

Renew Your Commitments! (Part 2) – Gen 2:24-25

Gen 2:24-25; 3 weeks into our *All Out Of Love* series; And I trust that God is using these truths to *change* your marriage, *prepare* you for marriage . . .

And help you counsel *others* who are married

So last week we covered the first two commitments we need to renew from time to time in our marriages; The first of which was to . . .

Commitment #1 – Receive your mate

That's commitment #1; Receive your mate as God's provision, for who they are, with no agenda, no regrets, all the time

Second, was to . . .

Commitment #2 – Leave your parents

As in cut the apron strings – the cords of allegiance; Cut the purse strings – the cords dependence; And erase your expectations

Both of you; You *and* your spouse, and you *and* your parents – they too have to let go

That doesn't mean cut them off, it means establish your own life (**Summary**)

Receive your mate, and leave your parents

And then 3rd, this week, is . . .

Commitment #3 – Cleave to your spouse (v24)

That's the 3rd commitment I want to encourage you to renew in your marriage

V24 says – *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife; Or cleave* to his wife as the old KJV translates it

Whatever the translation, the word in Hebrew is *dabaq* – used 55x in the OT

And it literally means – to pursue hard a firmly joined state like a continual pressing

Like if you were to put glue on your hands, and then press them together without ever letting up; Even when you want to; Even when you're tired

Even when times are tough; Even when others have long since let go

That's *dabaq* devotion; It's steadfast; And that's how it should be in your marriage

Hold fast to your spouse; *Cleave* to them

And do so . . .

• **With exclusive affection**

It says that *a man shall . . . hold fast to his wife*; Not someone else's wife; Not someone *other* than your wife; But *your* wife

And the same goes for a woman toward her husband

A survey conducted by the British version of Cosmopolitan magazine, found that more than 40% of women in the UK, had used social media . . .

To flirt with someone other than their spouse or boyfriend; Not good

Hold fast to your *own* spouse; Flirt with *them*; Exclusively

That means watch the *words* you use with those of the opposite sex; Be careful of the *time* you spend with them; Be mindful of their personal *space* as you talk w/ them . . .

The gestures you make, the laughs you laugh, the touches you touch . . .

Don't in any way share your affection with someone other than your spouse

Don't even risk it; Nothing dishonors and disheartens them more

Cleave to them; With *exclusive* affection

That's the first part of this commitment

2nd, is to cleave to them . . .

• **In faithfulness to your covenant**

B/c that's what your commitment in marriage is – a covenant

That's what it's called in **Mal 2:14**; Referring to the wife of your youth it says – *She is your companion and your wife by covenant*.

Now, most of us think of commitments in terms of *contracts* – agreements based on mutual convenience; You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours

And as such, they're designed to *protect* each party, providing an *out* in case of a default or unforeseen circumstance; And there's nothing wrong with that

Our world is filled with necessary contracts – from mortgages to business partnerships

• But that's *not* what God intends in *marriage*

He doesn't intend for you to go *into* your marriage with an *out* in mind

Or to draft a prenup in order to protect yourself should something go wrong

What God intends is that you're married for life

That you fulfill your marital responsibilities *regardless* of whether your spouse does

That you make an unconditional promise of life-long commitment, no matter what

That you cut a covenant, as it was said in Old Testament times*****

• And in marriage, it's a 3-way covenant

Whether you realized it or not, when you stood at the altar and made your vows, you were invoking God's presence in your marriage

B/c the next verse says in **Mal 2:15** – *Did he* [God] *not make them one* [the husband and wife], *with a portion of the Spirit in their union?*

It's a rhetorical question in that context, intended to communicate that God not only joined you together, but joined *with* you in your union; Through his *Spirit******

Which means, when you put it all together, that . . .

Marriage is a sacred, three-way, unconditional promise of life-long commitment between you, your spouse, and God.

Sacred, in that it's a God-thing; 3-way, in that it's not just about you; And unconditional, in that you can't legitimately break it just b/c

When you said "I do," you made a covenant; And committed to be faithful to it

It's something the Olson's found out the hard way (**God@Work video**)

If you want a marriage that's filled with love, like the Olson's is now – cleave to your spouse with exclusive affection, in faithfulness to your covenant

That's the 3rd commitment worth renewing from time to time

4th, is . . .

