

## Polygamy and the Bible: The Debate

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## Introduction

I smile when thinking about the continuation of this text, in which I will clearly demonstrate that the Bible does not prohibit polygamy, by dismantling each argument from those who claim otherwise and presenting several challenges they cannot answer. I also smile because I know it will not change the convictions of those who have reached such a level of brainwashing that you can show them something white, and because they have been told it is black, even when seeing white, they will tell you it is black and that you see white because you haven't prayed enough.

Our duty is not to convince them, but to present the truth to them, so that remaining in error is a choice for them and not the result of their ignorance. I know that those individuals will only move if their church leaders tell them it is possible. To those individuals, I urge them to pass this text to the leaders of their church.

I thank God, who gives me today the strength, knowledge, and words to confound all those who, in His name, preach what He did not say, to confound those who, like the Pharisees, keep believers in chains, showing that they have understood nothing of God's love and the spirit of the law. To the believers who seek the truth, this text will help them to be certain.

Before delving into the heart of the matter, so that we are resolutely guided by the Spirit, I pray to God that the reader of this text may be fully enlightened by the Spirit of God in their reading, and that every dogmatic veil, every posture aimed only at conforming to the teachings of their church, be broken. May they be in the mindset of one who seeks the truth, not one who wants to affirm their beliefs at all costs, knowing that it is more important to please God than to please men. May God enlighten us all, in the name of Jesus Christ, and may the Spirit of God teach us.

As my friend Alex wished, I want to first lay the foundations of a structured debate. I will start by defining some important concepts and stating the hypotheses of the debate. Next, I will present the main arguments put forth to support the prohibition of polygamy; then, I will address these arguments one by one, while gradually introducing arguments that prove the contrary.

## Definitions and Hypotheses

**Hypothesis 1:** Each verse pertains to the written letter. Its understanding is a form of interpretation of the verse, which may not be strictly aligned with the letter of the text but rather with its spirit.

**Justification:** Consider the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20:13); it is noted that the text of this law has no restrictions or explicit context. The text says: "Thou shalt not kill," and that is all. Is it therefore forbidden to kill chickens, goats, ducks, snakes... Everyone can tell me that this law does not concern animals, even though it is not written. This means that everyone, beyond the letter, has sought the spirit of the text and thus built their understanding: "... for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life" (2 Corinthians 3:6).

**Definition 1:** Consistent Interpretation A verse's interpretation is said to be consistent if all the verses in the Bible using the same expression or a strongly similar expression can be

interpreted in the same way without causing an obvious problem. Otherwise, the interpretation is said to be inconsistent.

Note that the inconsistency of an interpretation does not automatically make it false, but it allows concluding that other interpretations are possible and to seek the best interpretation, considering the context and other verses of the Bible.

**Definition 2: Coherent Interpretation** An interpretation is said to be coherent if it is not in blatant contradiction with other verses of the Bible. Otherwise, it is said to be incoherent.

In other words, when an interpretation is incoherent, one can find a set of Bible verses that, when combined with the interpreted verse, lead to a contradiction, regardless of the admissible interpretation given to that set.

**Definition 3: Partial and Fragmented Interpretation** An interpretation is said to be partial and fragmented when it chooses to ignore all Bible verses that seem to provide a contrary message. Thus, such an interpretation, rather than conveying a consistent and coherent message with the rest, will convey a contradictory message while acting as if the rest is not part of the Bible.

**Definition: Admissible Interpretation** In this text, admissible interpretation refers to any interpretation that is both consistent and coherent.

**Hypothesis 2: Preference for Consistent and Coherent Interpretations** To better understand the Scriptures, preference should be given to consistent and coherent interpretations. If consistency is not possible, at least coherence should be sought.

**Hypothesis 3: Impossibility of Debate in Partial and Fragmented Interpretations** For a debate concerning the Bible to have any validity, partial and fragmented interpretations must be avoided. Indeed, those who make such interpretations, by expressly ignoring a part of the Bible, cannot convince someone who takes that part into account, nor can they be convinced themselves, as they reject a part of the Bible they claim to quote.

## **Debate Orientation**

In the upcoming presentation, I will continuously favor admissible interpretations. I will also ask anyone who wishes to respond to my argumentation to avoid sending isolated verses with partial and fragmented interpretations, but rather to build an admissible interpretation themselves, incorporating all the other verses I have mentioned. There will be no continuation of the debate as long as certain arguments mentioned are left without an admissible interpretation. At most, I will remind them of the ignored arguments.

## **Summary of the Anti-Polygamous Position**

God has prohibited polygamy since Genesis. He then tolerated it until Jesus. With the arrival of Jesus, tolerance has ended, and polygamy is prohibited for Christians. To prove this, several strategies are used:

1. Various verses, including Genesis 2:24, Mark 10:1-9, Matthew 19:4 which references Genesis, Hebrews 9 which establishes a new covenant, the text that says “let every

man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband,” the fact that Christ came to abolish the law from which we are freed (Romans 10:4), the law of Christ replacing that of Moses, and advice given to kings not to multiply wives for themselves (Deuteronomy 17:15,17).

2. The absence of polygamists in the New Testament.
3. It is through prayer that one understands that polygamy is prohibited, and those who think otherwise have not prayed enough and need to pray more.
4. One should not be content with juxtaposing several biblical verses, as it takes years of study to understand them. Therefore, one should rely on those who have spent all these years and have understood.
5. Polygamy is prohibited by principle.
6. The problems created by polygamy.
7. God did not create two women but only one.

We will now analyse the various arguments presented here to see if they hold.

