fair with each other about having sex. A wife belongs to her husband instead of herself, and a husband belongs to his wife instead of himself. So don't refuse sex to each other, unless you agree not to have sex for a little while, in order to spend time in prayer. Then Satan won't be able to tempt you because of your lack of self control. In my opinion, that is what should be done, though I don't know of anything the Lord said about this matter. I wish that all of you were like me, but God has given different gifts to each of us.

“Here is my advice for people who have never been married and for widows. You should stay single, just as I am. But if you don't have enough self-control, then go ahead and get married. After all, it is better to marry than to burn with desire.