

THEOLOGY OF MARRIAGE IN GENESIS TWO AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR PRE-MARITAL COUNSELLING

Joshua Akinropo AKINOLA

The Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary, Ogbomoso

Phone: +2348032232934/+2348153699360 **Email:** psychodejosh@gmail.com

ARTICLE INFO

Article No.: 018

Accepted Date: 6/06/2025

Published Date: 06/07/2025

Type: Research

ABSTRACT

This paper examined the theology of marriage in Genesis 2 and how it impacts premarital counselling within the Christian ideology, through biblical principles for marital harmony. Using a theological and doctrinal dimension, the paper analysed Genesis 2 narrative and its relevance to modern Christian marriage. It also reviewed existing literature, scriptural interpretations, and current views on premarital counselling. The study revealed that Genesis 2 presented marriage as a divine institution, which was instituted by God for man companionship, procreation, and spiritual fulfilment. It further emphasized that marriage should be between a man and a woman (heterosexual) and should be monogamous, not polygamous. It also suggested that God's will for humanity is to form unions through marriage to prevent loneliness. In addition, premarital counselling, that is rooted in these biblical principles, empowers couples with communication skills, emotional and spiritual readiness, and conflict resolution strategies, which contribute to the stability and success of Christian marriages. Premarital counselling that is based on Genesis 2 can also address common misconceptions, such as the importance of marriage preparation, thereby providing a framework for understanding marriage as a sacred, lifelong commitment. It was concluded that the implications for premarital counselling derived from Genesis 2 are important for guiding couples toward building a God-centred marriage. The findings recommended that pastors and counsellors should uphold biblical teachings as foundational in their guidance, to ensure a healthier, and more enduring marriages within the Christian household.

Keywords: Theology of Marriage, Premarital Counselling, Genesis 2, Biblical Marriage, Principles, Monogamy and Heterosexual Marriage

INTRODUCTION

Marriage is one of the most central and important human relationships, influencing nearly every facet of life. Its success or failure has far-reaching effects on individuals and society. Yet, despite its significance, many people enter into marriage without a proper understanding of its purpose and principles. Marriage is often seen as an inevitable step in life; however, the absence of preparation or the presence of misguided expectations can result in serious difficulties.

In contemporary societies, marriage faces various challenges. In African Christian communities, for instance, young people struggle with the pressures and expectations of marriage, often influenced by cultural values, societal norms, and personal misconceptions. Ayankeye observes that one of the most pressing issues within the African church today is the difficulty young people experience in entering successful marriages this challenge is often rooted in a lack of proper understanding of marriage and its roles (Ayankeye 8). These misconceptions include distorted views on gender roles, the purpose of marriage, and sexual relationships, leading to unhealthy unions. Some individuals even enter relationships based on same-sex attraction, incest, or even exploitative dynamics, all of which deviate from the biblical understanding of marriage.

Furthermore, marriage preparation often takes a backseat to other topics like financial success, prosperity, and personal healing. In many cases, people do not sufficiently consider the emotional, spiritual, and relational aspects of marriage. Fowers and Olson draw attention to this phenomenon, noting that marriage, though omnipresent and vital, is often taken for granted like oxygen, it is essential but rarely discussed until problems arise (Fowers and Olson 406).

Problem Statement

The lack of adequate premarital counseling is a significant factor contributing to the instability of many marriages. This gap in preparation is especially troubling given that marriage is a lifelong commitment with profound social, emotional, and spiritual implications. In Africa, where marriage is seen as a fundamental cultural and spiritual milestone, many young people enter marriage without the necessary guidance, leading to misunderstandings and struggles. The challenges in the youth's marital decisions stem from a lack of biblical teaching on marriage, inadequate counseling, and the perpetuation of harmful societal norms. Without proper premarital counseling, couples are ill-prepared to handle the complexities of marital life, which leads to increasing rates of divorce and marital dissatisfaction. This study seeks to address these challenges by exploring how premarital counseling, based on biblical principles from Genesis 2, can provide a solid foundation for successful, lasting marriages.

