

# The Marriage Covenant

## Quick Overview

- Both husbands and wives bring into their marriages legitimate needs as created by God
- A need is not rooted in or based on sin or lack of faith
- Two reoccurring questions will continually be asked...
  - If you do not meet this need, then who do you want to meet it
  - Same alternatives when it comes to your needs

The covenant of marriage, as both conceived and defined by God, is made with God on the basis of legitimate needs of both the husband and wife to which both the husband and wife are held equally accountable.

## I. The Covenant of Marriage

### A. The Covenant

#### 1. Made with God

##### a. Husband – Malachi 2:14

*Malachi 2:14 "Yet you say, 'For what reason?' Because the LORD has been a witness between you and the wife of your youth, against whom you have dealt treacherously, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant.*

##### b. Wife – Proverbs 2:17

*Proverbs 2:17 That leaves the companion of her youth, and forgets the covenant of her God;*

2. **Meeting Covenant needs is not to be a legal burden or duty.** Rather, out of love you are saying to God, "I want to be the one who meets this need in my spouse. Choose me to be the missing piece of the puzzle. Allow me to serve my spouse by becoming one and thus meeting this need.

#### 3. Made with your spouse – Matthew 19:4 – 6

*Matthew 19:4-6*

*4 And He answered and said, "Have you not read, that He who created them from the beginning made them male and female,*

*5 and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'?*

*6 "Consequently they are no longer two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."*

#### 4. Made with the State – Romans 13:1

*Romans 13:1 Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.*

#### 5. Made before the Church – Hebrews 13:4

*Hebrews 13:4 Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.*

#### 6. Is by nature binding

- a. The question of divorce

- 1.) *Malachi 2:16 "For I hate divorce," says the LORD, the God of Israel, "and him who covers his garment with wrong," says the LORD of hosts. "So take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously."*
- 2.) *Mark 10:9 "What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate."*

**b. The question of remarriage**

- 1.) *Mark 10:11 And He said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her;*
- 2.) *Matthew 5:27 & 28*

*Matthew 5:31-32*

*31 "And it was said, 'Whoever sends his wife away, let him give her a certificate of divorce';  
32 but I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except for the cause of unchastity, makes her commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*

**c. Did I marry the wrong person?**

- 1.) *Proverbs 19:14 House and wealth are an inheritance from fathers, but a prudent wife is from the LORD.*
- 2.) *Proverbs 16:33 The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.*
- 3.) *Proverbs 3:5 & 6*

*Proverbs 3:5-6*

*5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.*

*6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

- 4.) *Proverbs 5:21 For the ways of a man are before the eyes of the LORD, and He watches all his paths.*
- 5.) The "form" or "type" of wedding or marriage has no bearing on this issue.
- 6.) Whether you are married in the church, by a rabbi, by an Islamic Mullah, by a Hindu Priest, by a cultural ceremony, by the state or legal system or simply by common law declaration, if you are married, then you are married.
- 7.) The Word of God gives no guidelines for what constitutes a marriage ceremony. Thus the desire for some to rid themselves of an undesirable spouse by declaring the marriage is not void because it did not follow some prescribed church ordinance or ceremony is completely false. Even the commonly held conventional wisdom that if a marriage is not consummated then it is not valid is false. Once married, you are joined by God, not the church, not sexual intimacy but by God. The church may bless but you are joined by God irregardless.

*1 Cor 7:12-13*

*12 But to the rest I say, not the Lord, that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, let him not send her away.*

*13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away.*

*1 Cor 7:27*

*27 Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be released. Are you released from a wife? Do not seek a wife.*

*1 Cor 7:39*

39 *A wife is bound as long as her husband lives; but if her husband is dead, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord.*

**d. What if my spouse does not fulfill his or her part of the covenant?**

1.) Husband yes, wife no: Ephesians 5:25

*Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;*

2.) Wife yes, Husband no: Ephesians 5:22

*Ephesians 5:22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

3.) Covenants are binding, even when they are “man’s” covenants Galatians 3:15

*Galatians 3:15 Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it.*

**4.) God holds us to our covenants Psalm 15:4**

*Psalms 15:4 In whose eyes a reprobate is despised, but who honors those who fear the LORD; He swears to his own hurt, and does not change;*

