

Response by Summit Ministries

We really liked the simple analysis and practical warning in this short article by Summit Ministries of the SCOTUS decisions.

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Rapid Response: The Supreme Court's Decisions on Marriage

Today the United States Supreme Court announced its decisions on two of the most important cases it has heard in years: the federal Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA) and California's Proposition 8, both of which define marriage as the union between one man and woman. Its 5-4 decision to invalidate DOMA means the federal government will recognize same-sex marriages from states that allow them, granting federal benefits to those couples. In another 5-4 decision, the court refused to force California to honor a voter-passed referendum defining marriage in the state as between one man and one woman. In doing so, the court throws the marriage question back to individual states to decide. While the Supreme Court's decision today doesn't technically make same-sex marriage legal in California, in all likelihood California officials will resume granting same-sex marriages in the coming weeks.

So, what now?

The Culture of Marriage Needs Rebuilding

The Supreme Court's decision doesn't mean our work is over. Quite the contrary: the work to rebuild a culture of marriage must kick into high gear. As we've said before (for a full list of the work we've done on marriage over the last two years, see the end of this article), marriage as an institution has been in trouble in the U.S. for decades. As

soon as marriage became a function of mere desires and passions, trouble was inevitable.

Anthropologically, marriage has always been about protecting children. A society that places the desires of adults over the needs of children has signaled that it has no interest in continuing to exist. To paraphrase traditional marriage advocates from France standing against gay parents raising children, the needs and interests of children trump the interests of needy adults. We can continue the work of rebuilding a robust culture of marriage in two ways:

1. **Argument** – We've mentioned numerous scholars, writers, and thought leaders making sound and rational arguments for maintaining current understandings of marriage: Robert George, Ryan Anderson, Sherif Girgis, and Eric Teetsel among others (see Summit's previous posts on marriage at the end of this article). We need to lovingly persist in making these reasoned arguments in the public square and with our family, friends, and neighbors.
2. **Embodiment** – It's clear though, that fewer and fewer today will be persuaded by good arguments alone. The second – and perhaps more urgent – tactic for rebuilding the marriage culture is to show skeptics the beauty and good of marriage. This means our own marriages ought to flourish, and we should seek opportunities to help other marriages flourish. We also need to recapture the imaginations of those skeptical of traditional marriage through use of the arts and media. So few messages permeate popular culture that show the goodness of traditional marriage. Much of the marriage battle has been waged in the arena of popular culture; that won't change any time soon.

Brace for Challenges to Religious Liberty

Don't expect the ruling to mean everyone will abide by the

implication that religious liberty ought to be respected in questions about same-sex marriage. Challenges will still likely come, because many still view the traditional marriage position as hostile and bigoted. So, when challenges come, what should we do?

1. **Stand Courageously** – It's precisely at these times that we remember our morals come from God, not from government. And we ought to stand together. The collective courage of the Church can send powerful messages to civil authorities.
2. **Decide Where We Stand** – All Christians should be prepared for the moment we may have to stand in opposition to what our governments tell us to do. These are not easy decisions to make, nor are they familiar territory for most Christians in the U.S. But if we are prepared beforehand, we stand a better chance of doing what's right in trying times.
3. **Remember Resources Like the Alliance Defending Freedom and the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty** – These organizations make it a point to protect those standing in accordance with their religion in cases like this.

Pray

Finally, pray. Pray for hearts and minds in our country to be changed, regarding marriage. Pray that our civic authorities would love truth and wisdom and would govern by them. And pray for children brought up in less-than-ideal family situations.

Further Resources

Summit has published several articles over the last two years dealing with this issue. Each of these is replete with numerous sources for further research, argumentation, and practical suggestions for rebuilding a culture of marriage. Also, Summit is partnering with *WORLD* Magazine this year for Engage. These one-day events equip attendees to work in their

local communities in several key cultural areas, including marriage and religious liberty. Manhattan Declaration Executive Director Eric Teetsel is one of our featured speakers. We encourage you to consider attending Engage Dallas on October 5 or Engage San Diego on November 16.

- Rapid Response: Defending Marriage: The Building Blocks of Society
- Summit Journal: The Good of Marriage
- Rapid Response: Confronting Cries of Bigotry
- Rapid Response: Erroneous Claims About Same-Sex Marriage
- Rapid Response: The Great American Hustle