Biblical Relevance

Marriage, as understood in biblical terms, is not a man-made institution but a divine creation. The Bible clearly outlines marriage as a sacred union between a man and a woman, designed by God for companionship, procreation, and spiritual fulfilment. Genesis 2 provides the foundational theological framework for Christian marriage, presenting it as a divinely ordained institution. In this passage, God creates woman as a helper suitable for man, emphasizing the complementary nature of the union. This biblical model of marriage, characterized by

monogamy, heterosexuality, and mutual commitment, serves as the ideal standard for Christian marriages. However, when this divine framework is misunderstood or ignored, the institution of marriage suffers. The theological perspective on marriage not only shapes individual relationships but also forms the basis for effective premarital counselling, which prepares couples for a God-centered marriage.

Contemporary Relevance:

In contemporary society, the importance of premarital counselling cannot be overstated. Many marriages fail because couples enter into them without adequate preparation. Collins identifies the lack of premarital counselling as a major contributor to the instability of marriages (Collins 5). Effective premarital counselling provides couples with the tools necessary for healthy communication, conflict resolution, and emotional readiness. However, despite its importance, premarital counselling is often overlooked, particularly in many Christian contexts where topics such as healing and prosperity are more commonly emphasized. This oversight is problematic, as it leaves couples unprepared for the challenges of married life. The statistics show that marriage stability is on the decline, with fewer couples reaching long-lasting marital milestones. Glass highlights that while 90% of couples married in the 1940s reached their 10-year anniversary, only 70% of those married in the 1980s did the same (Glass 5). This decline underscores the critical need for premarital counselling rooted in biblical principles to guide couples in forming lasting, healthy marriages. Stahmann and Hiebert stress that premarital counselling is designed to help couples build strong, healthy relationships that will lead to lasting marriages (Stahmann and Hiebert 7).

Aim of Paper

This paper aims to explore the theology of marriage in Genesis 2 and its implications for premarital counselling. By examining the biblical foundation for marriage, particularly the principles outlined in Genesis 2, the paper will demonstrate how these teachings can be applied to guide couples in their premarital counselling. The paper will argue that premarital counselling based on these biblical principles can provide couples with the communication skills, emotional readiness, and spiritual understanding needed to build strong, enduring marriages. Furthermore, it will highlight the importance of premarital counselling in addressing contemporary challenges in marriage, such as misconceptions about marital roles and the increasing prevalence of marital instability.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Biblical Foundation of Marriage

Marriage is never man-made institution but God's. It is not man that designed marriage for but God did for mankind. Oladejo opines that marriage is God's idea from the beginning and God intended that through marriage, there would be family (Oladejo 4). This is corroborated by Seager who views that marriage is the centerpiece of God's design for mankind, and has been the primary societal building block from the beginning of history (Seager 7). Also, marriage can be viewed as the lifelong union that guarantees sexual relationship between a man and a woman whose consents are authorized by the cultural and religious beliefs of whatever community they belong (Taylor 171). Legally, marriage is a bond between a mature man and

woman who promise to live together as husband and wife either for life or until the relationship is terminated by law (Ogunsola 8). Once marriage has taken place, the legal status of the parties involved changes, giving husband and wife new rights and obligations (Stewart 345). Ogunsola argues that marriage should be viewed from its cultural context owing to the fact that societies differ in their emphases on different aspects of marriage, hence “marriage cannot just be ‘fitted into’ or extracted from the cultural situation” (Ogunsola 14)

There are arguments for the redefining of marriage within the space of equality and liberty “from the union of a man and a woman to the union of any two persons”. Some scholars also argue that the definition of marriage must include other forms of marital relationships such as trial marriage or polygamy other than the traditional view of marriage as a lifelong union between a man and woman (Feinberg, 313). Nwogugu also submits that marriage is a social construct between a man and a woman that accords them legal, sexual, emotional and economic unity and creates an environment where children are born and raised by the couple (Nwogugu 24). Sequel to the above views of marriage, this study upholds the view of marriage as a lifelong heterosexual relationship designed by God for mankind. One common defense of the universal moral prescription position is that “the man” mentioned in 2:18 is generic, representing the entire class of human beings rather than a specific individual. It is necessary then to carefully study the translation of the instances of Adam, the Hebrew word translated variously as “a man”, “the man” or “Adam” in the articular form, in order to establish its true semantic and syntactical force. Of particular importance is the specific role of the Hebrew article, not only in 2:18, but also in the preceding context provided in chapters 1 and 2:1–17. It must be determined whether the article used with Adam at each point in the narrative is definite or generic. Waltke & O’Connor define the generic article as referring to “not a particular single person or thing but a class of persons, things or qualities that are unique and determined in themselves.” They add, “Sometimes the class is regarded as a unity, while at other times an individual within the species. One common defense of the universal moral prescription position is that “the man” mentioned in 2:18 is generic, representing the entire class of human beings rather than a specific individual. It is necessary then to carefully study the translation of the instances of adam, the Hebrew word translated variously as “a man”, “the man” or “Adam” in the articular form, in order to establish its true semantic and syntactical force. Of particular importance is the specific role of the Hebrew article, not only in 2:18, but also in the preceding context provided in chapters 1 and 2:1–17. It must be determined whether the article used with Adam at each point in the narrative is definite or generic.

