

The Covenant of Marriage

MENTION Love offering

Introduce "Bernie and Agnes" Begin with Skit #1

If we are going to talk about family and community we must first begin with this thing called love. You were hard wired for love. Everything you decide, desire, think, say, and do is an expression of love for someone or something.

- Starts with Love
 - o Greatest commandment ever given (most important thing in life) - Love God and love others.
 - Matt 22:36-39
 - Mark 12:28-31
 - o True Love
 - Stays in love - Til death do us part?.. (Phil 2)
 - Shows a daily commitment to each other's happiness. (Others first...having others best interest in mind)
 - Wants to do what the other enjoys. (Others focused)
 - Grants space when needed. (We all need our space a times...Leigh vs me)
 - Knows the other's weaknesses and doesn't disadvantage them.
 - "The person is more important than the issue."
 - Celebrates the other's strengths. (Hands: Your strengths/their weakness mesh)
 - Shares feelings with honesty and sensitivity. (H. O. T.)
 - "It's more important to be reconciled than to be right."
 - Have you ever tried to communicate with someone that always has to be right
 - ~~True humility is willing to be wrong even when you know you are right~~
 - If someone has to be wrong and someone has to be right...you are still going to bed with a loser
 - Demonstrates trustworthiness. (Your spouse needs to know trust)

- Believes the best of each other (assuming the best or worst?)

Is your spouse basically a good-willed person? Is it their intent to cause harm?

- Marriage

- o Covenant of Marriage

- When you got married, you made a vow (marriage vow) and entered into a covenant with God and your spouse.

- o What is a covenant?

- Covenant means “to cut”. It implies the intermingling of blood so that it can never be separated again. (Abrahamic Covenant)

- Covenant: unconditional/unbreakable agreement

- Marriage by definition is:

- a holy covenant
 - initiated by God (God designed)
 - conditioned on an irrevocable promise (vow you made)
 - to pursue oneness
 - with an imperfect person (sinner) (sandpaper)
 - of the opposite sex
 - for a lifetime
 - for the glory of God.

- o What is a vow?

- “a irrevocable promise, pledge, or personal commitment (binding myself).” (I am going to do this no matter what)

- Ecc 5:1-6

- God is serious about vows! Which means God is serious about your marriage

- Eze 16:8

- Wedding Vow’s

- o “To have (honor) and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.”

- o 19 years ago on a Saturday..... Feb. 18 I stood in front of people and God and I made vows like these to my wife. Maybe you made the same or similar vows.
- o In the months or years since that day, have you thought back on the vows you made to your spouse?
- o When was the last time you thought about the vows and commitments you made?
- o We have a tendency to forget (or not think about) about our wedding vows even though our wedding day is one of the most important days in our life.
- o Have you ever counted how many “ifs” there are in traditional wedding vows? Zero!
 - I promise today to love you “if” you treat me in such a way that makes me feel good about myself.
 - I promise to love you today “if” you keep your attractive figure after bearing seven children.
- o “To have (honor) and to hold, from this day forward, for better for worse, for richer for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part.”
- o On our wedding day (all of us) each of us made a solemn promise (a vow) to our spouse in the presence of God and several friends and family that we would love.....*no matter what*.
- o We told our spouse what we had decided "ahead of time" that we would love them no matter what would happen in the future. Have you ever thought about that regarding your spouse?
- o On your wedding day, there was no way of knowing what the future would hold - what changes, challenges, and hardships were ahead.
- o Nevertheless, we pledged a “decided ahead of time” love that would not quit when those changes and challenges would come. (They will come)
 - 1 Cor 7:28
- What can you learn about the state of many marriages today from Google’s most popular searches?
 - o Google’s auto complete function will supply you with suggestions to finish your search phrase based on its most popular searches.
 - My husband

- ...is annoying
 - ...hates me
 - ...doesn't love me
 - ...is a jerk
 - ...ignores me
 - ...cheated on me
 - ...is an alcoholic
 - My marriage
 - ...is falling apart
 - ...is in trouble
 - ...is over
 - ...is failing
 - ...was a mistake
 - How can I get my wife
 - ...to love me again
 - ...in the mood
 - ...to trust me again.
 - How can I get my husband
 - ...to fall in love with me again
 - ...to be more affectionate
 - ...to help around the house
 - ...to want me
 - ...to be more romantic
 - ...back
- o This is just one piece of the picture of the American marriage. But it's enough to show how many people are looking for help for their marriages and families.
- Lets start with the wedding day vows: The meaning of them.....
 - o **For Better For Worse**
 - Over the past 19 years there have been times that, when I thought or felt as though Leigh loved and respected me, or supported my leadership, that I have showered my love on her.
 - There have also been times when I have not felt the love and respect that I believed I should have had where I have withheld my expressions of love towards her. More often than I would care to remember. In these cases, my love had been nothing more than conditional...way too many “ifs”.

