

“Honoring the Marriage Covenant”
August 5, 2018

Hebrews 13:4 NIV- *“Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”*

“Honor the sanctity of marriage and keep your vows of purity to one another, for God will judge sexual immorality in any form, whether single or married.”
(TPT)

CORE: Crucial to any culture—the way we treat the covenant of marriage.

NOTE: Root of word for *“principalities (& powers)”* (Ephesians 6:12) is the *“questioning of origin, purpose, design”* in order to *“remove foundations.”*

1. MARRIAGE IS...

- A COVENANT RELATIONSHIP
- Built on SACRIFICIAL LOVE
- Bound by PROMISES that are kept as SACRED.

2. MARRIAGE IS NOT...

- **CONTRACT-** self-protective (NOTE: Covenants are *self-sacrificing*)
- **CONVENIENCE-** as long as you make it “easy” for me to love you
- **CONSUMERISM-** I will stay with you as long as I’m a “satisfied customer”—BUT I’m always “open” to an upgrade somewhere else

3. The HUGE CONTRAST between COVENANT & CONSUMERISM

- **Consumerism** says: “You must adjust to me—or I’m out of here!”
- **Covenant** says: “I’ll adjust to you—even when it’s inconvenient for me.”
- **Consumerism** says: “My needs must be met at every moment!”
- **Covenant** says: “Having my needs met is secondary to guarding our covenant union.”

NOTE: If a covenanter & a consumer get together → the consumer **controls** & the covenanter gets **exploited**.

NOTE: BUT when two covenanters unite → their marriage becomes a **“SAFE PLACE”** where they can be vulnerable; *“naked & unashamed.”* In consumerism → you must **perform** to keep your **“place.”**

4. Covenant Love is FREE FROM THE TYRANNY OF FEELINGS

- Feelings are **subject** to **physiology, present circumstances, & past experiences**.
- While feelings are **real**—they are never meant to **rule us**.
- **Covenant love is foundationally a CHOICE.** (i.e., not feeling-based)

NOTE: Don’t base a **lifetime relationship** purely on a **momentary feeling**.

5. Covenant Love HONORS GOD'S ORDER.

SEE GENESIS 2:23-24- Adam's Prophecy

- A reconnecting of two that were once one!
 - *"Ishah" (woman—taken "out of Ish")- "equal beside"*
 - "Women were created from the rib of man to be beside him, not from his head to top him, nor from his feet to be trampled by him, but from under his arm to be protected by him, near to his heart to be loved by him, by his side to rule with him." — Matthew Henry, *An Exposition of the Old and New Testament*
- God's Order:
 - *"Man will leave"*—with blessing; taking initiative
 - *"United to"*—covenant-making; "holy matrimony"
 - *"One flesh"*—sexual intimacy as celebration of covenant

NOTE: NY Times, April 14, 2018. *"The Downside of Cohabiting before Marriage"* by Meg Jay, clinical psychologist from University of Virginia.

- "Cohabitation in the United States has increased by more than **1,500%** in the past half century. In **1960**, about **450,000** unmarried **couples** lived together. Now the number is more than **7.5 million**. The majority of young adults in their 20s will live with a romantic partner at least once, and more than half of all marriages will be preceded by cohabitation."
- "Couples who cohabit before marriage tend to be **less satisfied** with their marriages — and more likely to **divorce** — than couples who do not."
- "Founding relationships on **convenience or ambiguity** can interfere with the process of **choosing** the people we love."

NOTE: **SEX** within marriage **covenant is a SACRAMENT**. Sex within **consumerism is a COMMODITY**—you can't isolate **physical unity** from **whole life unity**! Sex outside of covenant **lacks integrity**—doing with our **body** what we haven't done with our **life**!

FINAL THOUGHT

Covenant love with a spouse can never replace a covenant relationship with Jesus.

- Jesus calls us to resist looking at another person with *"lust"* (Matthew 5:28)
- The word He used has two roots:
 - Greed—*purely for selfish reasons*
 - Idolatry—*looking to another to give you what only God can give*
- This can happen both inside and outside marriage
- It can also occur on the "soul tie" level—the way we **"look to" another person**.

It's why Jesus offered *"living water"* to the woman at the well (John 4): *"You've been trying to find in men—what only I can give."*