

The Marriage Covenant Workbook

A look into the purpose, commitments and demands of your marriage covenant

Jerry Edmon

Part one

Covenant meanings found in the marriage ceremony?

Part two

Marriage Questionnaire

Part three

You're Wedding Ceremony

Jerry Edmon Ministries

www.Jerryedmon.com / P.O. Box 862 Elgin, Texas 78621 / (512) 281-5146

So you decided to get married. We think that is wonderful. We stand with you because we feel that the union between the husband and wife is the most beautiful union in the world. The relationship between the husband and wife is a picture of the union between Christ and the Church. The bible says that the husband is to love the wife as Christ loved the Church and gave himself for it. The wife is to reverence and respect her husband.

Marriage is not something to be entered into lightly. You are going into covenant with your companion. Those marriage vows are "covenant" vows. It is therefore necessary that you sit down and discuss all of these issues that we have laid out for you. This will give you a good understanding about where both of you stand as well as start you off with a good foundation of communication. If you were setting up a partnership in a business, you would be very wise to know everything possible about your partner, their diligence, beliefs, desires and commitments.

To take this self evaluation, you need to choose a time when you can be alone together with no interruptions. This is very important. Turn off your telephones. Determine to discuss each question until you are both satisfied that you understand completely where you and your mate stand on the issues. If you come to a place where you cannot agree on one of the questions, you need to stay with it until you work it out. If necessary, you might seek out a good Christian counselor to help.

After you complete all of these questions, your next step is to make an appointment with your Pastor or a counselor and share all of your decisions and commitments with him. They can advise you or set up any additional counseling appointments that you might need.

We love you and are committed to the success of your future.

Jerry Edmon

Covenant meanings found in the marriage ceremony?

A covenant is the strongest bond known to man. One Hebrew word for blood covenant is "*a vow or promise of self denunciation*". I will put my self down in behalf of you. It could not be broken. It is said that in ancient day, if someone broke a covenant, their people would hunt them down for three generations until they found them to destroy them. It is because they felt they cursed the ground. In this modern time, we have had no idea of the strength and commitment connected to the word Covenant.

What do you look for in a covenant partner? In the literal sense, you would look for someone who is strong in areas that you are weak. Your mate becomes the completion of you. All of the things that you are not, they are. All of the things that they are not, you are. This is why it is so important not to try to change one another. Rather, our responsibility is to polish and sharpen them.

There are many symbolic things that we do in our marriage ceremonies. Most people don't have a clue as to what most of them mean. I would like to go through some of the things that we do in our marriage ceremonies and explain how the traditions of the blood covenant are still used today.

Q. *Why is the white runner used in many weddings in the center isle?*

A. The white runner is symbolic of Holy Ground. It suggests coming into the presence of God and declaring the sanctity of this coming together as husband and wife.

Q. *What part do the parents play?*

A. Every parent has a responsibility to raise their children and be in authority over them until they are joined to their lifetime mate. After the couple is joined, the parents leave the role of authority and take the role as counselors. Their commitment to the ceremony is just as binding as the Bride and Groom. When the Father comes down the isle to give his daughter in marriage, he is not only declaring that he gives his full blessing on the union, but also that he is transferring the responsibility of care and protection of his daughter to the groom.

Q. *Why does the Groom enter the auditorium before Bride?*

A. This indicates that the Groom is the initiator of the marriage covenant. This is symbolic of Christ, who takes the greater responsibility in the relationship. As you look through the scriptures, you will find that it was God who initiated the covenant in every case.

Q. *Why do the Bride and Groom join hands during the ceremony?*

A. Throughout history, the open right hand represented the resources and strengths of that person. By clasping hands, it represents the pledge of these resources and strengths to each other. In our country, we see how a handshake was used as the seal of a covenant or agreement. Thus saying that the agreement would not be broken until the terms were satisfied.

