

International Journal of Family Life and Societal Development
(IJOFALSOD)

Vol. 1, No. 2, December, 2022.

©

Institute of Family Life and Societal Development

ISSN: 2971-5164

Published by
Institute of Family Life and Societal Development
Academic Arm of the Centre for Blissful Home Initiative

Printed by
Johnstar Educational Services
Akure, Ondo State
+234-8035608098, +234-8067746123, +234-8159992030.

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Contributors' Biographies

Jacob Kehinde Ayantayo is a Professor of Religious Ethics, Religion, and Society and, Religious matters in Peace and Conflicts in the University of Ibadan, Ibadan. He has published books, chapters in books and journal articles both nationally and internationally.

S.O. Ogundipe is an Associate Professor in the Department of Practical Theology of Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso. He specializes in Pastoral Care and Counselling. He has authored Books, chapters in books and journal articles.

Ayinde Abosede Hellen holds Master of Education in Guidance and Counseling and she lectures at Baptist College of Theology Igede Ekiti, Ekiti State where she also coordinates Women Training Department. She has had the opportunities of receiving trainings both within and outside the shores of Nigeria. Her passion includes raising godly children and emancipation of women.

Abraham Olutoye Odeleye PhD is a senior lecturer in the Department of Practical Theology of Nigerian Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso. He specializes in Christian Ethics.

Michael Oluwole Adeyanju Dmin. is the pastor of Christ Baptist Church, Anthony, Lagos. He graduated from Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso and specializes in Pastoral Care Ministry.

Abiodun James Aderele is a Baptist minister and theological educator. He is a researcher in the field of World Religions. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Nigeria Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso and has many publications to his name.

ASAOLU Samuel Olusanya is a lecturer in the Department of Theology of Baptist College of Theology, Igede Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy Degree from the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso, Oyo-State. His area of specialization is Christian Ethics, Pastoral Care & Counseling and Philosophy.

Victor Ifatokun holds Master of Theology in World Religions and Missiology, he is an Adjunct Lecturer in the Department of Theology, Baptist College of Theology Benin City.

Adeola A. A. PhD is a senior lecturer in the Department of Practical Theology of Nigerian Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso. He specializes in Pastoral Care and counselling.

Janet Adeyanju PhD is a lecturer in the at the Nigerian Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso. She has several published academic works.

James Akintayo Oyedele is a Baptist minister. He is a researcher in the field of Pastoral Care and Counselling. He is currently a PhD candidate at the Nigeria Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso and has many publications to his name.

Akinyemi Oluwafemi Alawode PhD is a lecturer and head of the Department of Intercultural Studies at the Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary Ogbomoso. He holds a PhD in Missiology from the University of South Africa, Pretoria, Gauteng Province, South Africa.

Editorial Note

In this issue, we continue to engage in how social and economic dynamics influence the family. The irrefutable point that the family is the basic unit of every society is made with the fervent belief that it nurtures its members and releases them to society. The failure or success of a society is intricately connected to how the family grooms its members. The inevitable conclusion is that the stronger the family in contemporary society, the better for all. In this light, Ayantayo blazed the trail by arguing that the traditional roles played by members of the family in the past have been affected by the ever-changing socio-economic factors in contemporary society. This dynamic and forward-looking social reality immediately suggests that members of the family must assume new roles that align with the demand and expectations of society. However, he argued that we must holistically develop a family based on blending treasured traditional values with contemporary dynamic values.

Alawode and Aderele examine the causes, effects, and solutions to substance abuse by members of the family. According to them, the rate at which the youth use or abuse substances has become so alarming that it requires deft musicological intervention. They argued that musicologists must take it as a point of duty to engage and minister to youth involved in substance use to restore them to fellowship with their families and Christ. Asaolu argued that although conflict is natural, marital conflict is complex and has serious implications for the family and society. Since conflict is human-made, Asaolu identified natural and potential causes of conflict in marriage and suggested that there are irreducible ethical prescriptions whose adoption and application can help to minimize conflict in the family. Salifu and Hammans's empirical exploration of drug abuse among the youth in the Dekina Local Government Area of Kogi State, Nigeria, clearly shows that it has assumed a dangerous trend that requires urgent intervention by government institutions and the family. They suggest that ethical principles are required to address this trend through socialisation as well as the spiritual exercise of

faith. Adeola's article centers on how flexibility is a virtue that couples should cultivate to navigate traditional impositions that might negatively affect the family. He adopts a theological standpoint that argues that consistent and mutual fellowship together in the family helps prevent external infiltration into the family.

