

COMMONWEALTH ★ ★ ★ POLICY CENTER ★ ★ ★

What is marriage?

There are two competing views of marriage today: Revisionist and Conjugal.

Revisionist: is a sexual and emotional bond distinguished by strong emotional intensity which need not point beyond the partners and lasts as long as their emotional attachment endures.ⁱ

Conjugal: is a mental, spiritual, emotional and bodily union between two people of the opposite sex. It is a comprehensive union based on complementariness between the sexes and is a permanent and exclusive relationship which is ordered to the conception and rearing of children.ⁱⁱ

Marriage is one man and one woman united bodily united by coitus which is ordered toward the good of bringing new human life into the world.ⁱⁱⁱ

Why is marriage important?

- According to the U.S. Supreme Court, marriage is “the most important relation in life” and “the foundation of the family and society, without which there would be neither civilization nor progress.” *Maynard v Hill* (1888).
- It is the foundational social institution. Marriage channels one of the most potent and consequential life forces—sex into a lifelong covenantal union.
- It ensures that a child’s father is married to his mother and engages in the upbringing and provision of his offspring.

Marriage serves the good of children.

- Children need both a mother and father for the best chance at healthy development.^{iv}
- Children in homes where their fathers are married to their mothers do better in almost every category—health, academics, and overall wellbeing.
- Redefining marriage to same-sex couples condemns children to single-gender households. No credible social science indicates that this is a good or healthy thing for children.

Marriage serves the good of spouses.

- Married spouses live longer, are healthier, happier, earn more money, and take less risks than their non-married counterparts.^v

Marriage serves the good of society.

- Society depends on the procreation that comes from man/woman marital union. No society could long endure without the man/woman conjugal union.
- The state benefits when fathers provide for and take care of their children.

Consequences of redefining marriage.

- Redefining marriage results in violation of personal conscience. States that have legalized homosexual marriage are forcing bakers, florists and photographers to accommodate same-sex "weddings" or face fines and lawsuits.
- Redefining marriage violates religious freedom. Christian adoption and foster care service ministries have had to shut down in Massachusetts and Illinois because they would have been forced to place children in same-sex households.
- Redefining marriage will undermine a Biblical ethic of human sexuality.
- Redefining marriage confuses children. States that have legalized homosexual marriage have children as early as kindergarten exposed to teaching that homosexuality is normal and acceptable.

ⁱ Sherif Girgis, Ryan T. Anderson, and Robert P. George, *What is Marriage? Man and Woman: A Defense* (Encounter Books, 2012), 1.

ⁱⁱ *ibid*, 6.

ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid*, 36.

^{iv} See David Popenoe *Life Without Father: Compelling New Evidence That Fatherhood and Marriage Are Indispensable for the Good of Children and Society* (Harvard University Press 1999).

^v Linda J. White and Maggie Gallagher. *The Case for Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier, Healthier, and Better Off Financially* (New York: Doubleday, 2000), 64.