Commitment #4 – Become one flesh (Gen 2:24)

V24 says – *Therefore a man shall leave . . . and they shall become one flesh.*

And the idea here is not just in a physical sense, but in *every* sense

That you would become one *emotionally*, as you mesh your personalities . . .

And *spiritually*, as you worship and serve the Lord together . . .

And *experientially*, as you share life together . . .

And *economically*, as you share resources with one another

Becoming one flesh is an all-inclusive joining of two lives

And there's 3 facets of it; Starting . . .

- **With a commitment to love one another (John 15:12)**

Which takes us to the heart of the message; It's not your love that sustains your *commitment*, but your *commitment* that sustains your love

If you're going to have a marriage *filled* with love, you have to *commit* to love; Feelings alone won't do it

Jesus said in **John 15:12** – *This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you*. And while he wasn't talking about marriage *specifically* . . .

It certainly applies; Love one another

- But the difficulty lies in the *as I have loved you* part; IOW we are to love one another in marriage, just like Christ loves us in life
Which, among other things, requires sacrifice, perseverance, hard work, and communication

Sacrifice, in that you need to lay down *your* life, and give up *your* desires, for those of your *spouse* – just like Jesus did with us

And *perseverance*, in that you need to stick *with* it, “‘til death do us part” – just like Jesus sticks with us*****

And *hard work*, in that it takes time and effort – especially when they don't *deserve* it
And *communication*, in that you need to *express* your love – just like Jesus
Becoming one flesh starts with a commitment to love like that – with sacrifice, perseverance, hard work, and communication

- Which by the way, your spouse may not *receive* very well; At least not the way *you* express it, the way *you* communicate it; B/c people tend to *feel* love *differently*

For instance, the way *I* tend to express love to Becky, is completely different than the way she'd like to receive it; Does that mean I'm not expressing it? No

It just means she's probably not hearing it; Which inevitably leads to misunderstandings, emptiness, and hurt feelings; Not to mention a lack of oneness

- Like the time when we were first married, and I gave Becky a Calvin and Hobbs comic book for her birthday
Which might have been a good thing if Becky had any interest *whatsoever* in comics
And if my gift had shown any kind of forethought or sensitivity
And if I had wrapped it and given it to her over dinner at a restaurant

Instead, 2 months into our marriage, I forgot about her birthday, and thought I could salvage it by stopping at the train station newsstand on the way home
And having found something that didn't look like a newspaper, I made things worse by tossing it on her lap as I walked in the door, still in the brown paper bag no less . . .
And said happy birthday; Not even a kiss

- Now, I'm here to tell you – that's not good no matter what your spouse's love language is; But when it's receiving gifts, like it is for Becky – it's very, very bad
And my lack of forethought on something so important to her, communicated that I didn't love her; It didn't matter how much I changed the oil in the cars . . .

Or took care of the house, or mowed the yard, or fixed things that broke – those things were lost on her; Oh, she appreciated them . . .

But they didn't communicate love in her mind; And still don't; But gifts do

So part of my commitment to love her, was figuring out her language, and then *expressing* my love that way

And the same is true for you; Whether it's acts of service, physical touch, words of affirmation, quality time, or gifts – figure out your spouse's love language . . .

And then make a commitment to love them that way; Just like Jesus

That's the first part of becoming one flesh; 2nd, is to do so . . .

- **With a commitment to spiritual transparency (1 Thess 5:11)**

This is something that Becky and I *both* didn't get the first 8 or 9 years of our marriage
We had very little sharing about spiritual things, and our oneness suffered b/c of it

I rationalized that if she was living right, and I was living right, then we were all good

We didn't *need* spiritual transparency to have a marriage filled with love

We didn't *need* to talk about the Lord

And almost imperceptibly we drifted apart like 2 ships in the middle of the ocean

Until we finally humbled ourselves, and talked about it, and began sharing our heart with little baby steps of vulnerability (**1 Thess 5:11**)

Encourag[ing] one another and build[ing] one another up as 1 Thess 5:11 says

Realizing that if we didn't, if we didn't start somewhere, there was going to be trouble

- And then we started praying together*****

Largely b/c Becky gave me a little book called “Two Hearts Praying as One”

With a note written inside the front cover, saying that she'd like to read it together

So we started doing so at bed time, and praying the prayers out loud that were written at the end of each segment; And slowly, our ships started coming in

And lo and behold, our oneness deepened

Don't miss that; Set aside your fear and pride, open up a dialogue, and start somewhere
B/c a commitment to spiritual transparency leads to a oneness you can't imagine

And then finally, become one flesh . . .