Premarital Counselling and Its Importance

Counselling is a profession dedicated to helping individuals or groups cope with the challenges of life. It encompasses moral, spiritual, and material support provided by a trained individual or community. The primary goal is to guide individuals in overcoming difficulties and making informed decisions. Collins defines counselling as an act of offering encouragement and guidance to those facing challenges, whether related to loss, decision-making, or disappointment (Collins 3). Furthermore, counselling serves as a “helping relationship,” promoting personal growth by enabling individuals to cope with life’s concerns more effectively (Collins 5). Through counselling, individuals gain the tools necessary for managing life's hurdles, fostering emotional and psychological development.

Pastoral Counselling

Pastoral counselling is a specialized form of counselling grounded in biblical principles and theological views. It is a subset of pastoral care, aimed at helping individuals address life's existential and spiritual challenges. Waruta & Kinoti describe pastoral counselling as a ministry focused on providing biblical guidance to individuals facing various life challenges (Waruta & Kinoti 28). Pastors trained in counselling are equipped to use biblical teachings to help individuals find solutions to their personal and spiritual problems. The primary aim of pastoral counselling is to help individuals develop coping mechanisms that promote personal and spiritual maturity, guiding them through life's difficulties with biblical wisdom.

Premarital Counselling

Premarital counselling, a form of pastoral counselling, specifically targets the preparation of couples for marriage. The term *premarital* refers to the period before marriage, addressing the issues that couples should consider and understand in preparation for their marital life. Collins defines *premarital* as occurring before marriage (Collins 6), while Hornby explains it as "happening before marriage" (Hornby 1153). In the context of this study, premarital counselling refers to the process by which couples, with the guidance of trained counsellors, gain a healthy understanding of Christian marriage. Through this process, couples are equipped to make informed decisions about their future together; while also learning to navigate the challenges, they may face in marriage.

Premarital counselling helps couples develop the skills needed for a successful marriage, including communication, conflict resolution, and emotional readiness. Cobbinah and Osei-Tutu emphasize that premarital counselling equips couples with the initial tools needed to begin their marriage on solid ground, which can also help address minor relationship issues that may arise in the future (Cobbinah & Osei-Tutu 8). Moreover, premarital counselling encourages couples to explore their motivations for marriage, including building a family, strengthening commitment, and creating a shared future together.

The Importance of Premarital Counselling

The primary goal of premarital counselling is to help couples better understand their motivations for marriage and how to navigate the complexities of marital life. By engaging in premarital counselling, couples gain insights into their own needs, desires, and relationship expectations. Shahid highlights that premarital counselling helps couples address important questions about their lives together, including communication, conflict resolution, and long-term goals (Shahid 7). It aids couples in recognizing what they want from their partnership and developing strategies tailored to their unique relationship dynamics. This process also focuses on building trust, de-escalating conflicts, and establishing clear communication channels to foster a healthy, long-lasting relationship.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study of marriage and its principles is guided by multiple theoretical perspectives, including both secular and biblical frameworks. One key theory in understanding marriage relationships, particularly in premarital counselling, is the Bowen Family Systems Theory, proposed by Murray Bowen in 1966. Bowen's theory posits that individuals' behaviours and

relationships are deeply influenced by their family dynamics, particularly patterns of emotional interactions, which are learned early in life. It emphasizes the interdependence between family members and how unresolved emotional issues from one generation affect subsequent generations. Key tenets of this theory include differentiation of self, triangulation, and family projection processes.