Odeleye and Adeyanju examine the necessity of resolving conflict among young couples. As part of the mandate of pastoral care ministry, pastors should ensure that their ministry intentionally cares about the health of young people's marriages. As a result of the potential consequences of failure in early marriages, the moral burden to guide and guard against unnecessary conflict in young homes must be borne by pastors by deploying their spiritual and moral training and authority. Oyedele specifically examines the roles of pastoral care in infidelity in Christian homes. He argues that one of the causes of conflict in the family is sexual infidelity by a spouse. This, he argues, can lead to the breakdown of marriage if pastoral care is not given in such a way as to ensure forgiveness. Still, on pastoral care, Adeyanju unfurls the complexities that COVID-19 imposed on communal coexistence. Social distancing affected the communal setting in that members of the community had to deliberately keep some reasonable distance to be safe. At such a moment, Adeyanju thinks that pastoral care ministry is critical in mitigating the consequences of social distancing and keeping healthy by all.

Kelechi and Oderinus's interest is in unhealthy rivalry among siblings in the family. The adverse effects rivalry has on the family call for critical attention to be paid to it. They suggest that parents must conduct themselves do not suggest that they love one child more than the other. Ogundipe returns to the role of the pastoral care unit in fostering unity and resolving marital conflict. To correctly resolve conflict, each issue that causes conflict must be examined on its own rather than deploy one solution fits all approach. This is where the dexterity of pastoral care comes in. Oluwaronke believes that Christian parenting is a critical means of mitigating social vices that

have continued to plague contemporary society. Oluwaronke itemizes and also proffers solutions to the causes of social vices that require good parenting and counseling to resolve. Victor re-examines the concept of one flesh marital bond as a quintessential measure couples need to take to resolve their conflict. The one flesh approach argues that conflict inflicts self-pain on the couples, and they should see each other as one. And finally, Ayinde explores the impacts of social media on Christian youth couples. She argues that time is essential in developing relationships in marriage. Consequently, when more time is spent on social media to neglect the spouse, conflict is bound to arise. Christian principles are thus recommended to ensure a balanced use of social media for the family's health.

I, therefore, welcome you to explore in detail the arguments and issues raised in this issue.

Prof. Benson Ohihon Igboin
Editor in Chief

THE BIBLICAL CONCEPT OF ONE-FLESH IN MARRIAGE AS A REMEDY FOR MARITAL CONFLICTS AMONG CHRISTIAN COUPLES

Victor Ifatokun

Baptist College of Theology Benin City.

Email: Victorifatokun8811@gmail.com

Phone Number: +2349052240815

Abstract

This study is informed by the rising rate of broken home in the contemporary society as many Christian homes are pierced with marital crises. Many families have disintegrated and some couples live as if they are strangers due to persistent and unresolved conflicts. Emergence of conflicts in marital homes is often occasioned by pervasive perception of marriage as an avenue for meeting some personal expectations, enjoyment, and curtailing sexual feelings, pressure, and loneliness. However, until marriage is understood from God's standpoint, conflicts will eventually break down the marriage. This study attempts to explore the Biblical concept of one-flesh in marriage to enhance understanding of God's idea of marriage and as a remedy for marital conflicts among young Christian Couples. A descriptive research method was used to qualitatively analyse and collect data from historical materials such as books, journals and internet sources to enrich the study. Findings indicated that marriage from a Biblical perspective is a union in which a man and a woman are regarded as one flesh, bone stuck and bound together in heart and affection. As such, love in this category is alive irrespective of disappointments, but because of the unity of flesh, bone, heart, and affection. The study concludes that understanding and application of Biblical concept of one-flesh in marriage will effectively reduce and curb marital conflicts among Christian couples. The study recommends that Christian couples should strive to become one in flesh, bone, heart and affection.

Keywords: Marriage, marital conflicts, Christian couple, cleave, and one-flesh.

