

Reading The Fine Print Of Your Marriage Vows: The Four Covenants Of The Family

Introduction:

A. What will be the determining factor in how you carry out your roles in the family?

1. Your parents, your culture, the culture of your church, the culture of your workplace, the culture of your friends?
2. God says Romans 12:1-2 *“I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”*
3. Our transformation in Christ results in a new mind, a new way of thinking, in your family do people say, “That is new, that is different, that proves the will of God!” If someone spent a day observing your family, would he know immediately you were Christians?

B. Looking at the Word of God

1. James says it is like a mirror – despite what we feel, it tells us what we are
2. Analogy to dieting - with weight, the only person you fool is yourself.
3. The answer to this problem, accurate measurements. Amos speaks of the “plumb line of God”
4. What do people say when they stand on scales “Is this thing accurate?”
5. We are going to look at the Word of God, you may well, respond, “Is this thing accurate?” and I can assure you it is.

C. It is important to read the fine print on a contract

1. Phone – two week window
2. I have learned to take the time to read the fine print on a contract
3. How many here took the time to read the fine print on your marriage contract?

D. Many will say, “Hey, we wrote our vows” or “we did not take our vows in the church”

1. God wrote the contract, irrespective of what you say, God holds you to His contractual terms.
2. Can your children get together and set the terms of the family?
3. Can employees get together and set the policy of the company?
4. Do people in a car get to vote on the traffic laws?
5. In each case, the terms were set before the contract was entered in to and it is the same way with marriage.
6. God has set up the covenants of marriage, these are the terms by which you enter marriage, God’s terms, not your own.

E. God does not take His covenants lightly...

1. PSA 56:12 *Thy vows are binding upon me, O God; I will render thank offerings to Thee.*
2. We may forget, but He does not.
 - a. A child may forget his promise to be home, but his father does not.
 - b. A student may forget a test date, but the teacher does not.
 - c. An employee may forget a deadline, but the others do not.
 - d. The vows of marriage may grow faint in our own memories but the echo and crash in the mind of God.

F. When you married you agreed to four vows as put forth in Ephesians 5:22 – 6:4.

1. You may not have taken the time to read them, you may not remember them, you may not even be aware of them.
2. But you did.

I. Vow #1 Wives: Ephesians 5:22-24,33

Ephesians 5:22-24 *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*

EPH 5:33 *Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.*

A. Subject – action

1. Are you subject to your own husbands as to the Lord?
2. Is your husband your head, as Christ is head of the Church?
3. Are you subject to your husband in everything?
4. You reply, “Yes, I am in subjection, but the Bible does not say I have to obey him, just be in subjection to him.
 - a. Does this make sense?
 - b. I am in subjection to the traffic laws, I just do not obey them.
 - c. I am in subjection to the tax laws, I just do not obey them.
 - d. Besides, in I Peter 3:5 & 6, as it pertains to marriage, subjection and obedience are directly linked, “*For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands. Thus Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.*”
5. Do you realize that you swore to the living God, before family, friends and church, to do this?
6. You made a vow to God and you are in sin if you are not keeping your vow.

B. Respect – attitude

1. Do you speak to your husband respectfully?
 - a. Do you give your husband orders?
 - b. Do you shout at your husband?
 - c. Do you honor your husband by consulting him and yielding to him.
2. Are your non-verbal actions towards your husband respectful
 - a. Your countenance
 - b. Slamming doors, an attitude of rebellion or punishment
3. Do you give your husband respect in private? (In the bedroom, in the privacy of the home?)
4. Do you give your husband respect in the home? (Before the children, before the family?)
5. Do you give your husband respect before his friends? (In public and at gatherings?)
6. Do you give your husband respect before the church? (In meetings and discussions at fellowships?)
7. Do you give your husband respect when he is not present? (In prayer meetings, in discussions with friends, on the phone with family, in conversations with women leadership in the church?)
8. Do you realize that you swore to the living God, before family, friends and church, to do this?
9. You made a vow to God and you are in sin if you are not keeping your vow.

C. Application:

1. Be subject to your husband as to the Lord, as Christ is head of the Church, in everything be subject to your husband.
2. With your tongue and with your actions give your husband respect as you are commanded by God.
3. If this does not characterize your life, repent this day of your sin.

II. Vow #2 Husbands: Ephesians 5:25 – 33

Ephesians 5:25-33 *Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her; that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, because we are members of His body. For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.*

A. You vowed to live sacrificially

1. The stronger cares for the weaker
 - a. Christ
 - 1.) Mark 10:45
 - 2.) Luke 22:24 – 27
 - b. The husband is the temporal steward of the welfare of his wife.
 - 1.) I Peter 3:7 – she is a fellow heir, God never fully relinquishes His ownership
 - 2.) Ephesians 5:25 – In the same way He cared for her as a single woman, in this way He expects us to care for her now that she is our wife.
2. Do you honor your wife as the weaker vessel? “honor” = TIME, not by virtue of authority but rather by virtue of it’s precious and delicate state
 - a. Before the children: Car door, dinner table
 - b. Before the church: Church door
 - c. In the home: Home repairs

B. You vowed to lead spiritually

1. PRO 31:23 *Her husband is known in the gates, When he sits among the elders of the land.*
2. In church
3. Active in Bible study
4. Leading others spiritually
5. Reading the bible to the children
6. Modeling the disciplines they are mastering

C. You vowed to care for her material needs

1. Transportation
2. Office vs. home
3. Business trips vs. Vacations
4. Her space

D. You vowed to put her emotional needs on the same level as your own.

1. Hebrews 4:12 – Are you as available to your wife as God is to you?
2. Do you belittle her emotions
3. Do you try to understand her needs
4. Do people see you as a devoted husband
5. Is your intense love for your wife known by all?
 - a. Does God regularly express His love for you?
 - b. Does God publicly express His love for you?
 - c. Do you give your wife that same reassurance?

E. Application: In your relationship with your wife, if you have continued to be conformed to this world rather than transformed by Christ, now is the time to act.

III. Vow #3 Children: Ephesians 6:1 – 3

Ephesians 6:1-3 Children, *obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right*. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.

A. Do your children obey you.

1. Children
2. Obey
3. Right
4. Moral High Ground

B. If your children do not obey, both you and your child is in sin.

IV. Vow #4 Fathers: Ephesians 6:4

Ephesians 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; *but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord*.

A. Provoke –

1. Does not mean to make angry or sad. It is not your responsibility to keep your children happy all of the time.
2. Example: Tongue
3. Example: Anger
4. Example: Failure to fulfill your responsibilities

B. Personal responsibility

1. When did children become women's work
2. Discipline
3. Instruction

V. You will have an opportunity to repent

A. Wives

B. Husbands

C. Children

D. Fathers