### **Analysis of “Anti-Polygamous” Verses**

#### **Analysis of “Fundamental” Verses**

Notice that the verses which seem to blind some to the point of acting as if all other verses do not exist are the following: Genesis 2:24, Mark 10:1-9, Matthew 19:4, and “let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.” We will now show that their anti-polygamous interpretation is inconsistent and incoherent, and therefore inadmissible.

Let us revisit the text from Genesis:

“Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh” (Genesis 2:24).

Those who cite this text do not understand it well. To realise this, let us start by citing this other verse from the Bible:

“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour’s wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass” (Exodus 20:17).

Note the constant use of the singular: his house, his wife, his ox...

Now, let us assume that according to the letter, “shall cleave unto his wife” in Genesis implies only one wife due to the use of the singular. With the same interpretation, we would conclude that it prohibits having more than one house, more than one servant, more than one ox, more than one ass. Clearly, this conclusion is absurd, and therefore the use of the singular does not necessarily indicate a prohibition of the plural but rather reflects a style of writing. When someone says “my neighbor is dead,” or “my neighbor’s wife is sick,” it does not necessarily mean that he has only one neighbor, nor that his neighbor has only one wife. Interpreting the singular in Genesis as a prohibition of the plural is inconsistent.

One might argue that, since it is also said in Genesis, “...and they shall be one flesh.”

To this, one might first ask, “What does it mean to become one flesh?” It is dangerous to recite a text without seeking even a basic understanding. It is evident that the physical body of the groom is different from that of his bride. That is why one can have an accident, suffer physically, fall ill, or die while the other is well. So what does it mean to become one flesh?

Consider this 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” (John 17:21).

Notice that Christ asserts that all Christians should be one. The term “one” here clearly denotes unity and not singularity (since each Christian remains a distinct individual). From this verse, it is consistent to translate “one flesh” in Genesis as unity of the flesh. And just as all Christians, who are many, should be one, unity does not exclude plurality. Thus, polygamy is not in contradiction with the unity of the flesh. This is even more true in a polygamous marriage, where if someone has an STD, it would affect all partners. Thus, the unity of the flesh naturally extends between the man and all his wives in a polygamous marriage.

This interpretation is further reinforced by this text from Corinthians: “What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh” (1 Corinthians 6:16).

In fact, what does it mean to be joined to a harlot except through sexual relations? Here we see that without marriage, and with sexual relations, one already forms one body, which confirms the unity or union of bodies as an admissible interpretation of Genesis, the anti-polygamists' interpretation being inconsistent.

I then wonder, on what admissible interpretation can the prohibition of polygamy by Genesis be concluded? What understanding has been given to the concept “one flesh”?

We will later show that, in addition to being inconsistent, this interpretation is incoherent. For now, let us analyse the other verses:

“But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, except for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery” (Matthew 5:32).

The Genesis passage (2:24) is repeated not to condemn polygamy, but to restrain the unlimited freedom of divorce, which is quite different. Marriage is a subject of joy, while divorce is a subject of pain. To equate them would be to consider birth and death as equivalent and to condemn someone equally for giving birth as for causing death.

Let us now analyse (1 Corinthians 7:2): “Nevertheless, **to avoid fornication**, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”

A literal, partial, and fragmentary interpretation immediately concludes that no one should have multiple wives. However, it is evident that this interpretation is inconsistent with Exodus 20:17 mentioned above, where we have already observed that the use of the singular does not necessarily exclude the plural. Moreover, this verse is too often cited and analysed without considering its beginning, “...to avoid fornication.” In some translations, it reads “...to avoid

**fornication.**” Thus, the verse stipulates that a man who does not have a wife or a woman who does not have a husband will be tempted by fornication or debauchery, and the solution prescribed by the Bible to avoid this is **marriage**.

Those who forbid polygamy forget that in a country like Cameroon, where there are many more women than men, the immediate consequence of prohibiting polygamy is that the part of the verse “**let every woman have her own husband**” will not be respected, with the natural consequence being fornication or debauchery. Thus, they violate the Bible and impose celibacy on women who are, according to this text, called to get married, and claim to do so in the name of God. It should be noted that the literal interpretation they apply effectively prohibits celibacy, as every man must have his own wife and every woman her own husband. The literal interpretation both prohibits and forces celibacy when there are too many women compared to men. This interpretation is inconsistent with itself. Those who apply it claim to act by the spirit, whereas clearly the spirit is far from their interpretation, and only the letter without any analysis prevails. Note that Europeans who imposed their monogamous culture on religion (which we will discuss later) were actually more comfortable with monogamy with multiple mistresses than with polygamy.

The interpretation of the prohibition of polygamy in this verse is also inconsistent with this other verse: “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife...” (1 Timothy 3:2). The very statement of this verse is sufficient proof that polygamy was not forbidden to other believers, and that it was then practiced in the Church. Indeed, if it had not been practiced and was forbidden, it would have sufficed to say that a bishop must be married, and not specifically to one wife.

In fact, the precept signifies that every man should have his own wife, but not that he should have only one. It is directly taught that bishops, elders, and deacons should have only one wife (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:5-7), presumably so they could more diligently fulfill their ecclesiastical duties. The command itself is sufficient proof that polygamy was not forbidden **to others and that it was then practiced in the Church**. We will show later that the anti-polygamist interpretation of these verses is inconsistent, having already abundantly proven it to be inconsistent.