- Yet on that wedding day I vowed a “decided ahead of time” love for her.
- I promised her that I would love her “as long as we both shall live”, no matter what!
- It was not just my wife that was listening that day however, so was my God.
- God loves us unconditionally because of the cross.
- May I mirror/reflect the love of God as I love my wife with a decided ahead of time love, not only in the good times, but even in the less than enjoyable seasons.
 - It may mean guys, loving her unconditionally through the difficulty that comes at certain times of the month.
 - It may mean loving your spouse during seasons of discouragement or depression when they are not sure they really love you.
 - It may even mean loving them with a Hosea like love through periods when a spouse may be living in rebellion against you and God. (I will stay married to you as long as....)
- o **For Richer For Poorer**
 - Top 3 issues in marriage - What do you think...Money, Sex, In-Laws
 - There was a married couple who were in a terrible accident. The woman's face was burned severely. The doctor told the husband they couldn't graft any skin from her body because she was so thin. The husband then donated some of his skin; however, the only place suitable to the doctor was from his buttocks. The husband requested that no one be told of this, because after all this was a very delicate matter! After the surgery was completed, everyone was astounded at the woman's new beauty. She looked more beautiful than she ever did before! All her friends and relatives just ranted and raved at her youthful beauty! She was alone with her husband one day and said, "Dear, I just want to thank you for everything you did for me! There is no way I could ever repay you!" He replied, "Oh don't worry,

Honey, I get plenty thanks enough every time your mother comes over and kisses you on your cheek!"

- 9 out of 10 arguments deal with issue of finances. (Take SEX off screen....men can't focus)
- A husband may have a very different idea about finances than his wife has.
- Many of us cant wait to be tested in this during the “richer” period of life.
- Many believe that being richer would make things better in the marriage.
- Riches can bring their own set of issues if not handled very very carefully....
- Ecc 5:10 (the more money you have, the more bills you have)
 - 10 He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.
 - 11 When goods increase, they increase who eat them, and what advantage has their owner but to see them with his eyes?
 - 12 Sweet is the sleep of a laborer, whether he eats little or much, but the full stomach of the rich will not let him sleep.
- *1 Tim 6:11, 9-10 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs. 11 But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness.*
- ~~Verse 6 speaks of contentment—Wanting what you have, not having what you want.~~
- More money does not equal a happier marriage.
- Riches themselves can test ones priorities and loyalties.
- Whatever God entrusts to us....we must remember our decided ahead of time love for our spouses. Our earthly loyalty should be to them not to our money or our things. Guys, we must always see her and love her in a

way that says she is “worth far more than rubies” -
Proverbs 31:10

o **In sickness and In Health**

- For those of us who get married at a fairly young age, this vow gets little or no thought.
- Will the spouse who participated in many of the extracurricular activities with us (running, hiking, biking, golfing, softball, etc...) or who enjoyed passionate physical intimacy with us in our youthwill they find us just as loving when she needs her walker to get around or when he struggles through the fog of Alzheimer's to show the simplest of affections.
- If one spouse's health fails before the other, our “what's in it for me” culture has made it so easy and acceptable for one spouse to justify finding some other object or person for their affections.
- If we are true to the vow that we have made and committed to what the Word says, then we will love them through any debilitating illness or the onset of old age.

{Couple Story.....Phillip and Gina}

- A decided ahead of time love will see us through all the seasons of marriage, in sickness and in health.

o **To Love and to Cherish, Till Death Do Us Part**

- Christ loves us with an unconditional love. There are no ifs.

- *Heb 13:5 "I will never leave you nor forsake you."*

- Can your spouse live with a similar assurance that you have decided and promised to love them no matter what?
- To love and to cherish, till death do you part?
- Several years ago Leigh heard me make that vow. I promised to love her with a predetermined love until the Lord calls one or both of us home. We have a sign in our trailer that says "forever and for always"
- No ifs!
- Maybe, we will find out what's going on with Bernie and Agnes

- Action Steps

- o Surprise your spouse this week by arranging time for the two of you to sit on the couch looking at your wedding album together.
- o Remind your spouse (as best you can remember) of your wedding vows that day. Tell them that you meant those vows then and you still mean them today
- o Re-assure them of the promise that you made to never leave them, no matter what.
- o **Give away "Love and Respect"**

Chinese Video

Coffee Talk

Which vows seem to be easily forgotten and taken for granted?