Q. *Why is there a wedding ring?*

A. The ring was a symbol of authority and the possessions that go with it. In a covenant, there was always an exchange of possessions. Therefore everyone who saw you with the possession of someone else knew that you were in covenant with someone. This was very important if an enemy tried to come against you. They would know that they not only had to deal with you, but also with someone that you were in covenant with. It was a source of protection and identification.

Q. *Why have a veil?*

A. The veil represents the thing that separates the couple. It represents all of the things in life that would keep you apart. When the veil is removed, you will from then on have a face to face, and heart to heart relationship. When the veil in the temple was torn in two, God was saying, nothing will separate us any longer. I will come and make my abode in your heart.

Q. *Why pronounce the couple Husband and Wife?*

A. Upon this pronouncement, it is known to all that hear that it is done. It gives a definite point in time for the beginning of this marriage covenant. It gives validity and confirmation to all of the guest and witnesses.

Q. *Why introduce the new couple by the new name?*

A. In a covenant, there is not only an exchange of possessions, but also an exchange of names. You would each take on a part of each others name. When God made a covenant with Abraham, his name was changed from Abram to Abraham, and Sari's name was changed to Sarah, and God was known as the God of Abraham. Your name declares who you are in covenant with.

Q. *Why sign the wedding papers?*

A. It is a public record. It is a public document about the covenant. It is a testimony to the public that the wedding is confirmed.

Q. *Why have a guest book?*

A. The people who attend the wedding are saying that they become a witness of the covenant. When they sign this book, they are saying that they become a witness to the event.

Q. *Why does the couple feed cake to each other?*

A. This represents the covenant meal. Again, an exchange. By feeding cake to each other, you are saying, "this represents my body, my substance, my strength that I give to you."

Q. *Why does the couple give each other wine to drink?*

A. The wine is representative of the blood covenant. The very life of each other given in the ceremony.

Q. *Why do the witness and guest throw rice at the end of the ceremony?*

A. It is the gesture that symbolizes fruitfulness. By doing this they are saying, "be fruitful in all that you do."

Marriage Questionnaire

As you enter this part of the questionnaire, try to get alone to where you will have no interruptions. Take your time. Do not move on to the next question until you have answered each question to complete satisfaction. Please. No quick answers. Give a real, legitimate response to each question. Otherwise you will not receive the full benefit of this self evaluation

Getting Acquainted

Why are you getting married?

What makes you think that this is the person that you are to marry?

How long have you known each other? Do you feel this is enough time to go into a marriage covenant? Why?

What was it that you saw in each other that attracted you?

What makes you feel that you can make a life time commitment to each other?

Did you seek counseling from someone that you respect? Describe to each other what that person told you.

On a piece of paper, describe the person that you want to marry.

Relationships

How much freedom do you give each other for outside interest?

How much time should be given to relationships outside the home?

What kind of relationship do you feel should be between you and your in-laws?

Are you a jealous person over your mate? If so, why?

Would you be willing to receive counseling for this problem?

Your Family

How many children do you want?

Explain your feeling about the discipline of your children.

What is discipline?

Have either of you ever had a problem in this area? If so, please explain.

If your spouse already has children, what are your feelings about them?

Please explain your commitment to them.

What day of the week do you intend to set aside for your family?

What do you feel the role of the husband is in the family?

What do you feel the role of the wife is in the family?

Who will do the grocery shopping?

Who will do the Christmas and birthday shopping?

Whose responsibility is it to clean the house?

Whose responsibility is it to clean the yard?

Whose responsibility is it to cook dinner?

Do you feel that you are selfish? Try to explain why.

Do you feel that you have been completely honest in your relationship so far?

Describe your relationship with your in-laws.

What could you do to make your relationship with your in-laws better?

What is it about your in-laws that you like the most?

Your God

Are you committed to a home church? If not, why?

What are your feelings about commitment to church, to God and to prayer?

Do you pray on a regular basis? If not, why?

Do you pray together? If not, why?

Do you read the bible on a regular basis? If not, why?

Did you ask God if this marriage was His will?

What part will God play in your marriage?

