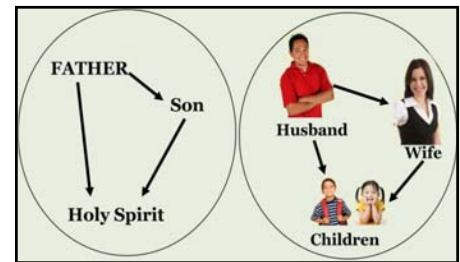


## Marriage: Representative of God's Nature by Chris Garner

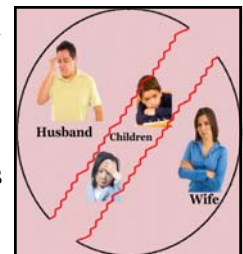
God created mankind, male and female in His image according to Genesis 2:27. As Christ and His father are *one* (John 10:30), the husband and wife also are *one* (Ephesians 5:31). This is a profound mystery, but something that deeply affects the marriage relationship. Marriage is not an institution we can manipulate and change at will or because the culture of the day demands change. It is an earthly representation of the very nature of God. Oneness, unity, community, singleness of purpose; this is who God is! Unfortunately, marriage today does not reflect this oneness, unity, community, and singleness of purpose in marriage is very rarely ever seen.



What a concept; that a husband and wife should work together in unity and singleness of purpose! If we, in the church would do this, it would revolutionize our marriages, the church and change the world. We need to get back to the basics and quit arguing over our differences and use those differences to strengthen our marriages and be a testimony of who our God is. Mankind has too long misrepresented God through marriages in which men use their physical strength to put down women and women manipulate and slyly seek their own way. This is the “war of the ages” that began with the fall in the garden. With the fall, we see that selfishness and separation tend to characterize marriage rather than oneness and unity.

## Divorce: A Modern-Day Plague

Divorce rips apart the representation of the image of God and children then come between husband and wife rather than proceeding from them. God hates divorce for good reason, it puts children in place they were not meant to be. Research has found that 15% of children of divorce experience serious social, emotional or psychological problems due to their parents divorce. In the United States alone, approximately one million children a year experience this ripping apart of their families. This means that 150,000 children a year are experiencing serious problems; compound this number over the past 25 years and we find a plague destroying not only the U.S., but many other nations as well.



As a fictional divorce judge said in a movie; “gays are not the problem with marriage, you people are.” He was referring to a couple who married on a whim and then wanted a divorce. Gay marriage is not the problem with marriage, it is the fact that the divorce rate in the church is the same as it is in the “world.” How can we proclaim a standard for marriage when we so thoughtlessly throw away our own marriages? If the church wants to make a difference in the culture today, it must begin by upholding the sanctity of marriage. Marriage must be held to a higher standard in the Church of Jesus Christ!

## The Answer: Christ-Centered Marriages

Counseling, seminars, and *love dares* are all well and good, but if we do not turn back to the one who created the institution of marriage, we cannot hope to have marriages that will represent God to a culture that so desperately needs Him. We must learn and live out God’s purpose for marriage; oneness, unity, community, singleness of purpose; it is *who God is!* Ecclesiastes 4:9 tells us that *two are better than one*, we are meant to work together in the marriage relationship. It is to be a relationship of love and sacrifice as we see in the life of Christ and how He related to the Father and to the Church. Marriage is hard because we make it hard; we are so selfish and self-centered; this is not something that glorifies God and it does not represent who God is. When we live out who we are in Christ, as new creations in Christ, we can be the husbands and wives that will better live out marriage as God intended it to be; marriages that will represent the nature of God to the world.