In the context of premarital counselling, Bowen's theory can be applied by recognizing how family background and early experiences influence couples' expectations and behaviours in their relationships. For instance, a couple's understanding of marriage might be shaped by family dynamics and emotional responses learned during childhood. Applying this theory in premarital counselling can help couples become more self-aware and develop healthier emotional patterns. It aids in recognizing and addressing emotional reactivity, unhealthy patterns, and unresolved conflicts from their family of origin that could impact their marital relationship.

Furthermore, biblical marriage principles, especially those from Genesis 2, complement Bowen's theory by providing a divine model for marriage based on mutual respect, monogamy, and lifelong commitment. Genesis 2 highlights God's design for marriage, one man and one woman in a complementary and cooperative partnership. This biblical perspective reinforces the need for emotional differentiation within the marriage while also emphasizing the spiritual and emotional interdependence required in a God-centered relationship.

Application to the Present Study

This study integrates Bowen Family Systems Theory with the biblical theology of marriage to offer a comprehensive approach to premarital counselling. The theory's focus on emotional systems within families can help explain how individuals' past experiences shape their expectations of marriage. Meanwhile, Genesis 2 provides the biblical foundation for understanding marriage as a divine and harmonious partnership, where each partner fulfills their roles and responsibilities in a way that reflects God's intent. By applying Bowen's theory alongside biblical principles, premarital counselling can guide couples to develop healthier emotional patterns, identify dysfunctional behaviours, and understand the divine blueprint for marriage. This approach aligns with the core aim of the study: to prepare couples for successful, God-centered marriages rooted in biblical truth and emotional health.

METHODOLOGY

The present study is qualitative in nature and explored the theology of marriage found in Genesis chapter 2 creation account and its significance for premarital counselling among Christians. Using content analysis, this study examined a theological and doctrinal study of Gen. 2 and the biblical rationale for divine intention regarding marriage. It relied on secondary sources such as the scriptural text itself, a theological text, commentaries and previous studies of Christian marriage and premarital counselling. Context for understanding Genesis 2 was provided through an extensive review of theological writings, scholarly journals, books on marriage, premarital counselling, and biblical studies. Traditional and contemporary views on marriage, monogamy, heterosexuality, and premarital counselling within Christianity were

reviewed. Finally, the study derived theological principles from Genesis chapter 2 and examined their application within premarital counselling curriculum.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The analysis of Genesis 2 reveals foundational principles of marriage, such as monogamy, heterosexuality, and companionship. These principles are consistent with both Bowen Family Systems Theory and Biblical Marriage Principles. The findings suggest that premarital counselling, rooted in these biblical teachings, helps couples build stronger, healthier marriages. This discussion examines how understanding these principles can enhance Christian marriage preparation and address common misconceptions.

Bowen Family Systems Theory proposes that individuals' behaviours in relationships are often shaped by emotional patterns from their family of origin (Bowen, 372). In the context of premarital counselling, this theory suggests that emotional dynamics learned in the family of origin influence how individuals approach marriage. For instance, couples may bring unresolved emotional patterns or unhealthy relationship behaviours from their families into their marriages. Understanding this emotional reactivity can help couples differentiate themselves and create healthier relational patterns.

The discussion now shifts to applying these insights from both Bowen's theory and biblical marriage principles to Genesis 2, which provides the blueprint for Christian marriage. The biblical text is not only about the divine design for marriage but also about emotional interdependence, aligning with Bowen's emphasis on understanding relational dynamics.

Theology of marriage in Genesis Chapter Two

Genesis is a Greek word that means “source”, “origin”, or “beginning.” It comes from the first phrase of Genesis one verse one: “in the beginning” (Bereshith, in Hebrew Language) (Kohlenberger 6). The book of Genesis is a book of beginnings (Kirkpatrick 36), from the creation of the universe through the patriarchal era of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and his sons, the founding fathers of the people of Israel.

Kirkpatrick opines that the Book of Genesis contains, in outline, the preliminary materials of the sacred history, previous to the call of Moses. These preliminary materials fall into two easily recognized divisions: (1) the Primaeval History of Mankind (chapter. 1-11.), and (2) the History of the Hebrew Patriarchs (chapters. 12-50.) (Kirkpatrick 5). According to Kirkpatrick, these two divisions may, for clearness' sake, be subdivided as follows: I. Primaeval History and Narratives respecting (i) The Origin of the World and of the Human Race (chapters. 1-5.). (ii) The Flood (chapters. 6.-9). (iii) The Primitive Races before the call of Abraham (chapters. 10, 11) (Kirkpatrick 8).

