

- As we finish our bible study on the marriage relationships, I would like you to listen to the part of the wedding called the “affirmation”. This is when the husband and wife affirm their intentions to each other, to God, and to the witnesses.
- I will ask you to affirm your intentions by saying “I will”. Will you have this (woman/man) to be your wedded (wife/husband) to live together after God’s ordinance in the holy estate of matrimony? Will you love (her/him), honor (her/him) and keep (her/him) in sickness and in health and forsaking all others keep yourself only for (her/him) so long as you both shall live?
- These areas of commitment are key areas in having a fruitful marriage relationship.
- We have already talked about loving them - we need to remember that they have the first position of love over any other human, only God is in front of them.
- We are committing to show them love, not just say that we love them.
- Now lets talk about honoring your husband or wife.
- To honor is to respect someone, to speak highly of someone, to reverence someone.
- This is key in every marriage. Every person wants to be honored and if they are dishonored and disrespected then they can grow resentful.
- Part of honoring is acknowledging the other person and recognizing their role in the marriage.
- In todays Christian marriages, I don’t think the husband and wife do enough to acknowledge the other’s contributions to the marriage. Some of this can come from this tendency to keep score in our marriages, always dwelling on our own contribution to the marriage.
- We don’t compliment enough. If anyone should be complimenting your husband or your wife it should be you. Everyone wants to be acknowledged, maybe not publically but absolutely in the intimate marriage relationship.
- Complimenting helps to reinforce the strengths of the person you are complimenting. It’s not just words, it is an acknowledgement saying “I notice what you are doing” and you are doing it great.
- Something else that we need to know is how to take a compliment. If nothing else, just say thank you, don’t try to disprove the compliment that your spouse has given you or it will make someone less eager to compliment you because they think they are going to have to debate you over the compliment.
- Remember part of honoring is acknowledging.
- (Read 1 Peter 3:1-7)
- (vs1) Tells wives to be in subjection to their husband, this means submissive. We have already studied (Ephesians 5) where wives are told to submit to their husbands as unto the Lord and husbands are told to love their wives .What we need to know is if you are doing this then you are honoring your husband by obeying the order that God put in the marriage.
- And in (1 Peter 3:7) we read - “Likewise ye, husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life: that your prayers be not hindered.”

- The husband needs to continually put the wife on the pedestal of honor in the home. The husband has been given the position by God as the head of the household but this is not a power position, it is an accountability position. The husband is suppose to notice things in his marriage and live with his wife according to the knowledge that he gains by noticing things. What makes her happy, what makes her sad, what encourages her and what upsets her. Husbands are suppose to notice the things about her that nobody else notices, and then live together according to that knowledge. This is a way to honor your wife.
- The wife is supposed to reverence her husband as to the position that God gave him and if she does he will naturally try harder to maintain her reverence.
- This is the way God said marriage is going to work best, no matter what society today says.
- If this mutual honor is implemented in the home it will pass down to the next generation in the home.
- So now we know about loving and honoring so lets talk about keeping our spouse in sickness and in health.
- Keeping means “to take care of”, “to watch over”, “to guard”.
- This is one of the most comforting things about marriage, to know that there is a person devoted to your well being, whether things are good or not good, whether you are sick or well, whether you are facing challenges or everything is going your way.
- This goes back to an unselfish love that we are commanded to have that causes us to love someone like we love ourselves. If your spouse doesn’t know that you are devoted to their well being, to take care of them, to watch over them and to guard them from anything that could hurt them then they are going to feel insecure about having you as a spouse.
- Now lets talk about this last thing that we said we would do. “Forsaking all others, keeping yourself only for them” This speaks about faithfulness in the marriage. This is so important (Hebrews 13:4) “Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.”
- This means marriage should be honored by everyone. The husband and the wife should honor the marriage covenant and everyone else should honor the fact that some other person is someone else’s husband or wife.
- It tells us that the marriage bed should be undefiled, which means the sanctity of sexual relationship in the marriage is a huge point of honor. This sexual relationship between husband and wife is something that those two people share and it is exclusive, it is important and no one else should ever be brought into this special place.
- God has always declared that this is one of his commands to us (Exodus 20:14) “thou shalt not commit adultery”. In the Old Testament law (Leviticus 20:10) both parties are to be put to death. (Matthew 5:27-32) Jesus speaks about adultery. (Matthew 19:19) Jesus speaks about adultery.

- So giving your spouse the first position of love.
- So complimenting your spouse to honor them.
- Acknowledging the things they do.
- Reverencing them in their role in the marriage.
- Noticing what they do and what makes them happy or sad.
- Taking care of your spouse, watching over them, and guarding them from anything that may harm them.
- And keeping yourself for them and giving them the exclusive sexual relationship that only the husband and wife share and not violating it.
- These are all things that are key to having a great marriage relationship.
- Every husband and wife naturally desire these things and you want to be sure that you are providing these things for your spouse so the devil doesn't tempt your spouse in an area that you have chosen to be deficient in.
- Remember those vows!!
- I \_\_\_\_\_ take thee \_\_\_\_\_ to be my wedded (wife/husband).

To have 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

Until death do us part.

