



Oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive.
- Sir Walter Scott

DECEIVE

TO CAUSE TO BELIEVE WHAT IS NOT TRUE; MISLEAD.

ABRAHAM WITH SARAH

Out of fear, Abraham said of Sarah his wife, "She is my sister." [Actually, she was his half-sister.]

Good intentions did not make deceit okay. It only compounded the problem.

DAVID WITH BATHSHEBA

David made multiple attempts to cover up his sin.

Bad intentions only increased the need to deceive and caused the death of Uriah.

ANANIAS WITH SAPPHIRA

Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.

Giving some of the proceeds of the sale did not make their deception acceptable.

LESSONS

Beware of the dangers and consequences of being deceitful.

Beware of the man whose words declare him to be what he is not.

Beware of one whose words and actions don't agree.

Therefore, putting aside all malice and all deceit and hypocrisy and envy and all slander, like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that by it you may grow in respect to salvation, if you have tasted the kindness of the Lord.

1 Peter 2:1-3

'It's Only a Piece of Paper'

I have heard some say that a marriage license is “only a piece of paper.” I have even heard some brethren make the same comment. Whatever the reason behind the statement, those who make it are sadly mistaken or wilfully ignorant.

The marriage license (the legal document) is only a piece of paper? On this “piece of paper” are the names and signatures of the couple being united, duly solemnized by a person the government has empowered. It is a declaration made to all people, and to the powers that be, that a marriage union, a covenant, a solemn exchange of vows and a marriage contract have been entered into. The license is only the legal aspect of this union. It's what makes the marriage legal. It confirms that a marriage has taken place.

WHAT HAS TAKEN PLACE?

First, marriage is a union of two of God's crowning creation—mankind. One man and one woman joined together, becoming “one flesh.”

Second, it is a covenant between two people. A compact entered into declaring that the man and the woman have covenanted to live together as husband and wife, forming a new family unit, with the intent of procreation – producing the next generation in their families.

Third, this marriage covenant is sealed by solemn vows made in the presence of witnesses and in the presence of God (Yes, God is a witness to such an action.) The vows often contain the words, “I take thee ...” and “until death do us part.” That is a binding and permanent vow.

Fourth, marriage is a contract, agreed to by both parties. A binding contract with only one “escape clause.”

Fifth, marriage is called “holy matrimony” for good reason. It is a union instituted and approved by God, the Father and Creator.

NOT TO BE TAKEN LIGHTLY

Marriages are not to be torn apart. *“Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.”* Matthew 19:6

Covenants are not to be broken. *“If a man makes a vow to the Lord, or takes an oath to bind himself with a binding obligation, he shall not violate his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth.”* Numbers 30:2

Contracts and agreements are not to be violated. *“And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery.”* Matthew 19:9

Marriage is to be treated as a sacred union. And He answered and said, *“Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female, and said, ‘For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?’”* Matthew 19:4-5

“Legal” and “God-approved” are not synonymous. God doesn't necessarily approve of every legal marriage or divorce.

ONLY A PIECE OF PAPER?

Are the title documents of everything you own only a piece of paper? Is your vehicle ownership document only a piece of paper? Is a diploma only a piece of paper? Is that Installment Contract you signed only a piece of paper? Is a dollar bill only a piece of paper? Is the Bible only a piece of paper? Yes, a marriage license is more than a piece of paper. Much more!

“Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.” Hebrews 13:4

PASSION

A powerful emotion, such as love, joy, hatred, or anger; Boundless enthusiasm.

—American Heritage Dictionary

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Passion in and of itself is neutral: it can be helpful or it can be harmful. Love and joy certainly are beneficial passions. Hatred and anger are passions that cause much harm. The powerful emotion of passion among Christians can be constructive or destructive.

## CONSTRUCTIVE

Passionate about spreading the Good News to a lost and dying world.

Passionate about protecting the church from false teachers.

Passionate about living as a Christian in a hostile world.

Passionate about sharing one another's joy or sorrow.

Passionate about loving one another.

## DESTRUCTIVE

Passionate about traditions to the point of tearing up congregations.

Passionate about personal feelings and desires to the point of intimidation or retaliation.

Passionate about changing things to keep up with the times and running rough shod over plain Bible teachings.

Passionate about being preeminent.

Passionate about "policing" the brotherhood.

## BIBLE EXAMPLES OF PASSION DISPLAYED

### LOVE AND JOY

Jesus' love for the world caused Him to suffer death on the cross for the sins of mankind.

The Apostles' joy in being counted worthy to suffer for Christ.

The abundance of joy among the Macedonian Christians in aiding needy brethren.

### HATRED AND ANGER

#### Passionate About Traditions

The Jews sought to kill Jesus because he healed on the Sabbath.

#### Passionate About Doing What One Thinks His Right

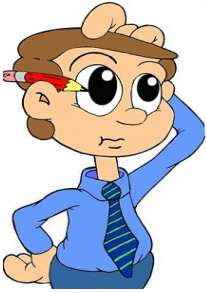
Saul of Tarsus relentlessly persecuting followers of the "Way" believing he was serving God.

#### Passionate About Idols

Demetrius the silversmith started a riot in Ephesus over lost revenue due to many turning away from the worship of idols to become Christians.

***Be passionate!***

***But make sure it is constructive, not destructive.***



# Ponder This

## Goad

(Something that incites or rouses to action.)

*And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds.*

Hebrews 10:24

**Look for the good in people, the bad is easy to see.**

**Express your appreciation for the good done by others.**

**Keep your eye on the goal. Encourage others to do the same.**

**Develop your God-given ability and use it. Don't just wait for opportunities, create them.**

You are an example to others, with or without your knowledge.

You don't know when or if the seed you plant in another's heart will germinate.

Do what you can, where you are, when you have the opportunity.

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Bear one another's burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ. ... For each one will bear his own load. ... The one who is taught the word is to share all good things with the one who teaches him. ... Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, especially to those who are of the household of faith.

Galatians 6:2,5,6,9,10



WORD STUDY

Bless; Give Thanks

Matthew 26:26

*"Jesus took some bread, and after a **blessing**..."*

[Greek: *eulogeo*: to speak well of, i.e.

(religiously) to bless (thank or invoke a benediction upon, prosper):--bless, praise.]

Matthew 26:27

*"And when He had taken a cup and given **thanks** ..."*

[Greek: *eucharisteo*, to be grateful, i.e. to express gratitude (towards); spec. to say grace at a meal:--(give) thank (-ful, -s).]

1 Corinthians 11:24-25

*"took bread; and when He had given **thanks**, (eucharisteo) He broke it, and said, 'This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same way He took the cup also ..."*

– Vines Expository Greek Dictionary

BLESS

Call upon a higher power (God) for a divine blessing; to make holy, A sanctifying [setting apart] of the bread and cup.

GIVE THANKS

Express gratitude, be thankful.

Both words are used in the Scriptures to convey the actions of Jesus.

Each word is used to denote a different aspect of the same act.

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