**5.) Col 3:18-19**

**a.) Wife’ Response: 18** *Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

**b.) Husband’s Response: 19** *Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them.*

**B. In the Covenant of Marriage, if you do not meet your spouse’s legitimate needs, then who do you want to do this?**

1. Legitimate needs do not indicate imperfection or fault, God created Adam both perfect and good, yet with needs only Eave could meet
2. Trapping your spouse with his or her devotion to God
3. Teaching your spouse to meet legitimate needs outside the primary will of God.
4. Meeting Covenant needs is not to be a legal burden or duty. Rather, out of love you are saying to God, “I want to be the one who meets this need in my spouse. Choose me to be the missing piece of the puzzle. Allow me to serve my spouse by becoming one and thus meeting this need.

**C. The Fine Print of the Marriage Covenant** - The fine print of Marriage Covenant or the bold print of the Bible – either way it is our responsibility.

**The covenant of marriage, as both conceived and defined by God, is made with God on the basis of legitimate needs of both the husband and wife to which both the husband and wife are held equally accountable.**

## II. The Fine Print of the Marriage Covenant

The covenant of marriage, as both conceived and defined by God, is made with God on the basis of legitimate needs of both the husband and wife to which both the husband and wife are held equally accountable.

### A. The Husband

If he, as Ephesians 5:25 commands, is to love his wife as “Christ loved the Church”, then those verses which define Christ’s undying love for the us, also define the husbands undying love for his wife.

#### 1. Spiritual leader of the family

*Ephesians 5:26*

*26 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,*

##### a. Wife – Ephesians 5:23 & 26; I Corinthians 14:35

*Ephesians 5:23 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.*

*I Corinthians 14:35 And if they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church.*

##### b. Children – Ephesians 6:4

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

##### c. Ministry – Romans 16:5; I Corinthians 16:19; Colossians 4:15; Philemon 1:2

*Romans 16:5 also greet the church that is in their house. Greet Epaphroditus, my beloved, who is the first convert to Christ from Asia.*

##### d. Two Questions...

###### 1.) If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –

###### 2.) Same alternatives when it comes to your needs

#### 2. Love wife by sacrificially meeting her emotional needs – Ephesians 5:25

*Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her;*

##### a. Conversational intimacy –

###### 1.) Access Hebrews 4:16

*Hebrews 4:16 Let us therefore draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and may find grace to help in time of need.*

###### 2.) Topics (resulting in emotional comfort and security) Philippians 4:6, 7

*Philippians 4:6-7 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all comprehension, shall guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*

##### b. Intimacy through emotional/psychological comfort and care – Ephesians 5:33

*Ephesians 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.*

##### c. Actually being there – Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:31

1.) In the beginning given by God the Father

*Genesis 2:24 For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh.*

3.) Reaffirmed by God the Son

*Matthew 19:5 and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh'?*

4.) Instituted in the Church age by God the Holy Spirit

*Ephesians 5:31 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.*

**d. Two Questions...**

- 1.) **If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –**
- 2.) **Same alternatives when it comes to your needs**

**3. Trusting and truthful relationship – Proverbs 31:11**

*Proverbs 31:11*

*11 The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have no lack of gain.*

- b. All men want the wife of Proverbs 31 - Here we have insight into the husband of this wife.
- c. If we continually “protect” our wife by not telling her the truth we treat her as a child not as a helpmate.
- d. The reason it was not good for man to live alone is the need for a helpmate.
  - 1.) If we refuse to be open and honest with our wives we deprive ourselves of this provision by God
  - 2.) .Not only that we deprive her of her God given ministry.
- e. It would be as if your wife intercepted your mail and threw away any correspondence concerning your work, finances, family, ministry that she thought would be distressful. This would not be helpful but hurtful. In the same way we hurt our wives by not allowing them to minister to us.
- e. **Two Questions...**
  - 1.) **If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –**
  - 2.) **Same alternatives when it comes to your needs**

**4. Material needs – Ephesians 5:28; I Timothy 5:8**

*Ephesians 5:28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;*

*I Timothy 5:8 But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith, and is worse than an unbeliever.*

*II Th 3:10 For even when we were with you, we used to give you this order: if anyone will not work, neither let him eat.*

- a. **How we clothe our body vs. our wife’s**
- b. **Our office and supplies vs. wife’s kitchen and supplies**

