

Marriage and Family
Lesson 2 – The Marriage Vow

Do you MALE; take FEMALE to be your lawfully wedded wife? Do you promise to love, honor, cherish and keep her, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, as long as you both shall live?

(MALE says I DO)

Do you FEMALE; take MALE to be your lawfully wedded husband? Do you promise to love, honor, cherish, obey and keep him for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health, as long as you both shall live?

(FEMALE says I DO)

This is recognition of the fact that you are not going to be just "living together," but that you are entering into a contract -- a covenant relationship. Those in the days of Malachi forgot that the Lord had been a "witness between you and the wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant" (Mal. 2:14).

This part of the vow speaks of companionship. Sometimes young people get married and want to keep on acting like they are single so they can hang out with their friends. When you get married your closest companion is to be your spouse. Many young people do not know this, for they did not see it in the homes they grew up in -- their parents were strangers to each other. One of the greatest things you can do for your children is to make sure they know that their parents are still madly in love with each other.

(TO MALE) Is there a ring? Please place it upon her ring finger and repeat after me.

I MALE...take thee FEMALE...to be my wedded wife...and I give to you...my name and my home...my hand and my heart...my life and my loyalty...my good times and bad...my triumphs and failures...and most of all...I give you my love...for as long as we both shall live.

(TO FEMALE) Is there a ring? Please place it upon his ring finger and repeat after me.

I FEMALE...take thee MALE...to be my wedded husband...and I give to you...my name and my home...my hand and my heart...my life and my loyalty...my good times and bad...my triumphs and failures...and most of all...I give you my love...for as long as we both shall live.

For as much as you have consented this day together to enter into this marriage and have pledged your love and spoken the marriage vows before God and these witnesses, it is my pleasure to pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss your bride.

This part of the vow speaks of companionship. Sometimes young people get married and want to keep on acting like they are single so they can hang out with their friends. When you get married your closest companion is to be your spouse. Many young people do not know this, for they did not see it in the homes they grew up in -- their parents were strangers to each other.

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The family is the oldest institution on earth and marriage is the beginning of God's design for the family.

We all hopefully remember the vows that we took the day that we were married. The promise to live with each other "after God's ordinance"; to love, honor, and cherish and, years ago, the word obey was used in regards to the woman's vow to her husband. To take your spouse in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer. These are all aspects of the typical vow taken in Christian marriage. The marriage is an agreement between two eligible parties, to take each other in holy matrimony, according to the laws of God and the laws of the land. Marriage is holy matrimony; holy because God instituted marriage, not man. Marriage is a spiritual commitment. This is something man, through the ages, seems to have forgotten.

God has not prescribed a marriage ceremony, a marriage takes place when civil law is complied with of the society where the union is formed. Some form of marriage ceremony to establish a family is observed in most if not all cultures.

Genesis 2:18-24 lays out for us God's plan. Paul reiterates the teaching of Genesis in **Ephesians 5:31**. In **Matthew 19:4-6**, Jesus not only reiterates the instruction of Genesis, but he issues a warning.

It is when people do not understand the significance of these scriptures, when there is not an understanding of God's intention for our marriage that the union of marriage fails.

Only your confession of Jesus Christ as the Son of God will be a more important declaration before man and God than when you confess your love, devotion and commitment to your spouse in the marriage vows.

So what do we learn from the Bible in regards to marriage?

1. When one enters a marriage relationship, he or she enters into a covenant agreement with a companion; that agreement is witnessed and sealed by God (**Ezek. 16:8; Mal. 2:14**).
2. The marriage covenant carries inherent responsibilities. When a person commits to the marriage relationship, he or she accepts certain obligations of this relationship (**1 Cor. 7:3-5; Eph. 5:22; 1 Tim. 5:8**).
 - 2.1. Marriage is a sacred and most serious undertaking. Our youth must be taught not to enter into this union lightly.
3. Marriage is for the mature
 - 3.1. Maturity needs to be on four levels: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. We must be able to recognize immaturity in ourselves.
 - 3.1.1. Immaturity is characterized by:
 - 3.1.1.1. Selfishness. Interested only in yourself and those things directly affecting you.
 - 3.1.1.2. Marked by ingratitude for the love and devotion shown to you by your spouse
 - 3.1.1.3. Demands to have your own way – will scream or say hateful, hurtful things to get your own way.
 - 3.1.1.4. Little or no sense of responsibility or obligation.
 - 3.1.1.5. Inability to meet the conflicts or problems of life without bad emotional reactions.
 - 3.1.1.6. Anger, jealousy, violent temper, envy. Maturity comes with the ability to have a good disposition, kindness, and gentleness. Ability to admit when you are wrong.
 - 3.1.1.7. Manifests itself in poor physical intimacy.
 - 3.1.1.8. Poor way of trying to get love
 - 3.1.1.8.1. If my spouse loves me they will do this, or that.
 - 3.1.1.8.2. When they don't meet our expectations, we get mad.
 - 3.1.2. Apply the teachings of **Romans 12** to your life.
 - 3.2. All three of these verses (**Genesis 2:18-24; Ephesians 5:31; Matthew 19:4-6**) specifically talk about leaving your father and mother and becoming one with your spouse. If you are not mature enough to leave your father and mother and make a separate home, you are not ready for a successful marriage. One of the biggest problems in new marriages is that one or both of the partners' tries to be parts of two households. They continue under the domination of parents rather than truly establishing their own home. This is **NOT** saying quit respecting your parents or seeking guidance or counsel from them.
4. The two shall become one flesh – The sexual relationship in marriage
 - 4.1. It is not intended by God that the physical relationship be for producing offspring only.
 - 4.2. Each spouse has a very definite responsibility to the other. When love is present it leads each person in the marriage relationship to lovingly consider the other's desires and the needs of the other.
 - 4.2.1. Reference: **1 Corinthians 7:2-9**

