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*"The Churches of God Outreach Ministries provides leadership, information, and biblical teaching in spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:19-20"*

I-800-611-8080 / [www.cgom.org](http://www.cgom.org)  
PO Box 54621, Tulsa, OK 74155-0621

## What God Has Joined Together

**In a world in where divorce is increasingly the norm and marriage a seemingly unusual occurrence, the ancient wisdom of God reveals to us how we can be happy and successful in marriage and in love.**

by Maynard Kappel

What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder." Such are the familiar words from the Bible we hear spoken at wedding ceremonies across the land. Each year, couples eagerly start planning for that special day. As many of us know, much thought goes into the location, invitations, reception, dress and all the other endless details. There is indeed much involved in this "joining" ceremony, isn't there?

As mentioned in the opening sentence, "*What God has joined together...*", reminds us that, above and beyond the physical activities associated with a wedding ceremony, God is somehow involved as well. Is He just stopping by to "witness" this wedding or "*joining process*," along with the rest of those present? Perhaps.

### Two Become One

*"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh" (Matthew 19:5, All references KJV).*

Concerning the marriage relationship, there is an interesting study that shows there may be more to becoming "*one flesh*" than we have imagined. Quoting from an article in the Tulsa World newspaper entitled "**Mates Could be Successful Organ Donors**":

*"Doctors have identified a surprisingly successful source of donated organs for people who need kidney transplants - the patient's own spouses.*

*The researchers found that kidneys taken from patients' husbands and wives survive almost as well as those removed from identical twins, which have long been the gold standard in organ transplants. For the study, Dr. Paul I. Terasaki and colleagues from the University of California at Los Angeles compiled data from 50,601 transplants performed at 97 U.S. hospitals. They found that 85 percent of kidneys transplanted between spouses*

*survived at least three years, compared with 90 percent survival between identical twins. The study found the chance of transplanted kidneys surviving at least three years was:*

- *80 percent when donated by a child to a mother*
- *84 percent, child to father*
- *87 percent, husband to wife*
- *87 percent, wife to husband, if the wife had never been pregnant.*
- *76 percent, wife to husband, if the wife had been pregnant."*

The results of this study are fascinating. According to this study, the success rate between husband and wife for this type of transplant **approaches that of identical twins, the "gold standard."** Remember, identical twins are of the **same genetic material!**

Question: Would there have been the same results between these men and women if they had not married? Does this occur immediately or gradually? Who, husband or wife, does the actual changing? Or do both change toward something they were not previously? Some things to ponder. What once was genetically independent and chemically incompatible now behaves as if it were of the same "*stuff*!" It seems there is a "*metamorphosis*" occurring here. Very interesting.

### Why is this happening?

Let us take a look at several verses from the Bible that may help us gain a better understanding.

In the book of Malachi, we find the earlier reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah had gone by the wayside. In chapter two, God is recorded as speaking out against the behavior of the priests, in particular, regarding their wives. In Malachi 2:11, they are reprimanded for divorcing them in order to

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take heathen wives instead. In verse 14, God reminds them that yes, He was there as a witness to their marriages. Then comes an interesting statement contained in verse 15:

**"And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth."**

God makes a statement here pertaining to the marriage union. He says here, "Did not He make one?" referring to Genesis 2:24. Now keep your place here, we'll be right back.

In Matthew 19, we find Jesus answering the Pharisees concerning marriage and divorce. Let us focus our attention on verses 4-6. He said in the beginning, God made mankind of two types, male and female. Why? **Because God had a purpose in mind.** To further that purpose in making two kinds, man (who is one "kind") was instructed to leave his father and mother and be joined, wedded together, to his wife (the other "kind") and that they **WOULD BECOME ONE FLESH.** He went on in verse 6 to say they would no longer be two distinct individuals, but ONE. How is this possible? Jesus Himself reveals the reason. **BECAUSE GOD HIMSELF HAS JOINED THEM!** This word "joined" means "completeness," "resemblance," "companionship," or "union" in the most intimate way!

Now, why this "*becoming one flesh*" business? Let's go back to Malachi 2:15 and read: "*That He (God) might seek a Godly seed.*" God's plan, from who knows how far back, was (and is) to bring into existence Godly seed (offspring) from this union. Godly offspring can and does mean children who obey and respect the way of life God has outlined in His Holy Word, but it goes even farther than that! Godly offspring must by its very definition mean offspring that is of the God kind! The apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 1:19-20 that the nature of God, His attributes (His mind, if you will), are revealed to us by the physical design (His handiwork) of the creation around us. The marriage relationship is one of them (remember Genesis 2:24). Just as God is busy with the physical joining in the most intimate of human relationships, could He be just as busy with a spiritual joining of the most intimate kind?

