

# Presbyterianism 101

ALL TO GOD'S GLORY:  
Marriage and Church  
(WCF 24-25)

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## The Christian Life: Marriage

- **New Section of WCF:** Largely focused on the means of grace
- **Marriage is Society's fundamental institution**
- **Marriage is Picture of Christ's relationship to His church**

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## What & Why Marriage (24.1-2)

- 1. Marriage is to be between one man and one woman: neither is it lawful for any man to have more than one wife, nor for any woman to have more than one husband, at the same time.*
- 2. Marriage was ordained for the mutual help of husband and wife, for the increase of mankind with legitimate issue, and of the church with an holy seed; and for preventing of uncleanness.*

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## What & Why Marriage (24.1-2)

- **Fourfold Purpose of Marriage (24.2)**

- Mutual Help
- Increase of Mankind
- Increase of Church
- Prevention of Uncleaness

- **State has duty, interest to protect marriage**

- **Marriage is instituted as a contract between two people for life**

## Why May, May Not Marry? (24.4-5)

*It is lawful for all sorts of people to marry, who are able with judgment to give their consent. Yet it is the duty of Christians to marry only in the Lord. And therefore such as profess the true reformed religion should not marry with infidels, papists, or other idolaters: neither should such as are godly be unequally yoked, by marrying with such as are notoriously wicked in their life, or maintain damnable heresies.*

## Why May, May Not Marry? (24.3-4)

*Marriage ought not to be within the degrees of consanguinity or affinity forbidden by the Word. Nor can such incestuous marriages ever be made lawful by any law of man or consent of parties, so as those persons may live together as man and wife.*

### Why May, May Not Marry? (24.3-4)

- **All people who can give consent may marry**
  - State may not forbid certain classes, ethnicities, castes from intermarrying
  - People may *not* marry their close kin even if his/her surname is Habsburg or Coburg...
- **American version softens this by removing prohibition re: marrying of one's wife's kindred**



### Why May, May Not Marry? (24.4-5)

- **Christians may not marry unbelievers**
- **2 Corinthians 6:14-16**, *Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. For what partnership has righteousness with lawlessness? Or what fellowship has light with darkness? What accord has Christ with Belial? Or what portion does a believer share with an unbeliever? What agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; as God said, "I will make my dwelling among them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."*

### Divorce (24.5-6)

*Adultery or fornication committed after a contract, being detected before marriage, giveth just occasion to the innocent party to dissolve that contract. In the case of adultery after marriage, it is lawful for the innocent party to sue out a divorce: and, after the divorce, to marry another, as if the offending party were dead.*

### Divorce (24.5-6)

*Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage: yet, nothing but adultery, or such willful desertion as can no way be remedied by the church, or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills, and discretion, in their own case*

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### Divorce (24.5-6)

- **Marriage is Ordinarily a Contract for Life**
  - Warning against seeking excuse to escape marriage contract (25.6)
  - (Death,) Adultery, Desertion the grounds to dissolve a marriage
- **May a divorced person who becomes a Christian later in life re-marry in the Lord?**

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### Divorce (24.5-6)

- **Adultery** (cf. Matt 19): grounds for divorce
    - Remarriage for “innocent party” is permissible
    - Divorce is not required if reconciliation is possible
- “The breakdown of a marriage [is] such a destructive thing, the husband and wife should not be left to make the decision themselves. They ought to seek wise counsel from both the church and the magistrate, and then they out to pay attention to it...since marriage is an orderly public declaration, there should be an orderly public attempt to mend marriages by the church and civil government” (Chad Van Dixhoorn)

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## Divorce (24.5-6)

- **Desertion by an unbeliever**

- Paul is not encouraging Christians to desert spouses
- What about imprisonment, drug abuse?
- What about physical abuse, sexual abuse of children?

## The Christian Life: the Church

- **What do we mean by *church*?**

- **Church catholic vs. Catholic Church**

- The word *catholic* simply means *universal*
- The Church of Rome is not part of the catholic church because of their doctrine of the Church

**I Peter 2.9-10**, *But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

## The Invisible Church (25.1)

*The catholic or universal church, which is invisible, consists of the whole number of the elect, that have been, are, or shall be gathered into one, under Christ the Head thereof; and is the spouse, the body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all.*

## The Invisible Church (25.1)

- **Full Number of God's People:** all nations, ages
  - No true member missing; the perfect church
  - Visible only in glory

**Ephesians 5:27**, *so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish*

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## The Invisible Church (25.1)