- We make these vows to our spouse and we make them to God. A vow is a covenant promise.
- The marriage vow is the marriage promise and it is a sacred promise. It is a vow that you honor even when it requires a lot of sacrifice to honor it.
- Things that you need to make sure of before you make this vow:
  1. If the person that I am making this vow with a saved person - Will we be equally yoked together by our belief (2 Corinthians 6:14)
  2. Does the person I am marrying feel strongly about the need to worship God consistently (Hebrews 10:24-25) "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works. Not forsaking the assembly of ourselves together as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another and so much more as ye see the day approaching." This applies to Christian marriage. Husbands and wives should first and foremost be encouraging each other spiritually.

- A. You want your spouse to be spiritually strong and spiritually obedient. Even though both have a lot of obligations, you want to make sure that you never lose focus of your spouse's spiritual temperature. A husband or wife that is close to God and listening to God and worshipping God and seeking God is a spouse that is going to be led by God. You may have differences but you will have your walk with God in common and if you are both walking with God you will be walking together.
- B. You need to be faithful to pray together and be comfortable talking to God together. There is a confidence that comes when you know that your spouse is faithfully praying.
- C. You need to make sure that you have a worship plan for your family and then as husband and wife, you need to be the examples.
- These spiritual issues are important and they will be the strength that you will be able to have that non-Christian couples don't have.
  - In (Colossians 3) we are given these instructions:
    - (vs17) "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him"
    - (vs 18) "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord."
    - (vs 19) "Husbands love you wives and be not bitter against them."
  - If you are a Christian wife or a Christian husband, you are a Christian first and a husband or wife second. Whatever you do and whatever you say, do it and say it in the name of Jesus. Represent him in your marriage. (Colossians 3:23) "And whatsoever ye, do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men." We are actually serving the Lord by being good husbands and wives. I am supposed to be a good husband because the Lord commands me as his servant to be a good husband.
  - As we see Paul tell the wives to submit unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord, we need to realize that the wife is accountable to God first then her husband. She is supposed to submit to her husband but if her husband is telling her to sin then she is accountable to God first not to sin. That is why it is important for both husband and wife to be walking with the Lord, so there is no difference between them in what they consider sin.
  - Next in (Colossians 3:19) Husbands are told to love their wives and be not bitter against them. Husbands are not supposed to have an attitude of harshness and bitterness with their wife. In some relationships you may see the husband that is seeing himself as the general of the family. The alpha male that is shouting orders because he is in authority. Sometimes people in authority get angry or frustrated at the people around them if things aren't going their way and they yell at them or continually fuss at them or talk down to them or criticize them or speak harsh to them. This is what the bible is calling "being bitter against them".
  - Men are commanded to show love, not bitterness, if a man is showing bitterness instead of love, he may get the authority he wants but he will not get the respect. God wants the wife to want to be submissive to the husband not have to be because he is a tyrant. The woman is made to be attracted to a man that has a loving authority in the home that is acting as protector and provider.
  - In a lot of homes today there has been a role reversal, the woman has assumed the role as the dominant spouse and she is the hard one, the one that is acting bitter. This is also a problem. First all the man is naturally going to resent her because she has assumed the authority but then it will continually grow into a deeper resentment because he begins to feel humiliated in his position.

- No one likes getting treated harshly, husband or wife, and both need to know that they are equally valuable in this relationship, they are two people who have become one so it doesn't make sense to treat the other person harshly because you are in essence making yourself weaker.
- Remember, God brought Eve to Adam after he took Eve out of Adam and Adam said "Now this is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh".
- God presented Eve to Adam because it was not good for man to be alone - God made a helpmeet for Adam "a second self" and at the same time Adam became "a second self" for Eve because she needed a helpmeet also.
- Man was commanded in the marriage relationship in (Genesis 2:24) to leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife. This means that as a man and woman are married then they become each others priority relationship.
- We learned that God gave the man and woman who became one by marriage the most special way to express that oneness. He gave them physical intimacy, which we call a sexual relationship. In this relationship the husband and wife can share each other physically and express their love and their bond together. This relationship is reserved for marriage and marriage only because it is the special bond that God gave that represents them as one flesh.
- Another expression of oneness is the children of the marriage, which are a result of the husband and wife coming together to become one. Think about it, the result of this action of oneness is that a child is produced and this one child is made of two parts, the husband and the wife.
- We read in ( 1 Corinthians 7) that when a man and woman become husband and wife they actually give ownership of themselves to their spouse, and they are not supposed to deprive each other unless they are both consenting to focus on their relationship through fasting and prayer and then they are commanded to come together again so they will not be tempted outside of their marriage.
- We learned that the wife is supposed to submit to her husband and the husband is supposed to love his wife, and that this works if the wife knows that the husband loves her so unselfishly that he would completely give himself for her best interest, then she will gladly submit to someone who always is looking to give to her.
- We learned that it's important to express your love to each other and that you need to be careful not to leave your first love. You need to remember that first position of love belongs to your spouse before any other human being, no one wants to be second. This love is a combination of Eros love, Philos love and Agape love. Eros love is physical and fulfills our desires, Philos love is that companion love that binds you together as companions and Agape love is an unselfish giving love.
- Unselfishness is the key to a good healthy Christian marriage, trying to out serve one another and showing your love to each other. Expressing your love, encouraging and complimenting each other and giving to the other person because you truly want them to be happy.
- God designed marriage between a man and a woman to be something that brings glory to him. Is your marriage bringing glory to God?
- Take this time and pray for your marriage, pray for someone else's marriage, or pray that when you do get married, that you will have all these things that God wants you to have.