

Essential Commitments of a God-honoring Marriage (Part 1) – Gen 2:21-24
2nd week into our **Happy To Be Stuck With You** series – talking about marriage and relationships from God’s perspective
Last week we focused on God’s *purposes* for marriage . . .
And this week it’s the **Essential Commitments of a God-honoring Marriage**

Essential, b/c without commitment, marriage is a moot point; Why have it?
In fact, you could say that without commitment, you really don’t even have a marriage
And if you do, it’s certainly not God-honoring, let alone long-lasting

Commitment is essential in marriage, and God lays out 4 of them in Gen 2
Two of which we’ll look at today, and two next week
Gen 2:21-24

The first essential commitment for a God-honoring marriage is to . . .
Receive your mate (v21-23)
The bottom line in 21-23 is that God made Eve, brought her to Adam, and he *received* her
He didn’t look at her and tell God he’d think about it
He didn’t register a complaint b/c she didn’t measure up
He received her – immediately and fully

That’s the gist of Adam’s relief in v23a – *This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh*
IOW perfect! I’ll take her

- Not only that, but his little naming ceremony in v23b also implies his full reception of her as his wife
It’s like when Becky and I were naming our girls just before they were born
We wanted a name that we could fully embrace – a name that would convey our fullest sense of receiving them as our own

That’s why people name their sons after their fathers
Like Martin Luther King, Jr; Robert Downey, Jr; Or the Thurston Howell III
People love their names, and apply them not only as an indicator of their hope for who their kids might become . . .
But their satisfaction for who they currently are

And I think the same thing was going on for Adam in calling her *woman*
He was so all about her, and so received her as God’s perfect provision in his life . . .
That he gave her a name that sounded just like his own – man and wo-man
Or in Hebrew – *ish* and *ishshah*
He was not only saying – she’s *like* me, but I accept her; I do; I receive her
And the implication is that Eve did too

- How many couples never experience that?
How many of *you* are missing out on God’s best in marriage, b/c you’ve never really *received* your spouse?
You’ve never fully accepted the fact that God brought you together, just like he did Adam and Eve

Becky and I are reminded of that every time we walk into our bedroom, with this painting on our wall (**photo** – “God must have brought us together”)
It’s a precious moments drawing of a little boy as a police officer, giving a ticket to a little girl on a tricycle

In our best of times, it gives us warm fuzzies, and makes us higgly-piggly
In our worst of times, it reminds us of our commitment to receive one another as God’s perfect provision for our lives

Have you done that?
Have you fully received your spouse as God’s provision for your life?
That’s the first key to a God-honoring marriage

To receive your mate . . .

- **As God’s provision**
God’s provision for companionship, partnership, relationship, and as we’ll see next week, intimacy

- **As is**
Strengths *and* weaknesses, successes *and* failures, curves *and* wrinkles
Or are you still hoping they’ll be someone they’re not?
If you’re going to have a God-honoring marriage, you have to receive them as is . . .
Trusting that God uniquely designed them for you, *weaknesses* included
It’s time to start embracing it all

- **With no agenda**
Your spouse is not your project; Nor are you their parent
So stop trying to change them and make them into someone they’re not
God may use you in their life to bring about change, yes
But it’s not your responsibility, nor should it be your goal

Your responsibility is to receive them with no agenda . . .
And your goal is to love them like Christ
Anything else and you’re going to be gravely disappointed . . .
And in the end, make a mess of your relationship

- **With no regrets**
Key to a God-honoring marriage is to receive your God-given mate with no regrets
Stop wishing you weren’t married to them . . . and start making the most of it
Stop wishing u’d married someone else . . . and start remembering th reasons u didn’t
Stop looking for an escape route . . . and start blooming where you’re planted
Stop lamenting the past . . . and start living in the present
Key to a God-honoring marriage is receiving your mate with no regrets

- **All the time**
Saying “I do” at the altar is not a one-and-done thing
It’s an ongoing, everyday decision of your will – *every day*
Not just when you feel like it, but always; Continually

Now, that comes naturally in the *best* of times

But it's the *worst* of times that require an ongoing commitment of your will, isn't it?
The times when your spouse rubs you wrong
Or you find out things about them you wish were different
Or when the skeletons of past relationships, or past lifestyles, or past decisions creep
out of the closet
That's when you need to make a conscious decision to receive them as God's provision
in your life

That's when you need to so let God invade your heart that mercy rains down and love
overflows
So that you can fully and continually receive your mate – all the time

It's essential for a God-honoring marriage
And if you've slipped in that recently, or you're failing miserably . . .
Ask God to forgive you; Ask your spouse to forgive you . . .
And start afresh with a renewed commitment to receive them as God's provision for
your life – as is, with no agenda, no regrets, all the time
That's the first essential commitment of a God-honoring marriage from this passage

The second is to . . .

Leave your parents (v24)

After conveying God's foundational purposes in marriage, and the first essential
commitment . . .

Moses comes to this multi-faceted conclusion in v24, the first of which is . . .

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother

IOW, when it comes to marriage, it's essential that you leave your parents

That doesn't mean you stop honoring your parents . . .