### Other “Anti-Polygamous” Verses

1. The advice given to kings not to multiply wives (Deuteronomy 17:15, 17).

The fact that this advice was specifically given to kings is proof that it was not forbidden to men in general. Not everyone has the profile or desire to be a king. Furthermore, it is a piece of advice, not a commandment. Once again, one must avoid taking a literal interpretation without considering the spirit. Not multiplying wives for himself does not necessarily mean having only one. The Louis Segond translation reads: “Neither shall he **multiply wives** to himself, that his heart turn not away; neither shall he greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.”

Can two women be considered a “great number of wives”? I do not believe so. With two women, one is already polygamous.

2. The fact that Christ came to abolish the law from which we are freed (Romans 10:4), the law of Christ replacing that of Moses.

This is well stated. However, Jesus never prohibited polygamy, as we have demonstrated that the interpretations of Matthew and Mark above, which suggest a prohibition of polygamy, were inconsistent. The liberation from the law did not impose a new law, namely that of monogamy.

### **The Bishop Must Be the Husband of One Wife**

1 Timothy 3:1-6: *“This is a true saying: If a man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach; Not given to wine, no striker, not greedy of filthy lucre; but patient, not a brawler, not covetous; One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?) Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil.”*

It is clear that this text concerns those who wish to lead the church and not all Christians. This is well stated at the beginning and excludes the novice (verse 6). Several other requirements are set: having children, managing one’s household, etc. This excludes single Christians without children. Therefore, I do not see why a text concerning those who wish to lead the church should apply to everyone. The same applies to verse 12, which is limited to those aspiring to the role of deacon. Moreover, the specification that he must be the husband of one wife implies that a Christian not aspiring to this role could be married to multiple wives.

### [Detailed analysis let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband](#)

1 Corinthians 7:2: *“Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband.”*

It is the singular form used here that leads to the conclusion of a prohibition against polygamy based on this verse. Let us test this reasoning in the light of two other verses.

First, consider the “**smaller**” verse, 1 Corinthians 7:29: *“But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that **have wives** be as though they had none.”* Notice that the plural form is used here. It does not say, “they that have a wife...”. I imagine someone might argue that this plural does not imply the plural; let us continue.

Exodus 20:17: *“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy **neighbour's wife**, nor **his servant**, nor **his maid**, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.”* This is the 10th of the Ten Commandments of God. Notice that everything is in the singular. So, following the reasoning applied to 1 Corinthians 7:2 to conclude a mandated monogamy, would it mean that having two oxen, two servants, two houses, etc., is forbidden? It is evident to any sane person that this is not the case. We can therefore conclude that the singular possessive usage in the Bible does not establish a prohibition on possessing a large number.

But there is more to show how this verse encourages polygamy.

Isaiah 3:25: *“Thy men shall fall by the sword, and thy mighty in the war.”*



Isaiah 4:1: “And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach!”

The prophet Isaiah tells us that after a war that decimates the men (Isaiah 3:25), the deficit of men will be so great that seven women will seize one man, just for marriage. How is this possible if God forbids polygamy? How can you ensure that each woman has her husband when men are greatly diminished by war or deficit? The verse in 1 Corinthians 7:2 **clearly states that each woman should have her husband to avoid fornication**. Do you see that by condemning women to celibacy in the context of a severe male deficit, **you condemn them to fornication?**

Now do you understand that to adhere to this verse, polygamy is necessary where there are not enough men, so that each woman can have her husband? Case closed.

Furthermore, Isaiah 3:25, which precedes the prophecy in Isaiah 4:1, shows that men are dead from war. This is a prophecy, meaning something that is to be fulfilled in the future, not something fulfilled in the past from the time of the prophecy. When reading the verses that follow (Isaiah 4:2-3), it is clear that it is unlikely that this prophecy has already been fulfilled. I find it hard to believe anyone would claim it has been fulfilled in the past. Therefore, those who wish to argue that this refers to the past should be cautious about their statements, and particularly state at what point in the past this occurred, a moment that would have the continuation described in Isaiah 4:2-3! In any case, a typical example at the beginning of 2024 is Ukraine, where so many men have died in the war that a similar problem is beginning to be experienced by women!

In such a context, when it is said that each woman should have her husband, would you prefer to force women into celibacy (since monogamy does not allow each woman to have her husband) and compel them to fornicate to have children? And to play the role of a mistress without legal rights due to your Western ideal, which you desperately try to impose through the Bible despite the Bible actively opposing all your arguments?

## Other Arguments

### Absence of Polygamists in the New Testament

Jesus Christ arrived in a Jewish society that practiced polygamy. The apostles preached to various polygamous peoples. The fact that the lives of people in the New Testament are not described does not allow us to conclude that there were no more polygamists. Such a conclusion goes against common sense, as not all polygamists would have died among the Jews and in all the peoples to whom the gospel was preached from the day of Jesus' arrival. Polygamists were present and were indeed part of the believers and repentants (it is statistically impossible that only monogamists believed), which is why bishops are instructed not to be polygamous, thus allowing each believer to choose their status.

It is through prayer that one understands that polygamy is forbidden, and those who think otherwise have not prayed enough and must pray more

This argument seems to me to be of bad faith. **Indeed, let those who advance this argument tell me which of their prayers brought them the revelation that polygamy is**

**prohibited, and in what form this revelation came.** How can someone make a teaching received in their church a prayer revelation and then send others to pray when they themselves did not receive it through prayer? It is good to defend one's position, but beware of lying and making yourself guilty before God. Do not invoke prayer for knowledge you did not receive through prayer.

Furthermore, let us note these other historical references. According to Wikipedia, polygamy was prohibited by the church in the 16th century ( [Polygamie — Wikipédia \(wikipedia.org\)](#)). According to another source ( [La polygamie dans le judaïsme et le christianisme - La religion de l'islam \(islamreligion.com\)](#) ) Martin Luther, during the Protestant Reformation, acknowledged that polygamy was not prohibited.