### Spiritual Joining

In order to become a part of the God kind (the reason you were born), **God is willing to give a part of His very being to YOU!** In Romans 8:15-16, Paul reveals a truth, with consequences. First the truth part. God here is reminding the Romans (and you and me today) that when we repented and were baptized (see Acts 2:38), we received a part of God Himself. Here it is described as the

Spirit of Adoption, because of which, we cry what? **FATHER!** Now, a father is one who holds a **special relationship** toward someone, isn't he? When someone is related, they are in a condition of being related or "connected" in some way, right? Connect means to "**JOIN OR FASTEN TOGETHER**"; "*to come into close relationship or UNION with.*"

In verse 16, we now see the consequences part of receiving this Spirit of adoption. When God "joins" His Spirit (one kind) with our spirit (the other kind), we see the results! **GODLY SEED!** Seed, or children, of the **GOD KIND.** That means **YOU** reading this article, if you have repented, been baptized and received His Spirit.

### One Spirit with Christ

In 1 Corinthians 6, Paul is warning the Corinthians not to revert back to their old way of life. In verse 15, he reminds them that they are now members of Jesus Christ, not to behave in those particular ways. Why?

In verse 17, Paul says that "*he that is joined to the Lord is ONE SPIRIT!*" The Greek word here means to "glue," "cleave," "to stick," "join self" or "keep company." Remember, "*what God has "joined" together....*" When God joins something, **HE JOINS IT.** Remember the article mentioned at the beginning? Two people (husband and wife) become chemically almost **INDISTINGUISHABLE.** Why? **Because they have been "joined" by God Himself.** Likewise, when God "joins" His Spirit with our spirit, they become one. When our spirit has been "joined" with God, through His Spirit, we now start becoming **indistinguishable from the very NATURE and BEHAVIOR of God our Father.**

### God Desires This Joining

Knowing that His time was short, Jesus Christ, on the night before His crucifixion and death, gave a meaningful and heartfelt prayer for you and me. It can be found in John 17:20-23: "*Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.*"

Here Christ is referring to all, not only those present with Him there, but those who would come to believe His word down through the ages, including us here today. The "*consequences*" of this belief we see in the next verse:

*"That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."*

The phrase "*may be one*" is rendered as "*one thing*" (Jamieson, Fausset and Brown Commentary). One "*thing*," not two. Remember what Jesus said to Philip? "*He that has seen me has seen the Father?*" (John 14:9)

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**Jesus and His Father were identical!** Just as Christ asked the Father here to make us identical with them!

*"And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."*

Here again, Christ is asking for the same unity or oneness He shares with the Father to be **given to us!**

*"I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me."*

The word “*perfect*,” which Jesus used in His personal request to the Father on our behalf, means to “*finish*” or “*to complete*.” He is saying here that we can only be complete when we are “*joined together*,” made one, literally.

Why is God “*assimilating*” us? Because, as Christ says, the Father loves us and wants us to be “one” with Him in His family forever. The only way to do that is to transform us so that we are capable of inheriting eternity, taking on the very composition and behavior of the God kind.

Hopefully, because of what we have seen here in the Word of God, we will come away with a deeper appreciation and realization that there is perhaps more to His Word than we might think.

When the Father said “...and they shall be one flesh” (Gen. 2:24), He had in mind an intimate union or “*joining*” between husband and wife. The results of this joining are beautiful and precious, physical, children, with the behavior and appearance characteristics of both Mom and Dad. However, this is really only the beginning.

A godly seed is, again, of the God “*kind*.” The Father sends the Spirit to those who have repented of their sins (living an “ungodlike” life) and been baptized. He then, by the laying on of hands, joins His Spirit with ours to start the spiritual “*integration*” process. The results will be beautiful and precious, spiritual children born of the same “*kind*,” with the behavior, appearance, and characteristics of the Father and Jesus Christ.

**God has indeed begun a good work in you that He will FINISH (make complete)** if you have repented, been baptized and received the Holy Spirit and have been “*joined*” (Phil. 1:6).

If not, I have 2 questions for you. First: **Have YOU given any thought about YOUR “joining” ceremony?** The Father certainly has. Second: **What are you waiting for?**

[Request the articles: ***Marriage - Just A Piece of Paper?*** and ***Spend A Lifetime - Together***]

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