The book Genesis hosts also the beginning of marriage and copulation. In the book of Genesis, it reads that God in the beginning created first a man (Adam) to exercise dominion over his creation and subsequently a woman (Eve) as the man's “suitable helper” (Genesis 2:18, 20). According to Bowen, emotional connection and differentiation are key aspects of a healthy relationship. The biblical idea that it is “not good for man to be alone” reflects both a theological

and emotional truth—God created marriage to meet the emotional needs of companionship, which Bowen's theory reinforces by emphasizing how individuals' family dynamics impact their emotional needs in marriage. There are principles in Genesis two which Christian marriages can operate if those marriages should be credited to be godly. The principles are discussed below:

A. God's Factor in Marriage

Marriage is the centerpiece of God's design for mankind, and has been the primary societal building block from the beginning of history (Seager 13). It is first introduced in Scripture immediately after creation in the second chapter of the Bible, and that it was not the man, Adam, who asked for the wife, but God introduced the needfulness of wife, and then God made it happened. Agana corroborates this and submits that the Genesis account provides useful context for the introduction of marriage as a human institution by God (Agana 99). This is revealed in the passage below (Genesis 2:18-22):

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals. But for Adam no suitable helper was found. So, the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man".

The passage above suggests and affirmed the fact that marriage was never the man's intention but God's. It was not only God's intention for mankind but he eventuated it. Therefore, God is the prime originator of the institution called marriage

B. It is Not Good for Man to Live Alone

Six times at the creation, God examined his works and declared it was good. "Then God saw everything that he had made, and indeed it was very good." (Genesis 1:31). The story was not the same after he created man, his positive assessment went up another notch: "The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." (Genesis 2:18). God made his view about the state of man, Adam, known that it is not good for man to live alone. This suggests two things: God was displeased with man's loneliness; and that man may not be able to activate the blessing placed on him by God after he had been made, without a woman.

"So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them," Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Genesis 1:27-28

Agana points out that one common defense of the universal moral prescription position is that "the man" mentioned in 2:18 is generic, representing the entire class of human beings rather than a specific individual. It is then necessary to carefully study the translation of the instances

of Adam, the Hebrew word translated variously as “a man”, “the man” or “Adam” in the articular form, in order to establish its true semantic and syntactical force (Agana 101). Waltke and O’Connor define the generic article as referring to “not a particular single person or thing but a class of persons, things or qualities that are unique and determined in themselves (Waltke and O’Connor 8).” They add, “Sometimes the class is regarded as a unity, while at other times an individual within the species. The above proves that God is not pleased with humankind to be living alone without a soul mate united in marriage. Also, the man in the context is generic and not particularly referring to Adam alone.

C. Marriage is Heterosexual but Not Homosexual

In light of the rapid moral and cultural changes in the West, one of which has been the redefining of marriage, in recent years it has become popular for biblical interpreters to turn to the Bible for approval of these seismic shifts in the landscape of the family structure and sexuality. In some cases, those who have made the decision to pursue a same-sex lifestyle, preferably including the option to get married, still desire to remain within the Christian tradition (Brian 684). Based on these personal experiences, every one of the oft-cited anti-same-sex texts has been “reimagined,” “reinterpreted,” or “set aside” in order to push forward an affirming agenda (Brownson 12). One text in particular, Gen 2:18–25, has been the focus of affirming scholars in their efforts to find validity for same-sex marriage.

Regardless of the changing views, culture and moral stance of marriage, the position of this paper is that the biblical standard of marriage, which is heterosexual but not homosexual remains valid. “So, God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them” (Genesis 1:27). Also, “Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man”. (Genesis 2:22). This indicates that if God was interested in homosexuality, another man instead of woman would have been to establish same sex marriage rather than marriage of different sex.