I wonder if those who speak of prayer have prayed more than the apostles who could not prohibit polygamy to Christians, or than all the early Christians, and especially Christ, who did not prohibit it, as we will see further on.

This argument is simply a trick by those who want us to accept what is clearly false, using a manipulative argument to make someone fear appearing unenlightened by the Spirit and thus admit what is not true.

I acknowledge that prayer helps us better understand God's Word, and it is through prayer that I recognise today that polygamy is not prohibited. Prayer allows us to find evidence of our "revelations" in the Bible and in history; otherwise, it is merely religious brainwashing disguised as prayer.

One should not merely juxtapose various Bible verses, as it takes years of study to understand them. It is therefore important to trust those who have done all this study and have understood.

This argument contradicts the one suggesting that understanding comes from prayer. We cannot simply believe others, as they might be mistaken. Finally, we should avoid merely juxtaposing verses; rather, we must find an acceptable interpretation within the overall context of the Bible, without exclusion.

### **Polygamy Prohibited by Principle**

Which principle? Since we have shown that the interpretation of Genesis is erroneous.

#### **The Original Design of God Regarding Marriage:**

Genesis 2:18: *"And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him."*

Before creating the woman, God said in Genesis, "It is not good that the man should be alone." Is this only valid for man? It seems not. Statistics show that, on average, people in relationships live longer and happier than those alone.

God further said in Genesis, after stating it is not good for man to be alone: "I will make him an help meet for him." The purpose of the woman is to help the man. As the Bible says, "...the woman was created for the man" (1 Corinthians 11:9).

In other words, the very purpose of the woman is the man. “Thy desire shall be to thy husband” (Genesis 3:16). The woman was made for the man, and her desires are directed towards her husband.

Thus, **what is against nature, against God’s initial** plan, is any theory that pushes thousands of women to **live alone**, away from their initial mission on earth. Yet in Cameroon in 2019, statistics show that in the 15-34 age group, which is the favorable age for marriage, there are nearly 300,000 more women than men, or 8% of the female population of that age.

The Bible also reminds us that **to avoid fornication, each woman should have her own husband**. Similarly, to avoid temptation, married couples should not deprive each other. How can we expose people to temptation for their entire lives and then ask them not to yield?

### **Polygamy Creates Problems**

Yes, monogamy does too. The goal of this debate is not to determine if it is the perfect marriage system without issues but to see if God prohibits it.

### **God Did Not Create Two Women but One**

Even among animals, God did not create a female duplicate, yet polygamy is almost the norm in the animal kingdom. Do animals sin all the time, or is polygamy ultimately the natural system in the animal kingdom, including humans?

Why would God create two models when one is sufficient for reproduction (I speak here as an engineer)? There is no link between creation in one example and polygamy.

### **God Simply Tolerated Polygamy, Which Was a Sin**

It can be confidently said that this is false in light of several Bible texts.

Consider this passage:

2 Samuel 12:7-8: “*And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man! **Thus saith the LORD God of Israel, I anointed thee king over Israel, and I delivered thee out of the hand of Saul; And I gave thee thy master's house, and thy MASTER'S WIVES into thy bosom, and gave thee the house of Israel and of Judah; and if that had been too little, I would moreover HAVE GIVEN unto thee such and such things.***”

Here, there is no ambiguity; God gave David wives as one of His great blessings. He would have given more if it had not been enough. I remind you that this comes well after Genesis, i.e., after the text about cleaving to one’s wife and becoming one flesh.

Here, God does not say He merely tolerated David’s polygamy. We read, “**I gave thee thy master’s wives** into thy bosom,” which means God Himself gave David the **wives** of his master, and He declares it. Does God encourage sin?

Consider also this passage:

2 Chronicles 24:2, 3: “Joash did that **which was right** in the sight of **the LORD all the days** of Jehoiada the priest. And **Jehoiada took for him two wives**; and he begat sons and daughters.”

The two phrases are not opposed or separated but are stated together, without disjunction, that under Jehoiada’s guidance, Joash did what was right and married two wives. Since Joash’s righteousness is mentioned without any exception related to this double marriage, it is clear that polygamy was not considered a subject of censure, as the sacred writer would not have missed this opportunity to make such an exception if there had been something worthy of reproach.

Moreover, taking two wives “**was right in the sight of the LORD,**” as it was done by Joash during the life of the priest, and even by the priest himself.

We will provide evidence that God did not merely tolerate polygamy but even encouraged it. Note that even Moses was polygamous, as was Abraham, the father of the faithful.

### Why then would a woman not be polyandrous?

Someone told me that polygamy cannot be justified by the need to produce offspring for a man whose wife is barren because, according to "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," this would imply that if it were the man who was barren, the woman should take a second husband.

In the Bible, **the man is the head of the woman, and no one can serve two masters**, hence normally a woman should have only one husband, from a biblical perspective.

Furthermore, a woman would have difficulty giving birth in the same year to children for multiple husbands. There is no symmetry, from a biblical perspective, where polyandry has never existed.

One should not forget that God gave a commandment to raise up offspring for the man, but there is no commandment to raise up offspring for the woman. Genealogies are patriarchal and not matriarchal.

1 Corinthians 11:9: "*Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man.*"

A woman who has married a barren man will explore with her husband various solutions other than having two husbands, knowing that chastity in celibacy does not produce more children than a barren husband.