Introduction

Conflict is often regarded as a product of interaction between or among people due to differences in interests, goals, needs, wants, and outcome of issues. It is an integral and inevitably part of an established relationships. Many homes have been ensnared in deteriorated conflicts which often leave either of the couple or both wounded. Many homes have been broken, leaving some children to wander about on the street. Also, the rate at which marital conflicts crippling couples has become alarming and prompted this study. The research question that guided this study are: If God is the creator and designer of marriage, why then do couples experience conflicts in marital union? Is marital conflicts part of God's design? Why can't couples enjoy the oneness, companionship and happiness of marriage?

The Bible traced the origin of marriage to creation after the first man was created followed by the creation of the woman. God brought them together for the purpose of companionship and procreation. Nevertheless, the fall truncated the perfect nature of marriage. In this case, Thomas (2000:67) posits that “we must never be naïve enough to think of marriages as a safe harbour from the fall. The deepest struggles of life will occur in the most primary relationship affected by the fall: marriage.” It appears that after the fall the marriage institution was perverted and this prompted persistent conflicts that is ravaging many Christian homes. Some of the pervasive preconceived notions that harms marital unions include differences in interests, desires, goals, and marriage as a measure to curtail loneliness, sexual feelings, pressures, economic and societal pressures. Practically, marriages contracted on these pervasive grounds will eventually resulted in conflict among couples.

Meanwhile, marriage is a sacred and intimate union ordained by God. It merges two personalities (a man and a woman) into an indivisible and unique union through covenant. In this union, a man enters a covenant with a woman considered a suitable companion and helper.

As a result, the woman becomes the man's flesh and bone, and their hearts are stuck and bound together, making them one. This covenant binds and unifies both the man and the woman in heart, affection, spirit and body. The thrust of this study is to explore the Biblical concept of one-flesh in marriage as a remedy for the ever increasing marital conflicts among young Christian couples. The term “Biblical” in this context mainly refers to the account of creation in Genesis regarding Adam and Eve and references drawn from other passages of the Bible. A descriptive research method was used to qualitatively analyse and collect data from historical materials such as books, journals and internet sources to enrich the study. The study intends to define Biblical concept of one-flesh in marriage, discuss marital conflicts and its causes among contemporary young Christian couples, and implications of biblical concept of one-flesh towards sustaining marital unions among Christian couples. This study will help Christian couples to have a better understanding of the factors responsible for marital conflicts. It will also help reduce marital conflict, which has contributed to the high rate of unfaithfulness, cohabitation without genuine love, and separation. Therefore, it is termed in this study that understanding and application of the biblical concept of one-flesh in marriage is necessary for sustainability, stability, and success in marriage.

Biblical Concept of One-flesh in Marriage

Marriage is a beautiful union initiated and ordained by God. It is a union of love, trust, and agreement between a man and a woman in which they live together as one for the rest of their lives. This section analyses and presents the biblical concept of one-flesh in marriage ranging from: Marriage as God's Design, One-flesh Companionship, One-flesh Relationship and One-flesh happiness.

A. Marriage as God's Design

In the book of Genesis, we saw the detailed account of the world's creation and God's purpose for creation. The idea and plan for

marriage were rooted in God's eternal plan and purpose for humanity. This was depicted and expressed in His creative act of making humanity in His image as male and female,

26. Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. 27. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him; male and female he created them (Gen. 1:26-27).

As a result, marriage as an institution is God's original intent and plan for humankind and not a product of perceived need or response to alleviate the loneliness that confronted Adam. Thus, to say that marriage is a divine response to the loneliness that confronted Adam is to insult the majesty of God as all-knowing. The reason is that it underscores that God did not know before, and as a result, He cannot be all-knowing.

Meanwhile, the majesty of God as the all-knowing demonstrated in Genesis 2:18, which revealed what is not suitable for man, accentuates that marriage is originally God's intent and plan for humanity before creation and not a product of a felt need or man invention. How did God know that marriage would solve the loneliness of Adam if He did not know anything about marriage before? Also, the biblical passage gives no evidence that Adam himself was aware of being alone or in need of a helper. It was God who knew marriage beforehand that took the initiative in creating a suitable human companion for the man. Therefore, it can indeed be said that marriage is God's original idea and a product of His sovereign will (Gen. 2:18-20).