- **With a commitment to physical intimacy (Gen 2:25)**

Let's just start with this – sex is the most personal and private act 2 people can share

And as such, it's one of the most amazing gifts God has given to husbands and wives

Especially so, since it's guilt-free; After saying in Gen 2:24 that the two *shall become one flesh*, v25 says – *The man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed*.

Confirmation that what God designed was perfect and pure

And based on **Heb 13:4** it's our responsibility to keep it that way

Let marriage be held in honor among all [it says; as in don't dilute it, don't diminish it, don't disparage it, don't ruin it, and don't interfere in it; esteem it very highly]

And let the marriage bed [the act of physical intimacy] be undefiled [pure], for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.

Keep the physical aspect of your marriage *pure*

Don't corrupt it by having *sex* with someone else, and don't pollute it with impure *thoughts* about someone else

Become one flesh with a commitment to *pure* physical intimacy*****

- Not only that, but *regular* physical intimacy
And all the husbands in the room are like – “Amen”
Especially so in light of **Prov 5:18-19**, where Solomon is writing, and says . . .
Let your fountain be blessed [this is poetic metaphor for sex], *and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe.*

And then he gets explicit; *Let her breasts fill you* [as in satisfy you] at all times with *delight; be intoxicated always* in her love.

Apart from regular physical intimacy, there's no way you can meet the standards of that verse; No way you can be satisfied at *all* times . . .

And *always* intoxicated in her love*****

Which is reinforced by **1 Cor 7:3-5** – *The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband* [IOW he should satisfy *her* desires for physical intimacy, and she, his]. [4] *For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.* [5] *Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.*

Implying, that physical intimacy in marriage should be regular – suspended only *for a limited time*, if at all (5)*****

- Not only that, but it also implies that it should be *other-oriented*; Pure, regular, and other-oriented; As in, *do not deprive one another* it says
Which means, wives – you should never use sex as a bargaining chip
“Hey sweetheart, I'll meet you in the bedroom if you get your honey-do list done”
Not good; It's manipulative, self-centered, and the exact *opposite* of other-oriented intimacy; Sex is a *means* to oneness, and a *celebration* of oneness . . .
Not a bargaining chip to get what you want

On the other hand, husbands – your wife is not your convenient concubine, nor your little sex toy whenever you have a notion

Sex with her should be the culmination of your loving *relationship*, not a cheap means to gratify yourself

- And finally, become one flesh with a commitment to *pleasurable* physical intimacy
Pure, regular, other-oriented, and pleasurable
And you don't have to read The Song of Solomon very long to realize it; Steam rises off the pages

Like **Song of Solomon 7:11-13** where the wife says . . .

Come my beloved, let us go out into the fields and lodge in the villages [a little hint here: this isn't a 4-H fieldtrip; these are metaphors for their bodies and their love-making]; *let us go out early to the vineyards and see whether the vines have budded, whether the grape blossoms have opened and the pomegranates are in bloom. There I*

will give you my love. The mandrakes give forth fragrance, and beside our doors are all choice fruits, new as well as old, which I have laid up for you, O my beloved.

Poetic imagery describing the treasures and pleasures of sex

And I guarantee you, if you *commit* to that, if you work toward that, along with a commitment to spiritual transparency and love (**Summary**) . . .

You'll go a long way toward becoming one flesh, and cleaving to your spouse like a continual pressing, in faithfulness to your covenant

Pray – Lord, we want marriages that glorify you, and satisfy us; So find us faithful in our commitments to that end, as we give ourselves to you, and one another
And as we give now of our tithes and offerings, especially those for the build-out – would you make our joy complete, enabling us to move ahead? I trust you will