- c. Our “business lunches” vs. wife’s getting to eat out
- d. Our travel and conferences vs. wife’s vacations and conferences
- e. Our transportation vs. wife’s transportation
- f. Two Questions...
  - 1.) If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –
  - 2.) Same alternatives when it comes to your needs

## 5. Home and family

- a. **Priority of the home** – Ephesians 5:31

*Ephesians 5:31 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.*

- b. **Discipline of children** – Proverbs 23:13 & 14; I Timothy 3:4

*Proverbs 23:13-14*

*13 Do not hold back discipline from the child, although you beat him with the rod, he will not die.*

*14 You shall beat him with the rod, and deliver his soul from Sheol.*

- c. **Honor in the home** – I Peter 3:7; Proverbs 31:28

*1 Peter 3:7 You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

*Proverbs 31:28 Her children rise up and bless her; her husband also, and he praises her, saying:*

- 1.) The mother is not the children’s servant
- 2.) Servant as defined by Christ in Luke 22:27

- d. **We cannot use “ministry” or God to as an excuse to neglect our responsibilities in the home**

*1 Tim 3:4-5*

*4 He must be one who manages his own household well, keeping his children under control with all dignity*

*5 (but if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?);*

*Titus 1:6*

*6 namely, if any man be above reproach, the husband of one wife, having children who believe, not accused of dissipation or rebellion.*

- e. Two Questions...
  - 1.) If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –
  - 2.) Same alternatives when it comes to your needs

**The covenant of marriage, as both conceived and defined by God, is made with God on the basis of legitimate needs of both the husband and wife to which both the husband and wife are held equally accountable.**

**B. The Wife** – If she, as Ephesians 5:24 commands, is to be subject to her husband “as the Church is subject to Christ”, then those verses which define the Church’s undying love for Christ also define the wife’s undying love for her husband.

**1. Submission to his leadership** Ephesians 5:22 – 24; Colossians 3:18

- a. If you define “submission” in Ephesians 5:22 as being virtually neutralized by Ephesians 5:21, That they are equal in terms of authority, then the wife must be consistent with this application in her all her relationship, not just with her husband,
  - 1.) She must be consistent with her application of submission and her children.
  - 2.) She must be consistent with her application of submission and domestic help.
  - 3.) Both use the same Greek word and both are found in the exact same context of this passage. (Ephesians 6:22-6:9)

*Ephesians 5:22-24*

22 *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.*

23 *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.*

24 *But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*

*Colossians 3:18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

- b. Submission and obedience Peter 3:1 & 2, 5 & 6
  - 1.) Stripped of obedience submission has virtually no meaning.
  - 2.) Again be consistent in the use of this same Greek word: Government, Employees, Domestic Help, Children – submission by these classes without obedience is virtually meaningless.
  - 3.) “I will be submissive to the tax laws of my government, but I retain the right to ultimately make my own choices when their is a dispute.”

*1 Peter 3:1-2*

1 *In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,*

2 *as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.*

*1 Peter 3:5-6*

5 *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.*

6 *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.*

**c. Two Questions...**

- 1.) **If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –**
- 2.) **Same alternatives when it comes to your needs**

**2. Sexual fulfillment**

**a. The care of her body as the temple of God.**

- 1.) Ecclesiastes 1:8

*Eccl 1:8 All things are wearisome; Man is not able to tell it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor is the ear filled with hearing.*

- 2.) Proverbs 27:20

*Proverbs 27:20 Sheol and Abaddon are never satisfied, nor are the eyes of man ever satisfied.*

## 3.) I Corinthians 7:4

*1 Corinthians 7:4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.*

## 4.) Song of Solomon 4:1 - 7

*Song of Solomon 4:1 "How beautiful you are, my darling, how beautiful you are! Your eyes are like doves behind your veil; your hair is like a flock of goats That have descended from Mount Gilead.*

**b. Sexual intimacy**

1.) Proverbs 5:15 – 19

2.) I Corinthians 7:3– 5

3.) **What has this woman done to make herself appealing?** (Song of Solomon 4:1 – 16)4.) **The Wife's Encouragement and Aggressiveness:** The godly wife recognizes that behavior once was immoral is now part of her ministry to her husband.