Furthermore, Kostenberger and Jones (2010:23) opines that God's creation of Eve reveals His plan for Adam's marriage and all subsequent marriages, a monogamous heterosexual relationship. This is because God only made one "suitable helper" for Adam, and she was female. It was God who perceived Adam's aloneness and hence created the woman to serve as a suitable partner. This was due

to the fact that there was no one fit for that role. Humankind was created in such a way to enjoy the emotional, physical, and spiritual blessing of companionship in the marriage relationship (Noble, 2020:3).

B. One-flesh Companionship

Marriage is companionship. Companionship is a term that refers to an intimate relationship. It is a relationship that involves constant intimacy and commitment. Humankind was created as a social being needing companionship (Gen. 2:18). This was manifested in the creation of woman and institution of marriage union to provide companionship as expressed in Genesis 2:18: “The LORD God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.'” The directive to “cleave” and become “one flesh”, as stated in Genesis 2;24, is evidence of marriage's companionship. Adams (1983:34) explains the term companion in relation to commitment and intimacy thus:

Together, they speak of a bond in constant commitment and intimacy. Intimacy without commitment to remain together is not sufficient; commitment to remain in the relationship without intimacy is equally deficient. Both commitment and intimacy are necessary to defeat loneliness. Thus, marriage is companionship, one aspect of which involves mating. The intimacy of Biblical companionship extends to every aspect of human nature. There can be no intimate companionship between two persons when a third intervenes. Fornication, adultery, and polygamy vitiate true companionship because they destroy the intimacy of a constant and close relationship.

The carnal desires of many who are venturing into marriage to curtail loneliness, sexual feelings and pressures, economic and societal pressures have thwarted God's desires for companionship concerning intimacy and continuing commitment. Consequently, Christian couples must perceive marriage as a companionship of one-flesh fostering intimacy and commitment. Moreover, being a helper in this context does not connote that the woman is inferior to the man, but the idea of a partner and support. The woman's supportive responsibility

has been in existence right from creation and resulted from her nature. This responsibility is expressed in Adam's admiration: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh" (Gen. 2:23). Ephesians 5:23-24 concisely presents the supportive role of the woman. Right from the creation, God designed the woman's supportive role as companion and helpmate. The woman's supportive role depicted in the Bible includes conceiving, bringing forth and nursing children, and running the home under the husband's authority (Gen. 1:28; 3:16). This supportive role requires submission to the man.

However, the term submission does not connote inferiority; instead, it means that the woman puts all of her abilities, resources, energy, and talent at the man's disposal. Also, the woman plays her supportive role by yielding and using all that she possesses under her husband's management. This supportive role sustains and advances intimacy and commitment in marriage union (Mack, 1977:14). Likewise, the man is meant to be the loving leader in the marriage union. As the leader, the man must continue to demonstrate selfless love and behaviour towards the woman's well-being and betterment. This selfless behaviour will foster intimacy and commitment in the marriage. It will also enhance trust and security in the relationship.

Similarly, the word "suitable" implies that the woman is an equal partner to the man. While analysing the significance of the expression "suitable help", Kostenberger and Jones (2010:25) states that on the one hand, the woman is congenial to the man in a way that none of the animals is (Gen 2:19-20); she is bone of his bones and flesh of his flesh, and on the other hand, the woman is placed alongside the man as his associate or companion. Similarly, concerning God's mandate for humankind to be fruitful and multiply and to fill the earth and subdue it (Gen. 2:28), the woman is a suitable partner both in procreation (Gen.2: 24) and earth domestication (Gen. 1 28).

C. One-flesh Relationship

Marriage is a one-flesh relationship built on understanding each partner's needs, likes, and dislikes. Fogle asserts that marriage was ordained as a one-flesh covenant relationship. The One-flesh shall be discussed in light of the Old and New Testament Perspectives.

1. Old Testament Perspective

Adam and Eve were literally “one flesh”, as Eve was formed from Adam's physical flesh and bone. Becoming one flesh involves the absolute identification of personality couples have with each other in pursuits and interests (fogle, 2007:2). Thornton (1989:33) explains that the sexual bond of a man and woman in marriage enables the couple's oneness in other spheres of life to be joined. It is a means through which their mutual appreciation, feeling, and understanding flow. The sharing is physical but involves emotional, spiritual and intellectual.