- 4.2.2. Marriage counselors and doctors report that almost 50% of the women who come to their offices never or almost never get any pleasure out of the sexual relationship.
- 4.2.3. Often caused by thoughtless and selfish husband.
- 4.2.4. Can lead to emotional and physical illness.
- 4.2.5. Tenderness, kindness, and understanding must underlie and motivate the physical intimacy.
- 4.2.6. It is intended as a means of expressing and growing love for and with your spouse.
- 4.2.7. Union with anyone other than your spouse is adultery/fornication - **Hebrews 13:4**
- 4.2.8. Cleaving to each other is essential. It is risky for marriage partners to be apart. It can make you much more subject to unfaithfulness and alienation of affection. Absence may make the heart grow fonder, but often times it is for someone else.
- 4.2.9. We must be the ones to teach our children the beauty and spiritual significance of the physical relationship in marriage. We must also teach them the purity of body they must bring to marriage.
- 5. Till death do us part
 - 5.1. God's Original Plan
 - 5.1.1. When God created male and female in the beginning, he established the divine relationship that we know as the home
 - 5.1.1.1. **Genesis 2:18, 24**
 - 5.1.1.1.1. This fact that man is to "leave" father and mother underscores the permanency of the marriage relationship.
 - 5.1.1.1.2. The fact that he is to "cleave" to his wife emphasizes the commitment God expects in marriage.
 - 5.1.1.1.3. The fact that God joined one man to one woman demonstrates:
 - 5.1.1.1.4. The marriage transpires between a man and a woman
 - 5.1.1.1.5. The singularity of marriage – not one man to many women or a multiplicity of partners
 - 5.1.1.1.6. The fact that the couple becomes "one flesh" manifests the unity of the home
 - 5.1.1.1.7. God's ideal plan is for one man and one woman, separated only by death
 - 5.1.2. **Ephesians 5:22-32**
 - 5.1.2.1. Marriage is the closest of all earthly relationships and was used by Paul to indicate the relationship between Christ and the church
- 5.2. Civil and Divine Law
 - 5.2.1. Some imply that divine law is subservient to civil law when attempting to apply the teachings of Scripture to marriage.

- 5.2.2. Civil law is human law, and though we normally are to be subject to the “ordinance of man” (**1 Pet. 2:13**), such ordinances are valid only insofar as they are in harmony with the divine law (**Acts 5:29**).
- 5.2.3. Civil law may not authorize that which is wrong or prohibit that which is right. Civil law may vary in different countries and culture; divine law is stable. Civil law may change due to the fickle dispositions of men, but divine law will remain the same throughout the Christian age.
- 5.2.4. Guy N. Woods noted, “Civil, legal action, regarding marriage, having nothing whatsoever to do with determining the moral and religious principles involved. It is the Lord’s edict, not man’s that governs.”
- 5.2.5. **DIVINE LAW IS NOT SUBORDINATE TO CIVIL LAW**
- 5.3. God intends for marriage to be a lifetime union
 - 5.3.1. Reference: **Matthew 19:6-9**
 - 5.3.2. Reference: **Romans 7:2-3**
 - 5.3.3. Reference: **1 Corinthians 7:10-11**
- 5.4. What are the scriptural reasons for putting away a spouse
 - 5.4.1. Reference: **Matthew 19:9**
 - 5.4.2. Reference: **Matthew 5:32**
 - 5.4.3. This applies to men and women equally
 - 5.4.4. Divorce under Moses was restricted. Under Christ, divorce was further restricted so that it cannot occur without sin i.e. adultery
 - 5.4.4.1. 1 Corinthians 7:12-15 is not permission for divorce and remarriage. This is a reference to a religiously mixed marriage, where one spouse obeys the gospel after marriage and the other spouse refuses to do so and refuses to live with the other unless he or she gives up his or her religion.
 - 5.4.4.2. The Greek word for “bondage” in verse 15 means to be enslaved or subjected to the will of another. This verse means that the believing spouse is not enslaved, by God, **to the will of the unbelieving marriage partner as to be expected to or permitted to renounce or compromise the Christian faith in order to prevent the unbeliever from departing.**
- 6. What does Spiritual maturity allow us to understand?
 - 6.1. What God teaches about the marriage relationship and put it in practice in our life.
 - 6.1.1. Reference: **Ephesians 5:22-33**
 - 6.1.1.1. Wives are to submit themselves to the husband, as unto the Lord
 - 6.1.1.2. Husbands have a role assigned and are to assume that role. They are to do so in a Christ like manner.
 - 6.1.1.3. The husband is to love his wife the way Christ loves the church. Thus, the husbands love is **NOT** dictatorial, tyrannical, overbearing or unreasonable in nature. This authority, being practiced in love, should not be disturbing or deplorable to the