D. Monogamy, Not Polygamy

God is interested, by what he did, in monogamy but not in polygamy. This made him to “extract” a woman but not more than a woman, from the man’s ribs. If God wanted a man to marry more than one, he would have molded it from the onset of marriage. “So, the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.” This indicates and signals strong interest of God in Monogamy but not polygama or polyandry. Significant evidence that the Bible presents monogamy as God’s blueprint or original plan for marriage exists and that God’s original intention or blueprint for marriage, according to the Bible was monogamy which encompasses marital monogamy, social monogamy, sexual monogamy, and genetic monogamy, all overlapping (Aguboshim 274).

E. Leaving for Cleaving to Become One Flesh

“That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:24). This verse sets forth the biblical pattern as it was instituted by God at the beginning: one man is united to one woman in matrimony, and the two form one new natural family. In this regard, “become one flesh” not only refers to the establishment of one new family but also to the husband and wife’s sexual union leading to the procreation of offspring. In the same vein, Keil and Delitzsch opine that “my bone and my flesh” is a common Hebrew idiom to show close kinship (Keil and Delitzsch 12) This, in turn, is in keeping with God’s original command to the first human couple to “be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion” over all of creation (Genesis 1:28).

Leaving, which connotes forsaking or losing, comes before cleaving, which implies cling or keep close. According to Albrecht and Nass, this means that marriage must come before intercourse and it certainly includes the aspect of sexual intercourse but the concept of “one flesh” includes a unity and harmony of spirit and emotions which goes beyond the physical relationship and actually serves to make the physical love much deeper and more meaningful (Albrecht and Nass 23)

Implication for Premarital Counselling

Premarital counselling is an immunization function that boosts the partners capabilities to handle potential difficulties that may emerge later in the marriage life. This involves communication skills programs, assessment inventory tool to educate engaged couples in the habits and skills that lead to happy enduring marriages (Mobegi, Mokoro and Keri, 95). Premarital counselling gives people the benefit of a supportive environment, the skills to deal with the problems a marriage can have during a life time. The couples acquire real expectations, real knowledge of partner and self to face the marital conflicts of a happy relationship. Professional and religious counsellors present a list of skills and knowledge areas, essential to endurance of marriage. Communication skills, compatibility, long term goals, conflict resolution, expectation, intimacy and sexuality, and personalities are also covered by successful premarital counsellors.

Statistics show that two-thirds of planning to be married couples does not take any sort of premarital inventory (McManus and McManus, 202). This is corroborated by Norman’s view that most young people who are anticipating marriage do not seek premarital counselling services due to the fact that they fear that their secrets or information that they may divulge to the counselor may harm their relationship. Further, in the explanation it is purported that partners may not disclose their past relationship history (Norman 12). Additionally, couples also fear that exploring some issues in counselling may lead to decrease in their stability marriage, which may ultimately lead the intending couple to end their union.

Ultimately, premarital counselling is a choice. Even though young couples experience the fears outlined above, participating in premarital counselling sends positive messages to the couple (Murray 450). This makes premarital counselling an important aspect in their journey to the institution of marriage. Mobegi, and Mokoro, Keri document a number of benefits of

premarital counselling: premarital counselling encourages couples to slow down and deliberate about their impending marriage; it also helps the young couples to have in keen insight that marriage matters and is not a decision to be made hastily; next is that, premarital counselling helps intending couple to be well informed about options available for help later in their lives should they ever need to seek counselling for marriage problems; and finally, premarital counselling has shown that couples who partake in the counselling sessions are at low risk for marital conflicts such as divorce (Mobegi, Mokoro, and Kearsi 93). Mobegi, and Mokoro, Kearsi identifies five dimensions of premarital counselling. They are communication skill counselling, financial counselling, sexuality and biblical counselling (Mobegi, Mokoro, and Kearsi 94)

Genesis two hosts the beginning of marriage and has some principles for Christian marriage which should be upheld during premarital counselling. This will help the intending couple to have adequate understanding about God's standard of marriage and having an informed decision when the need arises. The period of premarital counselling is a section of cognitive, spiritual and social restructuring for better and godly expectation on marriage (Stanley, Markman, and Whitton 663). This orientation on godly marriage as found in Genesis two to be considered during premarital counselling as earlier mentioned include:

God's factor in Marriage: Premarital counsellor provides adequate and convincing information on the fact that God is the pillar of marriage because he is the originator of marriage institution as found in the book of Genesis two. Harry opines that book of Genesis, foundational sanctities are established such as the sanctity of marriage, the sanctity of family, the sanctity of creation, the sanctity of divine revelation, the sanctity of God and the Sabbath, the sanctity of work and property, the sanctity of gender, all of that is built and initiated out of the book of Genesis and then elucidated throughout the whole counsel of God in His Word. In marriage God's factor must not be overlooked (Harry 6).