a. Song 1:2-4

b. Song 2:3-6

c. Song 3:1, 4

d. Song 4:16

e. Song 7:11-12

f. Song 8:14

5.) Three women...

g. Eve: Genesis 2:25

h. Rebekah: Genesis 24:67

i. Rebekah: Genesis 26:8

j. Esther: Esther 2:8, 9, 12, 14 - 17

**c. Two Questions...**1.) **If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –**2.) **Same alternatives when it comes to your needs****3. Helpmate and companion in life pursuits**

Ecclesiastes 9:7 – 9; Proverbs 5:18; Genesis 2:18; I Corinthians 11:9

*Ecclesiastes 9:7-9*

*7 Go then, eat your bread in happiness, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart; for God has already approved your works.*

*8 Let your clothes be white all the time, and let not oil be lacking on your head.*

*9 Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life which He has given to you under the sun; for this is your reward in life, and in your toil in which you have labored under the sun.*

*Proverbs 5:18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth.*

*Genesis 2:18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."*

*1 Corinthians 11:9 for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake.*

a. Career – who do you want to be helping him and praising him?

b. Ministry – why do other women praise him more than you and what are the results?

c. Leisure / Sports – who is his greatest fan?

d. Two Questions...

- 1.) **If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –**
- 2.) **Same alternatives when it comes to your needs**

#### 4. The home as a refuge – contrasting verses

Proverbs 7:11; 14:1; 21:9, 19; 25:24; vs. 31:12,15,26, 27

a. What a refuge is not...

*Proverbs 7:11 She is boisterous and rebellious; her feet do not remain at home;*

*Proverbs 14:1 The wise woman builds her house, but the foolish tears it down with her own hands.*

*Proverbs 21:9 It is better to live in a corner of a roof, than in a house shared with a contentious woman.*

*Proverbs 25:24 It is better to live in a corner of the roof than in a house shared with a contentious woman.*

VS.

b. What a refuge is...

*Proverbs 31:12 She does him good and not evil all the days of her life.*

*Proverbs 31:15 She rises also while it is still night, and gives food to her household, and portions to her maidens.*

*Proverbs 31:26 She opens her mouth in wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.*

*Proverbs 31:27 She looks well to the ways of her household, and does not eat the bread of idleness.*

c. Two Questions...

- 1.) **If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –**
- 2.) **Same alternatives when it comes to your needs**

#### 5. Respect

Proverbs 12:4; Ephesians 5:33; I Peter 3:1 & 2

*Proverbs 12:4 An excellent wife is the crown of her husband, but she who shames him is as rottenness in his bones.*

*Ephesians 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.*

*1 Peter 3:1-2*

*1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,*

*2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.*

a. Every mother knows the shallowness of mocking, feigned respect by a child.

b. She should not repeat this in her relationship with her husband.

Two Questions...

- 1.) **If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –**
- 2.) **Same alternatives when it comes to your needs**

The covenant of marriage, as both conceived and defined by God, is made with God on the basis of legitimate needs of both the husband and wife to which both the husband and wife are held equally accountable.

C. In each of these ten areas two questions continually reemerge....

- **If You Do Not Meet These Needs, Who Do You Want To Meet Them –**
- **Same alternatives when it comes to your needs**

### Husband

### Wife

#### 1. Spiritual leader of the family

#### 1. Submission to his leadership

- “If you do not meet your spouse’s need, then who do you want to do this?”
- “What is their moral alternative?”

#### 2. Love wife by sacrificially meeting her emotional needs

#### 2. Sexual fulfillment

- “If you do not meet your spouse’s need, then who do you want to do this?”
- “What is their moral alternative?”

#### 3. Trusting and truthful relationship

#### 3. Helpmate and companion in life pursuits

- “If you do not meet your spouse’s need, then who do you want to do this?”
- “What is their moral alternative?”

#### 4. Material needs

#### 4. The home as a refuge

- “If you do not meet your spouse’s need, then who do you want to do this?”
- “What is their moral alternative?”

#### 5. Home and family

#### 5. Respect

- “If you do not meet your spouse’s need, then who do you want to do this?”
- “What is their moral alternative?”

The covenant of marriage, as both conceived and defined by God, is made with God on the basis of legitimate needs of both the husband and wife to which both the husband and wife are held equally accountable