Furthermore, White (1961:51) expresses that marriage is the divine joining of a man and a woman into an everlasting union of one. It is the two equal bisects of God's creation built together into its natural position. God's plan was for the man and woman to become united in love, working together, living together, sharing experience and becoming a natural complement to each other. Similarly, Ortlund (2016:31) reiterates that:

In the one-flesh union of marriage, all the limitations between a man and a woman de-escalate, and the couple comes together completely... The two learn to think like one unified one, building a new life together with one total everything: one story, one reputation, one bed, one suffering, one purpose, one subject, and one family... It is this all-inclusive unity that sets marriage apart. The idea and expression of oneness between a man and a woman in all aspects of life is an essential part of God's intent for marriage. This oneness comes across all their dealing and relationship as long as they both shall live. This oneness is based on the expression in Genesis 2:22-24:22 Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. 23 The man said, “This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, for she was taken out of man.” 24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

Based on the above passage, we discovered that the woman was formed from the rib of Adam; as a result, a man shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh in the physical, spiritual and emotional. The two cleave together to form one flesh in their personal identities and values.

Furthermore, it is worth noting that cleaving is what causes the two to become one flesh. Strauss (online) collaborates that the terms “cleave unto” shows the nature of the marriage relationship as God intended it to be. The idea seems to be that a man is to bond himself to his wife... When two people are bonded together, they become one. They are united in unique and profound biological and spiritual glue that reaches every depth of their souls. Similarly, Strauss (online), while discussing the term “cleave”, asserts that the man shall cleave unto his wife with a cordial affection, taking care of her, cherishing and nourishing her, continuing to live with her, providing all things comfortable for her and not depart from her as long as they live.

Similarly, it is necessary to note that this principle of cleaving is intended to apply to all people, including contemporary Christian couples. It is one of the first principles God gave to man to sustain and foster stability in marriage relationships. Therefore, marriage is a sacred one flesh relationship in which a man and a woman bond their lives together as one. As such biblical marriage involves “leaving,” “cleaving,” and “blending into one flesh”.

2. New Testament Perspectives

In Matthew 19:3-6, Jesus re-states and declares God's idea and nature of marriage as a one-flesh relationship that should never end in divorce. Similarly, in Ephesians 5:25-32, Paul also affirms God's idea of marriage as one flesh relationship and relates it to the manner in which believers are members of Christ's body.

Similarly, in 1 Corinthians 6:15-17, Paul reiterates that a sexual relationship with a prostitute creates a one-flesh love in the sight of God. However, the one-flesh bond goes beyond physical. Becoming one flesh is the ideal God's nature of marriage relationship, which

spreads across all spheres of their life, including body, spirit, soul, deeds, worship, purpose, and expectation. In this condition, White (1961:16) asserts that marriage is all about the unity of man and woman in their physical, spiritual and psychological. Some marriages fail today because they were not originally united in either one or all areas mentioned above. Therefore, the obedience to God's command to "cleave" and become "one flesh" is the premise upon which Christian couples can attain stability, happiness, fulfillment and accomplishment of God's intent in marriage. Christian couples, therefore, need to yield to God's command for one flesh in marriage to complement each other physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. Thus God ordained marriage union to be a permanent one-flesh bond.

Furthermore, in Ephesians 5:28-29 Paul appeals that "28 In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 After all, no-one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church." These verses admonished one-flesh love among couples. The one-flesh love began with Adam and Eve. Adam did not only precede Eve, but he was the source from which Eve derived her body (Gen.2:21-23). The ribs that were used to form Eve was taken from Adam, covered with his own flesh and bones (Gen. 2:23). Adam expressed a tremendous excitement, a joyous astonishment when God brought the woman He had made to him, saying "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh..." In other words, when the Lord brought the woman to Adam, the man experienced a sense of amazement at the sight of Eve, He seemed genuinely awed by the creation of Eve who bear his flesh and bones and expressed his delightful feelings in words.

Causes of Marital Conflicts among Christian Couples

Conflicts are inevitable in every human relationship, including marriage. The term conflict refers to an active disagreement between people with opposing principles and opinions (McIntosh, 1995:45).

Marriage conflict is the state of disagreement between husband and wife concerning interests, values, ideas or beliefs. Tam and Lim (2008:97) describes the marital conflict as any significant or minor interpersonal interaction involving a difference of opinion between a couple, whether negative or mostly positive. No marriage relationship is devoid of conflict or dispute. However, the frequency of conflicts in marriage can be reduced and controlled if Christian couples understand and practice marriage according to God's design. The major causes of marital conflict among Christian couples include: infidelity, poor marital communication, financial issues, sexual Incompatibility, and lack of mutual respect.