### *Polygamy is equal to death because Arabs are at war with Israel*

One should regularly meditate on and apply this Bible verse: "Keep sound wisdom and discretion: so shall they be life unto thy soul, and grace to thy neck" (Proverbs 3:21). When you merely repeat what you have been told or speak without reflection, you can easily be led into false doctrines. Consider this reasoning: **Cain who killed Abel—was he from a different mother?** Should we conclude that **monogamy = death**? Joseph, who saved his brothers from famine, was he from the same mother as them all? Should we then conclude that **polygamy = life**? Jacob (Israel) came from a polygamous marriage, and so did Solomon.

Who told you that wars against Israel stem from polygamy? Why twist the word of God to suit human thoughts? Have you not read in the Bible what would be the origin of the wars against the people of Israel? What did they do to the Lord Jesus Christ? The worst part of your position is that, without realising it, you **implicitly proclaim yourself wiser than God or as judges of God**. So, God in the Old Testament did not have all your intelligence to understand that polygamy equals death and prohibit it? Please, **do not make yourself odious** to God by desperately defending human thoughts. I know a polygamous household where a son told me that his best friend in the family is not his mother's child, and he is rather at odds with his only brother who is his mother's child.

### Arguments in Favor of Polygamy

The New Testament, far from abolishing polygamy, confirms it according to the following evidence: The law of levirate imposes polygamy, Jesus likens the kingdom of heaven to a polygamous marriage, polygamy is not forbidden to believers in a polygamous environment, each woman should have her own husband, and Leah considered herself blessed for giving her maid to her husband.

### God Legislated Polygamy

To say that God forbids polygamy could be translated into the following statement: "God does not permit a man to have more than one wife." Or even into the following statement attributed to God:

*"I forbid a man to have more than one wife."*

Such a statement is so simple to articulate that one might wonder how God failed to realise that it was sufficient to declare it as a law. But the worst is when one tries to reconcile this statement with the following verses that legislate polygamy:

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**Deutéronome 21:15-16** : « [If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated, and they have borne him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn.](#) »

**Lévitique 18:17-18** : « 17 Thou **shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter**, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are her near kinswomen: it is wickedness. 18 Neither shalt thou take a **wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness**, beside the other in her lifetime. »

**Exode 21:10** : « If he take him another wife; her food, her raiment, and her duty of marriage, shall he not diminish. »

If we are at least somewhat honest, we must acknowledge that legislating without prohibiting = permitting, and not pretend that God intended to say, but was unable to say, "I forbid a man to have more than one wife." Fear God, and do not add to His word, and do not impose your thoughts as His commands.

The very fact that God legislated polygamy after Genesis, as we have seen before, indicates that He not only tolerated polygamy but even blessed it, makes any interpretation of Genesis against polygamy incoherent. This is because the text of Genesis precedes the text that legislates. If it is established that this was not merely a matter of tolerance and was even accompanied by blessings, it is evident that no interpretation of Genesis in terms of prohibition is sustainable.

We have already demonstrated through the analysis of the supposed anti-polygamous texts of the New Testament that there was no new regulation prohibiting polygamy with the coming of Jesus Christ.

Normally, at this point, the debate should be closed.

### **The Levirate Law Imposes Polygamy**

Consider this verse (Luke 20:28-32):

"Master, Moses wrote unto us, If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. 29 There were therefore seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and died without children. 30 And the second took her to wife, and he died childless. 31 And the third took her; and in like manner the seven also: and they left no children, and died. 32 Last of all the woman died also. 33 Therefore in the resurrection whose wife of them is she? For seven had her to wife."

The question posed to Jesus concerns a man marrying his deceased brother's wife who had no children. It should be noted that statistically, it is improbable that, over several centuries, only unmarried individuals would have lost their brothers without children. Therefore, it is quite possible that sometimes the surviving brother was already married. However, the law did not state that if he was already married, he should not take the wife, as that would make him polygamous. Jesus could have said that this law was valid before Him, but now that He is here, it is no longer valid. Instead, He merely states that at the resurrection people will neither marry nor be given in marriage. By this, He confirms that He does not challenge this law, and that this practice thus continued to exist after Him, among the people, including believers, with the potential consequence of polygamy.

This passage talks about seven brothers who successively took a widow, and it is evident that it is highly unlikely that none of them was married and just awaited the widow. God also killed someone who was going towards his brother's widow, arranging it so he could not father a child with her. Boaz, even the ancestor of Jesus, who married Ruth, was wealthy and old at the time of his marriage. It would be quite strange to believe that this old and wealthy man had no wife.

### **Jesus Compares the Kingdom of Heaven to a Polygamous Marriage**

Matthew 25:1-11: "Then shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. 2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish. 3 ...10 And while they went to buy, **the bridegroom came**; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut."

Is something that God merely tolerates cited by Jesus as similar to the Kingdom of Heaven? Someone who came to abolish polygamy? It's nonsensical.

I have read that some preachers say that the ten virgins were the attendants of the couple in the wedding chamber. Lies and falsehoods have short legs for those who reflect. Let us maintain wisdom and reflection. This teaching is a gross lie. Why would we need to be virgins to accompany the bride and groom? And where is the bride in the story? Since they say the virgins accompany "the married couple," why does the bridegroom come alone here? Where have you seen the bridegroom enter a wedding chamber officially alone? This lie is even more evident given that in the Bible, Jesus Christ is called the bridegroom, and the Church (all Christians) is called the bride. Moreover, the lesson of this parable is that Jesus Christ was asking believers to watch and be ready. Here, these preachers make the believers mere attendants, and the bride, who was supposed to be ready, no longer exists. This is a total destruction of Jesus Christ's message. The text even specifies that the virgins "went out to meet the bridegroom." Is this what attendants do? Go out to meet the bridegroom?

