



Marriage Need Not Be Oppressive to Anyone

Editorial Comment by Warren Krug

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In 1972 a scholar named Jessie Bernard, after some research, published a book titled *The Future of Marriage*.

Her findings suggested to her and many others that married women were more depressed than married men or than single women. Also, married men were less depressed than bachelors.

This book helped establish the belief of many feminists that marriage was bad for women and that men got more out of it.

Despite some studies showing different results, the belief that marriage is bad for women, good for men, has persisted.

Recently, the largest study ever to investigate the relationship between marriage and emotional problems has been concluded. The results were published in an Australian magazine called *Family Matters*.

Briefly stated, Bernard and her feminist colleagues again have been shown to be wrong. Men and women in marriage have the same rates of mental disorders, just different disorders.

David De Vaus, the professor of sociology who led the study, says Bernard went wrong because she focused largely on typical female disorders—*anxiety, depression, and phobias*. She ignored problems that are more common with men—*drug and alcohol abuse, for instance*.

De Vaus' study involved interviews with 10,641 Australian adults. They were evaluated according to World Health Organization definitions of disorders.

His results: mental illness was found in 16% of both married women and married men and 25% of both divorced men and divorced women.

For single people, 22% of the women and 26% of the men had problems.

Experts point out that in evaluating these figures, one must keep in mind that people with emotional problems might be less likely to get or to stay married.

For Christians, there is no need for either party in a marriage to feel oppressed if both observe God's laws and promises.

Remembering that marriage is a divine institution (Gen. 1-2), Christian wives will respect the headship of their husbands (Eph. 5:23) and Christian husbands will love their wives as the Lord loves the church (Eph. 5:25). In such a godly marriage, there is no room for oppression or depression. *LSI*

Warren Krug, editor