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## WITHOUT UNIQUE APPEARANCE

The world in its madness, of course, and man with his reason does not seriously believe that marriage is ordained and established by God. The common man thinks that marriage happens by coincidence. That whether we marry this person or that is simply a matter of chance. Like when we run into a person on the street.

This is why the institution of marriage seems to have become nothing more than a foolish game. This is why people talk about marriage with such contempt.

Why? They think of and evaluate marriage only on the basis of its external appearance.

Admittedly, when you look at the two alternatives—marriage and fornication<sup>1</sup>—they appear to be identical ways of living. In fact, they look so similar that there is no difference when it comes to living and sleeping together.

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***Marriage is to be praised and extolled as much as possible***

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It is no wonder that it is so difficult to master the skill of knowing how to distinguish between marriage and fornication. If it were not so hard, a husband would always be able to say: “God himself has given me my wife in order for me to live with her.” Likewise a wife would be able to say: “God himself has given my husband to me. With him I should share my food and bed.”

Above all, this should be diligently taught among the people: The institution of marriage is to be praised and extolled as much as possible! Why? Marriage has become utterly corrupted by unspiritual monks and papal hacks who judge it only according to its external appearance. Consequently they consider marriage to be no different from any other unholy way of life.

Such a determination was a result of the fact they themselves led the same kind of unholy life. Even to the point of drowning in it. This made them unable to think or say anything honorable or holy about marriage. What is more, the best among them burdened the consciences of those in marriage with their bonds and fetters, telling them how they should go about fulfilling their conjugal duties.

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<sup>1</sup> Fornication is usually considered to be having sexual intercourse before marriage. It is, in other words, a committing of adultery against a future spouse.

A Christian, however, should be able to distinguish clearly between the married and the unmarried life. How? By God's Word.

God attached his Word to the institution of marriage when he said in Gen. 1:27-28: "God created male and female, and gave Eve to Adam. He blessed them saying: 'Be fruitful and multiply'."

This blessing was renewed later in Gen. 9:1, 7. Then there is also Gen. 2:18, 24, where it says: "It is not good for man to be alone. I will make a helper for him who will stand by him... This is why a man will leave his father and mother and cling to his wife. And two will be one flesh."

Matthew 19:6 states: "What God has joined let man not separate." This is the jewel that makes marriage into something honorable. Marriage is a divine work and institution. Without this Word, the institution of marriage would be an unholy way of life and not what it truly is. Instead, marriage is truly noble for in it the Word itself can be seen to shine.

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***God attached his Word  
to the institution of  
marriage***

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Consider this example. When a murderer kills someone, the act itself looks exactly the same as when someone is executed according to the sentence of a judge.

It is for this reason it has long been held that a judge has a perilous duty. In fact, this one duty of a judge has in the past been described as so horrible that no one could carry it out with a good conscience.

Consequently the sword of the government became dull and rusty. People were scandalized by the death penalty.

Understandably, many fine, honorable judges fled when they were called to decide a capital case—rather than have anything to do with this horrible work!

This and other such errors occur when we consider one's place and duty in society by itself, apart from God's Word. For when a murderer kills someone, he does not do the right thing. He has neither a command to do so nor God's Word. In fact, the murderer acts against God's Word and commandment, which reads: "You shall not kill." This is why his murder is utter darkness, hell, and death.

However, when the government kills someone, it has God's Word and command on its side. This is why the judge or executioner does not use the sword. God does it.

Here the sword shines as if it were in the hand of an angel, even as if it were in God's hand. This happens by the Word which commands evil to be punished, and good to be protected and defended. And just as a murderer sins when he kills, because he is forbidden to do this, so the judge sins when he does not kill, because he is commanded to kill, Rom. 13:4.

Here is another example. When a burglar breaks into someone's house and steals something, then this work is very similar to that of a judge or other government official who goes about imposing fines on citizens or collecting from them assets pledged as securities.

And yet, there is a big difference between the two. The judge does so lawfully, as the one who should take it. He has the holy hands of God. For God's Word says to him: You shall punish injustice and promote and administer justice.

The burglar has neither a commandment nor the law

on his side, telling him to take what belongs to another. In fact, God has forbidden him to do this: “You shall not steal.” This is why the burglar has utterly devilish, accursed hands by which he grabs what is not his.

These two examples shed light on marriage. For when two people, a man and a woman, live together in an unholy way, it looks just like the married life. They help one another getting dressed. They walk and work together. They are just like a married couple when it comes to sleeping and eating. You cannot distinguish between how they are living and the married life based on reason.

In marriage, however, God is present with his Word. God blesses and sanctifies marriage, saying: “When you live with your wife, sleeping and eating with her, it is not the same kind of life that fornicators have together. Rather, it is a holy life together. It is ordained and instituted by God himself.”

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And that other life? A life of fornication is forbidden by God. So in Hebrews and in the Ten Commandments God says: “You shall not commit adultery or covet your neighbor’s wife.”

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1. What does the world think of marriage?
  2. How do people think of and evaluate marriage?
  3. Is it difficult to distinguish between marriage and fornication?
  4. How is such a distinction made?

5. What makes marriage a divine work and institution?
6. So why is marriage a holy life?