1. Marital Infidelity: Marital infidelity is an act of unfaithfulness towards the mutual vows of an intimate relationship between husband and wife. It is one of the major causes of conflict in a marital relationship due to its damage to love and the harmony of the relationship. It is necessary to note that infidelity is not limited to a sexual affair with someone outside the marital union but include disloyalty, distrust, and lack of submission.

2. Sexual Incompatibility: poor sexual satisfaction in the marital relationship often constitutes conflict in the union, which, if not timely and properly managed, could lead to extramarital sexual affairs. Sexual conflict often emanates from less intimacy, stress, infidelity, lack of romantic play time, and low erection. However, the main issue in this conflict is due to failure on the part of couples in making sexual adjustments.

3. Poor communication: communication in marriage is transmitting information from one person to another. It is an essential value in the marriage relationship. Communication in marriage touches all aspects of marriage life, such as managing daily living, making plans and decisions, making needs and wants to be known, discussing and many others. Effective communication in marriage entails that couples discuss issues and respond to questions. Lack of communication in marriage can destroy the intimacy and stability of the marital union. In this condition, Aina (2004:83-91) observes that

inability of spouses to communicate effectively with each other is very unhealthy to the union and it is a common cause of marital conflict among young couples.

4. Financial Issues: financial problems and the inability to live up to domestic responsibility often triggers quarrels, misunderstanding, disunity, hostility, bitterness and deters love among couples. According to Agha (2003:109) poverty and the inability to save money, train children, build a house or solve some family financial problems on the part of the man could cause a problem in the family. In other words, lack of finance to access the necessities of life can jeopardise the harmony of the marital relationship. Respect for one's partner is essential for marital relationship sustenance and stability. The lack of it can ruin the intimacy and harmony of the marriage relationship. According to Aderinto (2004:52-55) the inability of the husband to live up to domestic responsibilities is a major cause of marital conflicts.

5. Lack of Mutual Respect: Mutual respect among couples is integral for marital relationship sustenance. The lack of such respect could result to conflict capable of rocking even the strongest marital substance of previously blissful homes. The Bible encourages the wives to respect their husbands who in turn should love their wives as they would their own body. Respect and love are reciprocal variables in marital relationship and as such, couples owe it an obligation to respect and love his/her marriage partner, failure which fans the embers of marital discord and discontent.

6. Differences in desires and aspirations: one of the panoramic causes of conflicts in the marital relationship is differences in conception, understanding, values, expectations, attitudes, practices, desires, aspirations and expectations of couples in the relationship. The differences in perception, desires, goals, expectation and attitude towards marriage often promote sexual incompatibility, lack of mutual respect, submission, infidelity, communication gap. In this case, Kelly and Thibaut, cites by Templeton (2001:45) identified different goals, interests, desires or expectations that are not compatible as causes of marital conflict. Therefore, real cohesion is

needed in marital unions. This cohesion is like two opposite magnetic poles that hold each other tightly and closely, making them one (Aderinto, 2004:27).

Implications of Biblical Concept of One-flesh in Marriage for Marital Conflicts

This section presents the Biblical concept of one-flesh in marriage as a response to the conflict in marital relationships. Christian couples can overcome marital conflicts by understanding and applying God's design of marriage. It is believed in this study that the stability of marriage depends mainly on the Christian couple's understanding and application of marriage in God's design. The reason is that no one can comprehend the institution of marriage than the one who designed and instituted it.

1. **Marriage as One-flesh Relationship:** God's plan for marriage is a lifelong one-flesh relationship. In Genesis 2:23-24, the verses show God's design for man and woman to unite as one organism. As God's design, marriage is an everlasting union characterised by companionship expressed in selfless love, intimacy, and commitment. If marriage is designed and ordained by God, it should be practised as God ordains through the rules He set forth and should not be revamped by personal desires and expectations. Marriage was designed to be a one-flesh relationship.