Do you feel that your mate is called to some form of ministry now or sometime in the future? If

So, how do you feel about that?

Do you intend to raise your family up in church?

If your mate comes from a different religious background, whose faith will you follow?

Sex

What are your convictions about sex before marriage?

What is your opinion about sex?

Do you have any phobias or fears about sex?

Are you willing to receive counseling in this area if needed?

How important is physical appearance to you?

Describe what you desire to see in the appearance of your mate.

Your money

Will both of you work? If so, why?

Are you both willing to work if you need to?

If you have money in the bank, or cash on hand, whose money is it?

Which of you will handle the financial records?

Do you have a budget? If not, will you try to work one up before you get married?

Are you willing to receive financial counseling?

Please explain your view on giving to the poor, or to support your church?

Your future

On a piece of paper, write down your six month goals. What do you hope to accomplish in your first six months of marriage? File this paper away where you can occasionally get it out and look at it together.

Write down your one year goals.

Write down your five year goals.

Write down your ten year goals.

Write down your twenty year goals.

Write down your fifty year goals.

Write down your seventy five year goals.

Commitments

What are you willing to do to make this marriage a success?

Describe to one another how your marriage will survive:

- | | |
|---------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Financial difficulties | 2. Sexual difficulties |
| 3. Sickness | 4. Disagreements |
| 5. Two careers | 6. Disappointment |

Are you willing to accept your mate just as they are, or do you feel that they need to change in some area?

If you could change something about your mate, what would it be?

If you could change something about yourself, what would it be?

Turn and look at each other right now and tell what you are committed to do in this relationship.

Communication

What is communication?

Do you make decisions "together" about the following?

- | | | |
|-----------|-------------|------------|
| Bills | Groceries | Discipline |
| Purchases | investments | hobbies |
| Careers | Children | church |

Are you honest in telling what you want from each other?

Are you flexible enough to change?

Do you listen, or just wait for your turn to talk?

What approach do you take in problem solving?

What do you have in common? List as many things as you can think of.

What are your differences? List as many as you can think of.

Past problems

Are there any communications with previous relationships, such as old boy or girl friends? If so, express your abandonment of that previous relationship and your commitment to this relationship.

Do you now or have you ever used drugs?

Have you ever had a disease?

Do you feel that you have ever had mental or emotional problems?

Are there any genetic problems or illnesses that could be passed down to your children?

Have you ever had a drinking problem?

Have you ever had a credit problem?

Do you have a spending problem?

List all of the jobs you have had in the past, how long you stayed with them, and why you left each job?

Have you ever physically abused anyone?

Have you ever been in jail?

Do you have a police record?

Do you have any outstanding tickets or warrants?

Is anyone in the process of taking you to court for anything that you know of?

Do you have any habits?

Have you ever had an operation or surgery of any kind?

Have you or any of your family ever had a problem with incest or child molestation?

This outline is to give you the opportunity to shape what your ceremony looks like. You can add to or take away from this model to fit your need.

You're Wedding Ceremony

Love is the strongest force in the human heart. It is the adhesive that hold a marriage together. Love is made up of many things. I Corinthians 13:4-7 says:

:Love is patient and kind; True love is not jealous, conceited or proud. Love is not ill-mannered, selfish or irritable. Love does not keep record of the wrongs done to us. It is not happy with evil, but rejoices with truth. Love is slow to suspect or condemn, and quick to trust and justify. Slow to offend, quick to defend. Slow to expose, quick to shield. Slow to belittle, quick to appreciate. Slow to demand, quick to give. Love never gives up. Its faith, hope and patience never fail.

Groom and Bride, it is a joy and privilege to share this event with you. My prayer is that God will richly bless your marriage. It is my responsibility to remind you of the sacredness of the commitment that you are about to make. Marriage is a sacred union, and is not to be entered into lightly, but discreetly, soberly and in the fear of God. Marriage is a covenant that is cut before God between a man and a woman. The union of marriage began when God joined a man and a woman, and a one flesh relationship came into being. In like manner this marriage will be held in the highest of esteem, building a relationship that is based on love and trust, forsaking all others, cleaving to one another, and experiencing from this day forth that "One Flesh" relationship.

