

LIGHTER MINDS

OKAY—
POLYGAMY'S PASSÉ

By Robert Kirby



My wife and I try to stay in practice for the big day when polygamy comes back by playing "Choose the Wife."

ABOUT FIVE minutes after the Mormon church got started, my ancestors joined up. They went through all the initiatory rites to be Mormons in the old days: whippings, burnings, mobbing, and really, really long meetings.

Eventually, along came the big Mormon trial—polygamy. My ancestors participated

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in that, too, although probably not very successfully. Kirby isn't exactly a common Mormon name, and none of us are general authorities.

While none of my relatives now practice polygamy, I have a few friends who do. I asked one of them what benefit there could possibly be in having more than one wife. John said it taught him great humility.

I told John he was an idiot. The average male gets sufficiently humbled from being married to only one woman. Anyone who needs six wives to humble him has to be a slow learner with a bullet-proof ego.

Glorious Hopes. Even though the LDS church abandoned the practice, lots of Mormons claim that polygamy is still God's plan and that we'll be living it again some day. I hope not.

Right now, my marriage is at least a fair fight. There's only one of my wife and one of me. When my wife and I don't agree on something, there's no way she can gang up on me.

Still, my wife and I are Mormons, and so we try to stay in practice for the big day. We do this by playing a little sacrament meeting game we call "Choose the Wife."

The game assumes that all the women in the ward are husbandless and we've been "called" to choose three of them as new wives.

Even though it's only pretend, Choose the Wife can get pretty heated. It's earned me at least one hymnal up the side of my head. But it usually doesn't come to that because there are strict rules.

Actually, there's only one rule. The rule is that my wife and I have to agree on who the wives will be. This explains why we've never actually played a round of Choose the Wife all the way to the end.

Basic Rules. Because the choice is limited to the women in our ward, there's no way I can pick Kim Bassinger or Pamela Anderson to be my new wives. I can live with that because there's also no way my wife can stick me with Whoopi Goldberg or Felix Urioste.

Choose the Wife goes something like this: I pick Sisters X, Y, and Z as our new wives. In turn, my wife chooses Sisters A, B, and C. Then we begin negotiating.

It's the negotiating that makes me realize I would have made a lousy polygamist.

My wife invariably claims that I pick Sisters X, Y, and Z because they're slim and attractive.

Conversely, I argue that Sisters A, B, and C are gruff and demanding, each weighing about as much as a fully loaded Buick.

Contrary to what my wife believes, Sisters X, Y, and Z aren't chosen for their looks, but rather for the looks of their husbands. It's probably cheating, but I figure that if Brothers X, Y, and Z seem content and happy, I stand a good chance of being treated well, too.

My wife says polygamy isn't fair and won't be until we can play "Choose the Husband."

While there aren't many women in our ward that I'd want to marry, there are a lot of men I'd like to see get whacked in the head with a hymnal. ☒