The next thing is that God desires that it is not good to live alone. God was not pleased with Adam's lonely situation and thus made the woman, Eve out of him. The implication of this for premarital counselling is that God's will for every individual is to get married in order to fulfil God's purpose of companionship, procreation as well as glorifying God (to please God). The intending couple must be made to know and pursue this in their marriage and life'

Furthermore, the counsellor should intensify discuss on the fact that despite of the changing views, culture and moral stance of marriage, the biblical standard of marriage, which is heterosexual but not homosexual remains valid. Homosexuality is detesting to God and not be the pursuit of the intending couple at any time. "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them" (Genesis 1:27). Also, "Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man". (Genesis 2:22). This indicates that if God was interested in homosexuality, he would have made same sex individuals rather he made them of different sex. If God is interested in Homosexuality he would have created "homogender-mankind"

Additionally, it is imperative to include, during premarital counselling section that God is interested in monogamy and not in polygamy or polyandry. If otherwise, he would have created

multiple of women from and for the man, Adam or created woman, Eve, and created multiple men from and for the woman. Therefore, God made a woman for a man and vise vasa. This will enable the intending couple to have right and informed concept of marriage as far as monogamy and polygamy is concerned.

Finally, the implication of leaving and cleaving in during premarital counselling is to expose the would be couple to the fact that a new family entirely is formed by marriage. The word leaving means to forsake or loose which does not imply abandonment of one's parents or relation and cleaving means keep close (to the spouse). The verse, Genesis 2:24, sets forth the biblical pattern as it was instituted by God at the beginning: one man is united to one woman in matrimony, and the two form one new natural family. In this regard, "become one flesh" not only refers to the establishment of one new family but also to the husband and wife's sexual union leading to the procreation of offspring. It also means that marriage should precede sexual intercourse.

CONCLUSION

Premarital counselling is essential for individuals planning to marry, as it helps them make informed decisions about the various aspects of marriage, including personality, finances, social issues, and spirituality. This paper explored five key theological principles of marriage in Genesis 2 monogamy, heterosexuality, companionship, God's role in marriage, and the concept of leaving and cleaving and discussed how these principles can be applied in premarital counselling. By aligning premarital counselling with these biblical teachings, counsellors can guide couples toward healthier, more stable marriages.

The study reinforces the thesis that marriage, as defined in Genesis 2, provides a solid theological foundation for premarital counselling. This foundation helps couples prepare for the challenges of married life, ensuring that they build their relationships on the principles that God designed for marriage. This paper is recommended for counsellors, pastors, church leaders, youth, married individuals, parents, and other stakeholders involved in marriage affairs to promote godly marriages within the Christian community.

