

Essential Commitments of God-honoring Marriage (Part 2) – Gen 2:24-25

Gen 2:24-25; 3 weeks into our **Happy To Be Stuck With You** series

I trust that God is using these truths to change your marriage, prepare you for marriage, and help you counsel others who are married

Last week we covered 2 of the **Essential Commitments of a God-honoring Marriage**

The first of which, from Gen 2:23, is . . .

1. Receive your mate

As God's provision, as is, with no agenda, no regrets, all the time

2. Leave your parents

From v24 where it says (read it); As in . . .

Cut the apron strings – the cords of allegiance

Cut the purse strings – the cords dependence

Erase your expectations – your spouse is not your mom/dad; nor are they your project

If you're going to have a God-honoring marriage, and you should since it's his creation, and his design, for his glory . . .

You need to start by receiving your mate, leaving your parents . . .

And then, cleaving to your spouse

That's the third essential C . . .

3. Cleave to your spouse (v24)

24 – *Therefore a man shall . . . 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

Have you ever seen a carpenter or a cabinet-maker take two pieces of wood, prepare the surface, apply some glue . . .

And then press them together w/ those big clamps that u screw together/tighten down?

Why do they do that? B/c they want to ensure the tightest bond possible

That's the idea of cleaving or holding fast to your spouse

And it happens best when you're near each other

If you're going to cleave to your spouse, you must be . . .

• In close proximity

That's what the word *dabaq* means in its most basic form – to be close

Certainly Adam and Eve were – and we s/b too

It concerns me greatly when I hear from time to time that a husband's working in one state or country, while his wife's holding down the fort in another . . .

With no end in sight

That's a problem – *it is not good for man to be alone*

And it's contrary to the pattern/example here of Adam and Eve

If there's no end in sight to your separation, and soon, don't start the journey

Figure out another way – even if it means a cut in pay or a different job

B/c God's design, both for your good and his glory . . .

Is that you cleave to one another in close physical proximity

Second, cleave to your spouse . . .

• With steadfast devotion

That's the second sense of this word for “hold fast”

It means to be steadfast in your devotion – even when times are tough, and even when others aren't

Like when Naomi was urging her two daughters-in-law to leave her, go on w/ their lives

The Bible says that Orpah did exactly that, but Ruth *clung* to her – she held fast to her

The same word as in Gen 2:24

And then listen to the next verses (Ruth 1:15-18)

That's *dabaq* devotion – steadfast even when times are tough

And even when others aren't

Like when the men of Judah in (**2 Sam 20:2**) remained *steadfast* in their devotion to King

David, despite the fact that everybody else left him

So all the men of Israel withdrew from David and followed Sheba the son of Bichri. But

the men of Judah followed their king steadfastly from the Jordan to Jerusalem.

They followed steadfastly – they held fast to David; they cleaved to him

Even when others didn't

That's how it s/b in your marriage – cleave to your spouse with steadfast devotion

Even when times are tough; And even if others don't

Third, cleave to your spouse

• With exclusive affection

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

If you're married, flirting is out; You're done with it

That means watch the words you use with those of the opposite sex

Be careful of the time you spend with them; The personal space as you talk with 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 your spouse with exclusive affection

And fourth, cleave to your spouse . . .

• Faithful to your covenant

That's what your commitment in marriage is – a covenant

That's what it's called in **Mal 2:14**, where 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 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
And regardless of the circumstances
That's a covenant – an unconditional promise of life-long commitment, regardless of the other party's performance

- And it's a 3-way covenant at that

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

Which means that when you put it all together . . .
Marriage is a sacred, three-way, unconditional promise of life-long commitment between you, your spouse, and God.
When you say I do, that's what you're committing to
That you'll be faithful to your covenant

Does that mean that divorce is never allowed? No; But it *is* never intended
And I'll spend a whole message on that later in this series

For now, cleave to your spouse . . .
In close proximity, with steadfast devotion, and exclusive affection . . .
Faithful to your covenant

And then fourth; The 4th essential commitment of a God-honoring marriage . . .
After Receiving your mate, Leaving your parents, and Cleaving to your spouse . . .
Is to . . .
4. Become one flesh (Gen 2:24)
Therefore a man shall leave . . . and they shall become one flesh.

The idea here is not just in a physical sense, but in *every* sense
One flesh has this connotation of being woven together . . .
Emotionally, as you mesh your personalities
Spiritually, as you worship and serve the Lord together
Logistically, as you adjust for one another
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 – 2 become 1

And it starts . . .

- **With a commitment to trust God**

Marriage is a leap of faith – there's no getting around it
Certainly that was true for Adam – he'd never seen a woman before, let alone lived w/ 1
And the same was true for Eve

Which means that in their commitment to become one flesh, they had to trust God
They had to trust his design, his method, his timing . . .
They had to trust him for every single aspect of their relationship

And we're in the same boat
Once married, we have to trust that God *brought* us together . . .
And then we have to trust that God will *knit* us together
Weaving our lives into a never-before-seen tapestry of beauty and function

The problem is, we can't always see it
It's like the old time Spanish rug makers who used to weave their rugs upside down
Which meant that they couldn't see the beauty of the tapestry until it was finished
So they wove by faith – trusting that the strands and frays on the backside were patterns of elegance on the front

The same is true in marriage
We can't always see the finished product
And it's hard to imagine that the loose ends of life and the daily grind of our relationship could result in *anything* of value, let alone *beauty*

But we do the right things, trusting that the *Grand Weaver* can
That he *can* imagine a thing of beauty and function when 2 become 1
And that he can *do* it, if we do it his way

Second, become one flesh . . .