### **Leah Considers Herself Blessed for Giving Her Maid to Her Husband**

Genesis 30:17-19: "17 And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son. 18 And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar. 19 And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son."

If polygamy is something that God merely tolerates as a sin, how can its practice be a source of blessing? Does God bless sin?

### **Polygamy Is Not Forbidden for Believers in a Polygamous Environment**

Jesus and the apostles preached in a polygamous environment; they baptised converts among whom were polygamous individuals. There is no place where they asked these people to renounce their polygamy. Jesus even illustrated the Kingdom of Heaven with polygamy.

### **Every Woman Should Have Her Own Husband**

Let us not forget, every woman can only have her own husband in a polygamous context, when there are too many women and few men. Remember, it is not good to be alone.

### **Many Men of God Were Polygamous**

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Joash, David, Solomon, and even some priests! God did not rebuke them. David, a man after God's own heart, was only rebuked for the affair with the Hittite's wife.

### **Those Who Do Not Understand God's Love**

Those who do not understand God's love do not grasp that God is a Father who cares about the well-being of His children. Why else would the Levirate Law exist? The necessity of raising up seed to his brother, what does it matter to God?

Galatians 5:14: "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself."

Those who do not understand the law forget that this is the spirit of the law: **the love of God, the love of neighbor.**

**Monogamy is not the spirit of the law, but the spirit of the law resides in the principle of love and justice.** To avoid debauchery and to live happily, it is better to be married, even in second marriages, than to be single. **And those who impose celibacy in the name of a divine principle do not serve God and do not show love for their neighbor. God is love.**

They should read Matthew 12:7 and meditate on it: "*But if ye had known what this meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.*"

Today I speak the same language that Jesus spoke to the Pharisees in similar circumstances. I know that the heirs of the Pharisees, clinging to a letter they do not seem to interpret well, just as the Pharisees fought Jesus, will fight me despite the evidence, believing they do so for God. This for the same reasons as the Pharisees, not questioning their entrenched beliefs.

They should read carefully the fourth commandment (Exodus 20:8-11) and they will see that they would have killed Jesus Christ just as the Pharisees did if they had lived at that time, more attached to a letter than to the spirit of the law of God, which emphasizes love, justice, and mercy.

Matthew 19:9: "*And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery.*"

Interpreting this verse as a prohibition of polygamy is inconsistent with all the other analysed verses. Similarly, a literal interpretation that limits fornication to sexual infidelity would imply that one can divorce a wife for sexual infidelity, but her husband cannot divorce her if she attempts to kill him. Is a murder attempt less serious than sexual infidelity? This verse to me is like the verse "Thou shalt not kill." It has neither preamble, conclusion, nor restriction, yet in several other places it is stated that killing is required under certain conditions. Such a verse does not express the absolute and inconsistent position that could result from a direct interpretation of the letter. It is somewhat like the passage that says it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God (Matthew 19:24). Yet, since no camel can pass through the eye of a needle, one could literally conclude that no rich man will be saved. However, by seeking a consistent interpretation of this verse in light of other verses, it is seen that it translates the difficulty for a rich man to be saved and not his impossibility.

**Returning to Matthew 19:9**, we also observe that adultery is mentioned only in the context of repudiation. It is not stated outright that someone who marries two women commits adultery. We know that a polygamist does not need to repudiate his wife to marry another. This shows the overall spirit of the text, which is to discourage divorce, considered here as infidelity of a man to his wife (not sexual infidelity, but simply infidelity), rather than prohibiting polygamy. This aligns well with the answer to the question posed in Matthew 19:7. It also fits the spirit of the text where God says He hates repudiation.



## Christian Freedom

At the beginning of the Christian era, there was a debate among the apostles about what should be imposed on converts. Here are some excerpts from the questions and resolutions:

"Now therefore, why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (Acts 15:10)

One might say here that it concerns the yoke of the law understood in the letter rather than its spirit.

"Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God: But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollution of idols, and from fornication, and from things strangled, and from blood." (Acts 15:19-20)

## Adding to God's Commandments

**"For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book."** (Revelation 22:18-19)

Do not choose to subtract or ignore verses because they do not serve your cause. Do not add commandments that God has not given. Nowhere in the New Testament does it say that the so-called "tolerance of polygamy" has ceased. Do not add to it.

## Other Arguments

In the following section, you can read many arguments in favor of polygamy for those who are not yet convinced.

## Polygamy and the Bible

In light of the many sexual scandals that shake some so-called traditional and revival churches, one might wonder if these churches are not somehow responsible for these scandals by imposing unnatural commandments presented as God's commandments. By forbidding a man to marry, are we not exposing him to vices such as pedophilia or homosexuality?

The Christian church generally has a number of sexual or social prohibitions that one can always meditate on, wondering whether they are truly commandments of God or ideological visions of some.

In this article, we address the topic of the Bible and polygamy. Although most churches teach that polygamy is prohibited, one can objectively question whether this is the case, given the biblical text. We will objectively review biblical texts related to this subject and draw the conclusion that seems necessary to us, which aligns with the vision we have and advocate of God, the God of love, the loving Father who desires the well-being and happiness of His children.

## Some Fundamental Readings

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To introduce the debate, I invite the reader to consult the following links, which address the subject with references from both the New and Old Testaments:

[Découvrir l'islam \(decouvrirelislam.net\)](http://decouvrirelislam.net)

### Initial Analyses

There is much teaching and many texts to meditate on in the pages of these links.