- **Universal Church:** transcends all other works of God in excellence

**Eph. 1:22-23**, *And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.*

“As if a father should say, ‘my house seems empty to me when I do not see my child in it.’ A husband will say, ‘I seem only half a man when my wife is not with me.’ After the same manner God says that He does not consider himself full and perfect except by gathering us to himself and by making us all one with himself” (J. Calvin)

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## The Invisible Church (25.1)

- **Why “Invisible”**
  - Only partly visible, even visible outlines are uncertain
  - Many appear to be part of it, but not truly

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## The Visible Church (25.2)

*The visible church, which is also catholic or universal under the gospel (not confined to one nation, as before under the law), consists of all those throughout the world that profess the true religion; and of their children: and is the kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ, the house and family of God, out of which there is no ordinary possibility of salvation.*

## The Visible Church (25.2)

- **Membership:** those who are members of *invisible* church *will* seek out membership in *visible* church
  - Letters of NT largely written to churches, pastors
  - Believers and their children

- **Why Children:** born church members by virtue of birth or adoption into believing household

**1 Cor 7:13-15,** *If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy...*

## The Visible Church (25.2)

- **Commanded, Called to Gather**
  - Old Covenant: Light (Cf. Psa 100, Isa. 49:6)
  - New Covenant: Light to the world (cf. Matt 5)

**Luke 24:46-47,** *and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*

## The Visible Church (25.2)

- **Outside of the Visible Church:** no *ordinary* possibility of salvation
  - The Church is the household, family of God
  - Rejection of Christ's bride, Christ's body is rejection of Christ
- **Membership in the Visible Church is to publicly proclaim, name, identify with Christ**

## The Visible Church (25.2)

- **Trans-National Institution**
  - Unlike Old Covenant Church
  - Impossible to have full union with all churches
- **Kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ:** not the fullness of Kingdom of God, but its visible expression

**Matt 13:47-50,** *Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and gathered fish of every kind. When it was full, men drew it ashore and sat down and sorted the good into containers but threw away the bad. So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous and throw them into the fiery furnace. In that place there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.*

## Gifts to the Church (25.3)

*Unto this catholic visible church Christ hath given the ministry, oracles, and ordinances of God, for the gathering and perfecting of the saints, in this life, to the end of the world: and doth, by his own presence and Spirit, according to his promise, make them effectual thereunto.*



### Gifts to the Church (25.3)

- **Christ has given the Church all she needs to accomplish her mission**
  - When the church needs more than what Christ has provided, she has transcended her mission
  - Oracles: Scripture
  - Ordinances: preaching, sacraments, prayer, teaching
  - Purpose: Gather the elect from out of the world, perfect the saints who have been gathered
- **Success Guaranteed**

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### Purity of the Church (24.4)

*This catholic church hath been sometimes more, sometimes less visible. And particular churches, which are members thereof, are more or less pure, according as the doctrine of the gospel is taught and embraced, ordinances administered, and public worship performed more or less purely in them.*

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### Purity of the Church (24.4)

- **Church at War:** rooting out bad doctrine, conformed to the word
- **Marks of the Church:**
  - WCF: Preaching, Sacraments, Worship
  - Alternative: Word, Sacraments, Discipline
- **Never be surprised by shenanigans:** but always be praying for Christ's church

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## The Church Will Never Perish (25.5)

*The purest churches under heaven are subject both to mixture and error; and some have so degenerated, as to become no churches of Christ, but synagogues of Satan. Nevertheless, there shall be always a church on earth, to worship God according to his will.*

## The Church Will Never Perish (25.5)

- **There will always be error in the visible Church**
- **Some churches do degenerate so far as they are no longer churches of Christ**
  - Corinthian Standard
  - There will always be a remnant on earth to worship the True and Living God

## Christ the Head (25.6)

*Although the corruption of man be such as is apt to study arguments unduly to put asunder those whom God hath joined together in marriage: yet nothing but adultery, or such wilful desertion as can no way be remedied by the Church or civil magistrate, is cause sufficient of dissolving the bond of marriage: wherein, a public and orderly course of proceeding is to be observed; and the persons concerned in it not left to their own wills and discretion, in their own case.*

## Christ the Head (25.6)

*There is no other head of the church but the Lord Jesus Christ. Nor can the pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof.*

## Christ the Head (25.6)

*There is no other head of the Church, but the Lord Jesus Christ; nor can the Pope of Rome, in any sense, be head thereof; but is that Antichrist, that man of sin, and son of perdition, that exalteth himself, in the Church, against Christ and all that is called God.*

## Christ the Head (25.6)

- **Various Usurpers of Christ's Headship**

- Church of England, Rome, Constantine
- "Vicar of Christ," "Supreme Pontiff," Papa

- **Christ is the King and Head of the Church**

*Col 1:17-19, And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell...*