



Type: Book Chapter

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## Polygamy/Polyandry Concerns

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Source: *Bamboozled by the CES Letter*

Published: Self-Published, 2015

Pages: 55-56

## Chapter 6 Polygamy/Polyandry Concerns

29) *Joseph Smith was married to at least 34 women.*

Answer: Two or thirty-four, the number is irrelevant if the practice was commanded by God. Either it was or it wasn't. If it was, then Joseph cannot be faulted for living the commandment; if it wasn't, then it doesn't matter how many extra wives he married, it would have to be a sin. The way to know if he was commanded by God to practice plural marriage is answered by knowing if he was God's prophet, not by deciding we don't like that he married other women.

This is such an emotionally-charged and complex issue that—like many of the topics in the critics' list of “concerns”—it should really be answered by a lot more material than I can provide in this booklet. For those who have heartburn over the plural marriage issues I would suggest listening to this free [FairMormon podcast](#), or if you *really* want to get into the details, I suggest you read the book, *Joseph Smith's Polygamy: Toward a Better Understanding* by Brian C. Hales and Laura H. Hales.

30) *11 of those women were married (simultaneously) to other men.*

Answer: The answer to #29 should suffice for this concern as well, but I will add that Joseph apparently also included dynastic sealing under the umbrella of marriage. A dynastic sealing is where someone is sealed (bound by God for time and eternity) into part of a dynasty or family unit. Dynastic sealings don't (and perhaps didn't) necessarily involve intimacy. There is no evidence, so far, that these sealings were anything more than platonic bindings of family units. Joseph apparently wanted to be sealed to his followers, his followers to their families, and ultimately all of us sealed to the Heavenly family.

31) *7 of those women were teenagers as young as 14.*

Answer: See answers #29 and #30 above. There is no evidence that these young marriages involved intimacy.

32) *Joseph Smith promised some of these women (and their families) eternal life; some he threatened with loss of salvation. He also claimed that he would be slain by an angel with a sword if he didn't marry those girls.*

Answer: Joseph consistently asked potential plural wives to seek the Lord's position on the matter for themselves before agreeing to plural marriage. He emphasized that they needed to gain their own spiritual witness of the principle. Their journals often record how they didn't accept the practice—and often vehemently opposed the practice—until they discovered, on bended knee, that

the doctrine was of God.

*33) President Hinckley said polygamy is not doctrinal.*

Answer: The practice of plural marriage is not in effect for modern Latter-day Saints but was in effect for nineteenth-century Latter-day Saints. President Hinckley was not denying that the practice was doctrinal for the early Restored Church, but simply pointing out that it is contrary to the doctrinal practice for the people of today's Church.

*34) Joseph Smith was not honest. He secretly married and publically denied that he was practicing plural marriage.*

Answer: Unfortunately, a public acknowledgement of plural marriage could have brought the death of the prophet and/or the Church in Joseph's day. While lying is typically regarded as dishonest, some circumstances of survival have necessitated altering the truth. In WWII Europe, for example, some Germans protected the lives of Jews whom they harbored in their homes—and then lied about harboring them to the German authorities. Was it okay to lie to save their lives?