For example, legislating polygamy:

- Leviticus 18:17-18: "Thou shalt not uncover the nakedness of a woman and her daughter, neither shalt thou take her son's daughter, or her daughter's daughter, to uncover her nakedness; for they are near kinswomen: it is wickedness. Neither shalt thou take a wife to her sister, to vex her, to uncover her nakedness, beside the other in her lifetime."
- Deuteronomy 21:15-16: "**If a man have two wives, one beloved, and another hated,** and they have born him children, both the beloved and the hated; and if the firstborn son be hers that was hated: Then it shall be, when he maketh his sons to inherit that which he hath, that he may not make the son of the beloved firstborn before the son of the hated, which is indeed the firstborn."

**It is evident that legislation is not made for what is prohibited; the very act of legislating implies that it is permitted.**

Moreover, among all passages, this one deserves the attention of more than one:

- **Genesis 30:17-19: "And God hearkened unto Leah, and she conceived, and bare Jacob the fifth son. And Leah said, God hath given me my hire, because I have given my maiden to my husband: and she called his name Issachar. And Leah conceived again, and bare Jacob the sixth son."**

Leah considered herself rewarded by God for giving her maid to her husband. She could not bear children, but to produce offspring for her husband, she gave him her maid. After her maid bore children, she herself became pregnant and perceived it as her reward from God.

For those who still wish to limit polygamy before the coming of Jesus, the following verse may provide food for thought:

**For the End Times:**

- **Isaiah 4:1: "*And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man, saying, We will eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel: only let us be called by thy name, to take away our reproach.*"**

This **verse announces that at the end of times**, seven women will ask to marry one man just to be his wives. Is this not polygamy? In Cameroon, where there are far more women than men, there is a tendency to teach that these women who could not be first wives should accept their single status and pray.

Some oppose polygamy based on this word of Jesus Christ:

- **Matthew 5:28-29: "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."**

If we start from the fact that to talk about adultery, there must be at least one married person, and we also admit that this verse is correct, the question immediately arises where the married person is. Does a single person who looks at a single person "to lust after" commit adultery in their heart? If this were possible, the answer would be yes. But it is not possible.

Do not confuse "lust" with "desire." To lust means to desire to possess and enjoy someone else's thing or something forbidden (<http://www.cnrtl.fr/lexicographie/convoitise>).

**Thus, the expression "looking upon a woman to lust after her" fundamentally applies only if it concerns another man's wife or a woman who is forbidden to us. For it to relate to the term adultery (which fundamentally involves a married person), it seems clear that it is another man's wife being referred to. In other words, to look upon a woman to lust after her only makes sense if she is someone else's wife, which explains why it is considered adultery. Therefore, there is no adultery in desiring a woman who is not anyone's wife.**

### Concubinage and the Bible

Concubinage existed before the establishment of the Law covenant. The Law admitted and regulated it, which ensured the protection of the rights of both wives and concubines (Exodus 21:7-11; Deuteronomy 21:14-17). Concubines did not have the same rights within the household as the primary wife, and a man could have multiple wives and concubines simultaneously (1 Kings 11:3; 2 Chronicles 11:21).

When a man's wife was barren, she sometimes gave her own maidservant as a concubine, and the child born to the concubine was considered as belonging to the free woman, her mistress (Genesis 16:2; 30:3). The children of concubines were legitimate and could inherit (Genesis 49:16-21; see also Genesis 30:3-12).

Among the Hebrews, a concubine held a position similar to that of a secondary wife; in fact, she was sometimes referred to as a wife. Concubines were sometimes slaves from one of three categories: 1) the young Hebrew sold by her father (Exodus 21:7-9); 2) the foreign slave bought; or 3) the foreign captive taken in war (Deuteronomy 21:10-14). Some were the slaves or maidservants of the free woman, like those of Sarah, Leah, and Rachel (Genesis 16:3, 4; 30:3-13; Judges 8:31; 9:18).

**According to Genesis, Abraham had two wives and two concubines, as did Isaac and Jacob.**

### Levirate and Polygamy

Note this verse from the Law:

- **Deuteronomy 25:5: "When brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her."**

And this case presented to Jesus:

- **Matthew 22:28: "Therefore in the resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her."**

The verse from Deuteronomy does not say that if the surviving brother is already married, he should not take the deceased's wife. Thus, if the surviving brother is already married, he becomes necessarily polygamous. Jesus does not revoke this verse when presenting the case of the seven brothers who had the same wife. He simply says that there will be no marriages in the resurrection. Therefore, it can be clearly considered that Jesus did not abolish this practice or the polygamy that could result from it.

### New Testament "Anti-Polygamy" Texts

Now let's analyse the text from Corinthians. For me, I do not want to work within a biased and partial logic that involves ignoring some texts to focus only on those that seem to advocate polygamy.

- **1 Corinthians 7:1: "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman."**

A view that we all readily ignore. Naturally.

- **1 Corinthians 7:2: "Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband."**

It is surprising to see in this text a prohibition of polygamy if we assume that Paul is consistent in his statements and that we cannot ignore all the texts cited in the links I provided, which clearly state who should be a wife to one man. To consider the most coherent approach, could he have written "let every man have his wives"? No, because that could de facto be perceived as an obligation for a man to be polygamous, which is not the case. Expressions like "let every man have his house," "let every man have his thing," do not seem to obligate everyone to have only one house or one thing. Note that verse 7:29 speaks rather of those who have wives and not of those who have one wife.

- **1 Corinthians 7:29: "But this I say, brethren, the time is short: it remaineth, that both they that have wives be as though they had none."**

- **1 Corinthians 7:3: "Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband."**

This is understood in the context specified before. The use of the singular implies nothing regarding the number.