That would contradict the 5th Commandment to honor your father/mother (Ex. 20:12)

Nor does it mean that it's okay to withhold help from them when they need it

That would run contrary to the instruction of Jesus in Mk 7 to help your parents if
necessary (Mk 7:9-13)

Not to mention Paul's instruction in 1 Tim 5:8 to provide for your relatives

And lest you think this just applies to husbands b/c it says *a man shall leave his father and
mother* – think again

If that were the case, then he would also be the only one who had to hold fast in the
marriage – and we know from the rest of Scripture that that's not the case

So the implication is that both should leave their parents

But **Ps 45:10-11** actually makes it explicit, where it says in middle of this love poem–
*Hear, O daughter, and consider, and incline your ear: forget your people and your
father's house, and the king will desire your beauty.*

Forget as in *leave* – not forsake, but establish your independence

The first step of which is to . . .

• Cut the apron strings

In order to effectively leave your parents when you get married, you must cut the apron
strings – the cords of allegiance

Meaning that when you get married, you must transfer your primary allegiance from
your mom and dad, to your spouse – both of you
If don't, you'll undermine the oneness God requires *and* desires for you

So let me ask you something

When trouble comes up in your life, who do you call first?

Your husband, or your mom? Your wife, or your dad?

When you have good news to share, who the first speed dial you hit?

When you have an important decision to make, who's your go-to man?

If the answer is your parents, you haven't left them

You haven't cut the apron strings

- If you're going to have a God-honoring marriage, you must shift your priorities, your
loyalties, and your accountability to your spouse
Your *priorities*, in that your wife/husband should be your first consideration in all
decisions
Your *loyalties*, in that you defer to the desires of one another, before your mom/dad
And your *accountability*, in that you no longer answer to your *parents* for your
decisions, but to one another

Consult with them on important things, yes

Listen to their wisdom and advice, yes

But never make a decision just b/c they want you to, or one that runs contrary to your
spouse

- If you're going to have a God-honoring marriage, you must cut the apron strings by
shifting your priorities, loyalties, and accountability to your spouse
That's God's design
A man shall *leave* his father and mother
A woman shall *forget* her father's house

It's one of the few things Becky and I did *right* in our early years

We made a commitment from the start that we would not talk to our parents about
anything we hadn't already talked about with each other

Especially if it was a fight or a disagreement

And it saved us much heartache over time

Leave your parents by cutting the apron strings

And second . . .

• Cut the purse strings

As in, sever the cords of dependence

Rely on one another for financial support

Figure out how to make ends meet with just the two of you

That's where memories are made and bonds are forged

That doesn't mean you should refuse any and all financial help from your parents

Not at all; Sometimes it's necessary; Sometimes you *need* help

And rejecting it is just pride on your part

Nor is there anything wrong with parents helping their kids get started in marriage

There's much latitude here for personal convictions

But if the help continues beyond what they need; Or it has strings attached . . .

Or you're just looking to make life easy for them . . .

You risk doing them more harm than good by making dependents out of people who
s/b independent

- We had some friends a while back whose parents bought the *wife* a new van every couple of years – as in, they put it in *her* name, and handed *her* the keys
That's a problem – not just b/c they gave it when they didn't need it . . .
But b/c she accepted it

And though it was a divisive issue in their marriage . . .

The husband was both too greedy to refuse it, and too weak to deny his in-laws the month-long visit that came with it

If you're going to leave your parents in a biblical sense – you must cut the apron strings,
and the purse strings

- And don't think that just because you're 1000 miles away, that you've done either
Distance has nothing to do with it, especially in this day and age of communication
You can be just as dependent from the next state, as you can be next door

Nor does *time* have anything to do with it

I originally thought only young married's struggled with this

And then I started running into couple after couple who still struggled with it after being married for years and years

I remember one such couple who had been married 20 years, and still hadn't cut the apron strings

The husband called his mom every single day, she told him what to do, and he did it

She was his go-to person instead of his wife

And their marriage stunk b/c of it – no wonder

Leaving your parents has nothing to do with distance, nothing to do with time, and it doesn't happen by itself

The purse strings and apron strings won't sever themselves

You have to do it – both of you

And so do your parents

They too must recognize and accept this God-ordained shift in allegiance and dependence

Otherwise, they'll become disillusioned, hurt, and angry – becoming a *drag* on your marriage instead of an encouragement

Unfortunately, not all parents recognize this

And it may require a sit-down with them to explain your convictions

And if that doesn't work, then follow up with a letter, and draw some firm boundaries

It's your marriage, and your responsibility

So cut the apron strings, cut the purse strings . . .

And finally, under this principle of leaving your parents . . .

- **Erase your expectations**

Most of us come into marriage with so many preconceived notions of how things should happen

From day-to-day living, to long-term planning – we're filled with expectations

Like what your family traditions will look like around the holidays

Or how the laundry s/b folded; Or how many kids you should have

Or who cooks dinner, and what it should taste like

All things that we pick up from our parents, and there's nothing wrong with them

The trouble starts when you expect *your* life and *your* marriage, to look the same as your parent's

When that's the case, you'll never be satisfied – b/c *nobody* does *everything* the same

If you're going to leave your parents and have a God-honoring marriage . . .

You must erase your expectations and establish your own life

That doesn't mean you can't have some of the same traditions your parents did – undoubtedly you will

But the key is deciding on them *together* . . .

And holding your tongue when your wife doesn't fix jello salad like your mom does . . .

Or your husband isn't as handy as your dad

He's not your dad, and she's not your mom

So erase your expectations, leave your parents, and receive your mate

It's essential for a God-honoring marriage