2. **Marriage as One-flesh Covenant:** in Genesis 2:24, the term cleave means to stick to or cling. Cleaving is a covenant term used to indicate God's relationship with His people (Duet. 10:20; 13:4; Josh. 22:5). Therefore, the term expresses a union in which the man and woman become one flesh (Fogle, 2007:3). The nature of the one-flesh union is indissoluble. The issue is not limited to the flesh but extends to other areas of life. The man and the woman must learn to become one-flesh in spirit, soul, body, purpose, expectation, desire, and reputation. This understanding and relationship are usually produced by the conscious awareness of each other, resulting from their understanding of needs, likes, desires, hates, and dislikes. Therefore, couples should put pride aside and be humble and willing to study

each other and make the necessary adjustment to yield to God and submit to one another. Les and Leslie Parrott (2006:36) asserts that the ultimate paradox of love is when two persons become one, yet remaining two. Thus, the marriage relationship is one where two separate individuals become one, cemented together for life.

3. **Marriage as One-flesh Foundation:** The foundation of marriage should be on one-flesh and everlasting union reflecting passion, intimacy and commitment. The Foundation of marital relationships should be rooted in the understanding of marriage as one flesh union designed by God. This one-flesh relationship joins the couple together until death. Therefore, Christian couples should work on any issue that may ruin their marriage and remain committed to the foundation of one flesh and one bone.

4. **Marriage as Image of God's nature:** the creation of human kind as male and female in the image of God, as stated in Genesis 1:27, has implications for the one-flesh nature of Biblical marriage. Although the focus of the verse was not on marriage, the image of God mentioned imply God's triune nature as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, yet one God. This speaks of the relational nature of God resulting and reflecting in the creation of humanity as male and female. While interpreting the above verse, Martin (2010:13) notes that the creation of humanity as male and female together in a relationship reflects the image of God. Therefore, Christian couples should relate their marital relationship to the relational nature of God in His nature as the Father, Son and Holy, yet one in Being, Purpose, will and action.

5. **Marriage as One-flesh Companionship:** the oneness of the man and the woman is the foundational component of a society. God designed the marriage relationship to be one man, and one woman bonded together into a personal relationship, united as companions and friends for life (Thompson, 2009:28). The joining together of a man and women form an entity that enables humanity to strengthen one another and fill the earth (Ibid,9). The design of marriage as a one-flesh companion relationship is fundamental and essential for a successful marriage and societal development. Therefore, couples

should submissively and respectively relate to each other as one flesh and bone. They must demonstrate this oneness physically, spiritually, mentally, and in their desires, expectations, needs, likes, dislikes, hate, suffering, and all spheres of life. Similarly, this oneness must be shown in passion, intimacy, and commitment.

Conclusion

This paper examined the Biblical concept of one-flesh in marriage as a remedy for marital conflicts among young Christian Couples. It was discovered that conflicts in marriage often resulted from differences in expectations, desires, goals, aspirations among others. Likewise, marital conflicts often associated with poor marital communication, infidelity, financial issues, and lack of mutual respect. As such, understanding and application of God's design of marriage is necessary for sustaining marital union. Christian couples should not practice marriage as a joint project where individual have their interest and desire, ignoring or rejecting God's plan for marriage as one flesh, one interest, one desire and one expectation. Real cohesion is needed for stability in marital unions (White, 1961:17). Christian couples should serve as a helper to each other; they must be united physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. Similarly, the remarks of White is worth mentioning thus: the same way a man is interested and concerned about his well-being, he must also have the same feelings towards his wife (Ibid, 18). Living as a suitable partner through intimacy, submission, passion, respect, and commitment will enable contemporary Christian couples to fulfil God's purpose and plan for marriage. Therefore, practising marriage in God's design as a one-flesh companion and relationship is significant for family and society development.

Recommendations

1. Christian couples should strive to become one in flesh, bone, heart and affection. The differences in values, expectations, attitudes, practices, desires, aspirations and expectations among couples can be overcome when both strive to become one-flesh and bone.

2. Christian Couples need to submissively and respectively relate to each other as one flesh and bone. They must demonstrate this oneness physically, spiritually, mentally, and in their desires, expectations, needs, likes, dislikes, hate, suffering, and all spheres of life.

3. Christian Couples should endeavour to follow God's principles for marriage. If marriage is designed and ordained by God, it should be practised as God ordains through the principles He set forth and should not be revamped by personal desires and expectations. Marriage was designed to be a one-flesh relationship.

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