- **1 Corinthians 7:4: "The wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife."**
- **1 Corinthians 7:5: "Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency."**
- **1 Corinthians 7:6: "But I speak this by permission, and not of commandment."**

### Other Discussions

According to some, Paul merely tolerates monogamy! (It is good for a man not to touch a woman).

God did not create anything in double (there are couples, not duplicates). Therefore, the fact that He created one man and one woman does not imply anything about polygamy. Let us not forget the parable of the ten virgins of Jesus, and the question of how Jesus could choose something abominable to God to illustrate the kingdom of God.

It is said that divorce was permitted due to the hardness of hearts, not polygamy. Let us not forget that every consensual marriage is primarily a celebration, an occasion for joy, whereas a divorce is an occasion for sorrow. To condemn or prove that it is forbidden, some seem to start from the premise that polygamy is bad, yet that is what needs to be demonstrated.

Let us not forget that the law on levirate (marrying the deceased brother's wife without children) which was never officially prohibited, inherently required the polygamy of the groom who took his deceased brother's wife!

Some people "demonstrate" that polygamy is bad because of the consequences experienced in certain polygamous households. Such examples cannot constitute proof, and for several reasons. On one hand, following the same reasoning, one could demonstrate that monogamy is bad by showing the divorces of monogamous individuals who wished to take another wife, and had no other choice due to the prohibition of polygamy, by exhibiting the social problems caused by women who cannot marry due to the prohibition of polygamy, or by showcasing various problems observed in monogamous households. In short, for every polygamous household that has had problems, one could certainly find a monogamous household that has also had issues.

This other demonstration of the bad nature of monogamy is not valid, just as proving on the same principle that polygamy is bad. Moreover, one would forget that African and Eastern societies have been polygamous for centuries.

There are Christians who believe that it is the Spirit of God who has revealed to them that polygamy is forbidden, even though they received this teaching from their church. Therefore, for them, anyone who thinks otherwise should pray to be enlightened by the spirit that has enlightened them.

Regarding receiving the Spirit, I thank God, for after having been what I call in my article on sin a “Christian Pharisee,” I introduced into my daily prayer this supplication: “Give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation in Your knowledge.” I always ask God for this. Since then, I have begun to understand the things of God better. It is unfortunate that people consider a teaching they received as a revelation from the Spirit.

This argument by the Spirit is very troublesome because I have realised that it is the basis of brainwashing in many false churches. You can be told anything. If you doubt, you are explained that it is because you have not received the Spirit and are in sin. Thus, out of fear of being seen as not having received the Spirit, one accepts everything. I prefer to be considered as not having received the Spirit in order to defend the word of God and not the interpretations of men.

I feel that some judge themselves as more righteous and wiser than God. He who legislated it at a certain time (for them it has never been good) would have done so out of love or understanding (they reproach Him for this love and cannot understand this understanding).

Those who do not like polygamy have every right to their opinion. Those who believe it is bad also have every right. Let them express this as their opinion, and that is all! In this sense, everyone is free to consider it as "not advisable," just as many people consider monogamous marriage not advisable. Everyone is free in their opinion.

Finally, let me be clear. I neither recommend nor discourage polygamy. Everyone is free before God, according to what they consider to be God's will for them, to make their choice. I know that any extreme ideology generally opposes the love of God. This is what Jesus taught us through His examples (see my article on sin).

Let us remember this text from the Apostle:

- **Acts 15:28-29:** "For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well."

And these words of Jesus:

- **Matthew 11:30:** "For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Those who want to recommend monogamy are free to do so, but to make polygamy a divine prohibition, it is better to say that it is a personal opinion and not the teaching of the Bible.

Should we prohibit polygamy because of the following text?

- **1 Corinthians 10:23-24:** "All things are lawful for me, but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not. Let no man seek his own, but every man another's wealth."

I agree. I think it is better for a sister who has not been able to have an early marriage to become a second wife rather than a mistress. Thus, she will have fulfilled the counsel to

marry rather than burn. It is good to consider things on a case-by-case basis, in the love and justice of God.

## Conclusion

Let each one do as he has agreed with his spouse, in the freedom we have. It is very easy when one is satisfied to explain how the hungry can live without eating. It is easy for married women to explain to others that they should not accept a polygamous marriage and should not be mistresses to married men, even though they have passed the age to easily hope for a monogamous marriage.

This is a message that does not resonate and leads to social transgressions and unparalleled hypocrisy in churches.

God is Love; the love and justice of God surpass all forms of extremist ideology. We must know this.

I clarify here that the purpose of this article is not to compare polygamy with monogamy to say which is better but solely to determine whether polygamy is forbidden according to the Bible. The comparison of the two systems is the subject of many other debates and articles. My opinion on the matter is that there is no inherently better option at all times and in an absolute sense. If in a country there are far too many women compared to men on a societal scale, polygamy will certainly solve more problems than monogamy. If someone chooses polygamy and manages their household poorly, they will certainly encounter many problems.

I recommend that the reader consult my article on the definition of sin to better understand the love of God and the nature of sin. Its content may be as shocking as hearing a Christian say that polygamy is not forbidden, but let us remain grounded in the scriptures, without bias, and the rest will follow.

May God enlighten us.

**For more information**, here is the link to the web page to access all social networks where you can follow us: <https://telegra.ph/Liens-vers-mes-publications-chretiennes-10-08> There you will find how to access documents, audios, and videos for clarifications on what is here or to deepen your knowledge. You will also find a model of repentance prayer and for inviting Jesus Christ into your life. You can also contact us for guidance on your repentance if you wish.

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