References

- Agana, A. N. "Is Marriage for All? A Theological Reflection on the Grammar of Genesis 2:18, 24." *Asia-Africa Journal of Mission and Ministry*, vol. 17, 2018, pp. 90–110.
- Aguboshim, F. C. "The Biblical Blueprint for Marriage and the Predicament of Polygamy: A Narrative." *World Journal of Advanced Research and Reviews*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2022, pp. 271–279.
- Albrecht, M. J., and T. P. Nass. *An Exegesis of Genesis 2:18–24: In Light of the Current Discussion on the Role of Man and Woman*. Michigan District Southwestern Conference, Pastoral Conference, 1981.
- Ayankeye, S. O. "Crisis and Factors Influencing Spouse Choice among Christian Youth in Southwest Nigeria." *International Journal of Innovative Social Sciences & Humanities Research*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2017, pp. 7–13.
- Bowen, M. "The use of family theory in clinical practice." *Comprehensive psychiatry* 7.5 (1966): 345-374.
- Brian, N. P. "Does Genesis 2 Support Same-Sex Marriage? An Evangelical Response." *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, vol. 60, no. 4, 2017, pp. 681–696.
- Brownson, James. *Bible, Gender, Sexuality: Reframing the Church's Debate on Same-Sex Relationships*. Eerdmans, 2013, pp. 11–13.
- Cobbinah, J. E., and E. M. Osei-Tutu. "Pre-Marital Counselling and Sustainability of Marriages in Contemporary Ghanaian Society." *International Journal of Political Activism and Engagement*, vol. 6, 2019.
- Collins, Gary R. *Christian Counselling: A Comprehensive Guide*. Thomas Nelson, 2007, p. 36.
- Collins, W. *English Dictionary – Complete & Unabridged*. 2nd digital ed., HarperCollins Publishers, 2012.
- Feinberg, Joel. "Exposing the Traditional Marriage Agenda." *Northwestern Journal of Law and Social Policy*, vol. 7, no. 2, 2012, pp. 301–351.
- Fowers, Blaine J., and David H. Olson. "Predicting Marital Success with PREPARE: A Predictive Validity Study." *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, vol. 12, no. 4, 1986, pp. 403–413.
- Glass, Shirley. *Not Just Friends: Protect Your Relationship from Infidelity and Heal the Trauma of Betrayal*. Free Press, 2003.
- Harry, L. *God's Blueprint in Biblical Perspective: Foundations from Genesis—Biblical Masculinity and Femininity and Singleness*. 2022.
- Hornby, A. S. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary: International Student's Edition*. Oxford UP, 2010, p. 1153.
- Keil, C. F., and F. Delitzsch. *Commentary on the Old Testament. Volume I, The Pentateuch*. Eerdmans, 1975.
- Kirkpatrick, A. F. *The Book of Genesis*. Cambridge UP, 1921, p. x.
- Kohlenberger, J. R. *Ministry Essential Bible: A Comprehensive Bible for Everyone in Leadership. King James Version*. Hendrickson Publishers, 2015, p. 1.
- McManus, M., and H. McManus. "How to Create an America That Saves Marriages." *Journal of Psychology*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2003, pp. 196–207.

- Mobegi, W. O., J. M. Mokoro, and J. D. Kears. "Pre-Marital Counselling and Marital Conflicts among Christian Couples in Sameta Sub County, Kisii County, Kenya." *International Journal of Recent Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IJRSSH)*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2016, pp. 91–99.
- Murray, C. "The Relative Influence of Client Characteristics on the Process and Outcomes of Premarital Counselling: A Survey of Providers." *Contemporary Family Therapy: An International Journal*, vol. 26, no. 4, 2004, pp. 447–463.
- Norman, W. H. *Marriage Counselling: A Practical Guide for Pastors and Counsellors*. 1995.
- Nwogugu, E. I. *Family Law in Nigeria*. HEBN Publishers, 2011.
- Ogunsola, M. "Abstinence from Premarital Sex: A Precursor to Quality Relationship and Marital Stability in Subsequent Marriage." *International Journal of Psychological Studies*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2012, www.ccsenet.org/journal/index.php/ijps/article/view/14762.
- Oladejo, O. B. "Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4–9; 11:13–21 and Its Implication for the Christian Family in Nigeria." *International Journal of Arts and Humanities*, vol. 1, 2016, p. 1.
- Seager, C. T. *A Biblical Foundation Counselling Strategy to Direct Couples to Become One Flesh in Marriage*. Liberty Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014.
- Shahid, A. *Premarital Counselling: Module of Premarital Counselling and Family Wellbeing for Service Providers*. 2020, p. 6, <https://fp2030.org/sites/default/files/Premarital%20module-final%20V6.pdf>.
- Stahmann, R. F., and J. H. William. *Premarital and Remarital Counselling: The Professional's Handbook*. Jossey-Bass, 1997.
- Stanley, S. M., H. J. Markman, and S. W. Whitton. "Communication, Conflict, and Commitment: Insights on the Foundations of Relationship Success from a National Survey." *Family Process*, vol. 42, 2002, pp. 659–675.
- Stewart, M. N. "Marriage Facts." *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, vol. 31, no. 1, 2008, pp. 313–369.
- Taylor, Howard. *Tend My Sheep*. University Press, 1994, pp. 171–172.
- Waltke, Bruce K., and M. O'Connor. *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax*. Eisenbrauns, 1990.
- Waruta, D. W., and W. H. Kinoti. *Pastoral Care in African Christianity: Challenging Essays in Pastoral Theology*. Action Publishers, 1994.