- wife. Do we find our subjection to Christ distasteful? NO!
Because of the love he has for us.
- 6.1.1.4. The husband should be willing to not only lay down his life for his wife, but ensure he presents no obstacles to her ability to be saved. This could include counsel, and a living example.
 - 6.1.1.5. The husband should love the wife as he does himself.
 - 6.1.2. Reference: **1 Peter 3:1-7**
 - 6.2. This is a joining of two, imperfect humans.
 - 6.3. This union involves much more than just the two parties involved
 - 6.3.1. Reference: **Proverbs 14:34**
 - 6.3.2. You will largely influence the shaping of your child's character, personality, and life.
 - 6.4. This will be the most important relationship you will experience in life, other than your relationship with our Lord.
 - 7. Love is an essential ingredient in a great marriage
 - 7.1. Four different types of love discussed in the New Testament
 - 7.1.1. Eros (physical love)
 - 7.1.2. Storge (family love)
 - 7.1.3. Philia (affectionate love, Brotherly love, friendship)
 - 7.1.4. Agape (A devoted love, a love expressed in serving others)
 - 7.1.4.1. Giving of self – **1 Cor. 13:4-8**
 - 7.2. Love must be on the highest level
 - 7.2.1. Love between a husband and wife is a combination of the various types of love
 - 7.2.1.1. The sexual attraction, the romance, is strong, especially in the beginning.
 - 7.2.1.1.1. It is what draws two people together and motivates them to become one in marriage
 - 7.2.1.1.2. Hebrews 13:4 - In marriage sexual intercourse is undefiled
 - 7.2.1.1.3. Eros is the excitement in a marriage, but it cannot sustain it
 - 7.2.1.2. True love takes time because it takes time to get to know someone
 - 7.2.1.2.1. In true love, you are aware of both a person's assets and their flaws.
 - 7.2.1.2.2. You love who they are in totality
 - 7.2.2. A love that is, not because of, but in spite of. It lets your spouse know that no matter who or what you are, no matter the circumstances and tribulations of life, I will love you with a steadfast and unabandoning love.
 - 7.2.3. A love so comprehensive as to embrace and embody all the beautiful elements of every word Jesus and the apostles utilized to define man's feelings and duties to his wife.
 - 7.2.4. Love is to be given without reserve or limit.
 - 7.2.5. Reference: **1 Corinthians 13:4**

8. Marriage is also about companionship
 - 8.1. Man was never meant to be alone - **Genesis 2:18**
 - 8.2. Your spouse is your companion, your best friend, your confidant - Malachi 2:14 (end of the verse)
 - 8.3. It is the type of love a woman is to have for her husband - Titus 2:4
 - 8.4. It has to be worked on and developed.
9. Marriage is also about devotion
 - 9.1. It is the ultimate expression of love - **1 Corinthians 13:4-8**
 - 9.2. Each sees the other as more important than themselves
 - 9.3. Many marriages fail as the partners focus on what "I want" instead of what "we need"
 - 9.4. It is not a give and take relationship.
 - 9.4.1. It is not "I love because my spouse loves me."
 - 9.4.2. Agape love gives regardless of whether it is returned. It is not dependent on a reciprocal love.
 - 9.4.3. It is a commitment to love no matter what happens - **Song of Solomon 8:6-7**
 - 9.4.4. It is the type of love command of husbands toward their wives - **Ephesians 5:25**

Marriage, at its best, is a picture of God's own family in this world. The Bible reminds us of God's faithfulness, his love, and his covenants. Partners in the marriage relationship will respect their covenant with one another because this covenant is ordained by God and made before God.