SONG:

Who gives this woman to be married to this man?

At this time the father will make the hands of bride and groom and join them together, then take his seat.

Bride and Groom should now step up to minister.

CHARGE:

The pattern of marriage is that of the communion and relationship between Christ and His Church. The responsibilities of the husband and wife are to each other, Christ and the Church being their pattern. I now charge you both as you stand in the presence of these witnesses, to remember that true love and observation of these marriage vows are required for a foundation of a successful marriage and establishment of a complete and enduring home. Without these, there can be no real and enduring marriage, and the home

which you will endeavor will be in vain effort. Keep the solemn vows that you are about to make, live in tender consideration of each other, conduct your lives in honesty and truth, and your marriage will last and your home will endure. The marriage bond will be a blessing to you, and you will be a blessing to others. This should be embraced as you declare your desire to be wed. The world has the idea that Marriage is just a legal contract. While this is true, it is so much more than that. This is not 50-50 agreement. You are not equal with each other. This is a wrong concept of what is happening here. Rather, you are the fulfillment of one another. Groom, all that you are not, Bride is. Bride, all that you are not, Groom is. You should never try to change one another. God has joined you because when you are together, you are whole. You are one.

PROFESSION OF THE VOWS:

Groom and Bride, Knowing that you are both believers in the Lord Jesus Christ, following the Lord's will in your marriage, and knowing of no barriers which should hinder this union, I ask you to join your right hands and respond to the question which I ask.

Groom, in taking this woman you hold by the hand to be your wife, will you promise to love, honor, cherish her as Christ loves the Church, as long as you live?

Grooms response

Bride, will you in turn take the man who holds you by the hand to be your husband, submitting yourself unto him as to the Lord, showing reverence to his as the head of this union for the rest of your lives?

Bride's response

PRESENTATION OF THE RINGS:

Groom, which do you give as a token of your affection, sincerity and fidelity?

Groom responds: A ring

The exchange of rings is symbolic of the transfer of authority, strength and protection. All who see this ring will know that you are in covenant. In scripture, the ring is symbolic of authority and the resources which go with it. The rings are used in a wedding as a seal of the sacred vows being made.

Groom, as you take the ring which you will place on Brides finger, notice the completeness. It is a never-ending circle, a symbol of martial love. Such love knows neither boundaries nor limitations. It is never ending, undying and unfading.

Would you place this ring on her finger?

Bride, what token do you give as a symbol of your affection sincerity and fidelity?

Bride: A ring

As you take this ring which you will place on **Groom's** finger, notice its composition. That of pure gold. This too is symbolic of the purity and worth of your love. Such love seeks only the best for each other.

As you place the ring on his finger would you please look at each other and repeat this pledge to each other.

To you my love I pledge, all of the days of my life, through joy and sorrow, sickness or heath, to share in the fullness of living at your side as long as we both shall live, because I love you with all my heart. Where ever you go I will go. Your people shall be my people and your God my God.

Let us pray:

UNTIY CANDLES / SONG

After the song beings, bride and groom move toward the unity candles to light it. They remain there during the song. After the center candle is lit, the other candles are put out and they join hands and look into each others eyes. As the song is ending, they return to their position for the final declaration of blessing over their marriage.

PROCLAMATION:

Having vowed your love to each other, I declare that you be blessed in all that you are and in all that you will ever be, in all that you put your hands to, may the blessings of God be upon you and your children and your children's children. And by the authority invested in me as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the presence of God and these assembled witnesses,

I pronounce you Husband and Wife. As the scripture states, "What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Groom, you may kiss your bride.

Bride will receive bouquet from maid of honor. Bride and Groom take hands and face congregation.

May I introduce you to "Mr. and Mrs. _____"

Music will begin and Bride and Groom will exit down aisle followed by rest of the party.

Copyright ©2009 Jerry Edmon Ministries