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

Jesus says 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

The difficulty lies in the *as I have loved you* part – we are to love one another in marriage just like Christ loves us in life
Sacrificially; Selflessly; and Unconditionally

Which means that your commitment to marriage cannot be based on feelings alone
Yes, romance and attraction are an important part
But feelings will only carry you so far, because *feelings* are *fleeting*

Two don't become one with a commitment to feelings . . .
2 become 1 with a commitment to love – sacrificial, selfless, unconditional love
Nor is it your love that will sustain your commitment, but your commitment that will sustain your love
It's a God-empowered decision of your will, and the only thing that will endure the ups/downs of marital life

The best part is, when you're *committed* to loving your spouse, your feelings usually follow, and you get the best of both worlds
But it starts with a commitment

Third, become 1 flesh . . .

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

1 Thess 5:11 – *Encourage one another and build one another up*

It's one of about 30 "one another" commands in the NT

Like *love one another* (Jn 15:12; just saw); *Bear one another's burdens* (Gal 6:2)

Confess your sins to one another (James 5:16); *Exhort one another daily* (Heb 3:13)

None of which you can possibly do, without transparency

How can you . . .

Encourage one another – if you never say anything?

Build one another up – if nobody knows you're down?

Bear one another's burden's – if you don't know what they are?

You can't

Consequently you forfeit a huge portion of the oneness/wovenness that God intends

- This is something that Becky and I didn't get this the first 8 or 9 years of our marriage
We had very little spiritual transparency

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 God-honoring marriage

We didn't *need* to talk about the Lord or spiritual things in order to be one

And almost imperceptibly we drifted apart like 2 aircraft carriers in the middle of the ocean of life, not having a clue what we were missing

And if we did, we were too proud and too protective of our egos to do anything about it

I'm not sure what caused us to wake up

But I vividly remember thinking at some point – "this is not good"

And if we don't do something about it, there's going to be trouble

And the longer we wait, the harder it will be

So we humbled ourselves, and began sharing our heart in little pieces

And opening up with little baby steps of vulnerability . . .

And slowly our ships started coming back together

- If that's you, can I encourage you to do the same?
To start taking some *risks* toward spiritual transparency?

I'm not talking about leading family devotions for 45 minutes every night . . .

I'm talking about sharing your thoughts as part of the dinner table conversation

Maybe something you experienced at work that reminded you of God's goodness

Or some verse or thought that struck you in your Bible reading, or in a message u heard

Take some risks and verbalize your thoughts

If it spawns a conversation, great; If not, let it go and wait for the next one

And then, (and here's the hardest part when it comes to ST) – *start praying together*
That's right

Becky and I used a little book called "Two Hearts Praying as One"

She gave it to me with a note written inside the front cover saying that she'd like to read it together

So we started reading it together at bed time, and then praying the prayers out loud, that were written at the end of each segment

And you can do the same thing

Husbands – set aside your pride and just do it

"Oh, I can't do that – if I start praying now, I'm basically admitting that I should have been praying all along"

Ya? So? Humble yourself and get going

"Oh, I can't do that – she's just going to think I'm doing it b/c I'm supposed to"

You are; And eventually you'll be doing it b/c you *want* to

But in the meantime, you have to start *somewhere*

Wives, for your part – set aside your fear of getting rejected or hammered for your vulnerability, open yourself up, and pray

And don't just sit back waiting for your husband to initiate things – you can do so too

But one way or another, grab each other's hand when you climb into bed, and say, "Let's pray, can we?"

And then do it; 30 seconds; Start there; Start *somewhere*

B/c a commitment to spiritual transparency leads to a oneness you can't imagine

Finally, become 1 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/wives

In the context of a God-honoring marriage, it's a *celebration* of your unity . . .

It's one of the means by which God *strengthens* your commitment . . .

And it's guilt-free

Gen 2:25 – *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 [IOW don't take marriage lightly], *and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous.*

Let the marriage bed be undefiled – i.e. keep the physical aspect of your marriage pure

Don't corrupt it by having sex with someone else (or anything close to it)

Don't even pollute it with impure *thoughts* or fantasies about others

Thoughts and fantasies that if revealed, would bring guilt/shame

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

- And become one flesh with a commitment to *regular* PI

Prov 5:18-19 says . . .

Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you [satisfy you] at all times with delight; be intoxicated always in her love.

You'll never hear someone say it, but if husbands were honest, that would be one of their favorite verses in the Bible

Satisfied at *all* times; Intoxicated *always* in her love

That's regular and continuous PI

Reinforced by 1 Cor 7:3-5

3 – IOW he should satisfy *her* desires for physical intimacy, and she, *his*

4 – in marriage, your body is not your own

2 become 1 with a C to regular, *other-oriented* PI

Do not deprive one another

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 th exact *opposite* of other-oriented love

Physical intimacy is a *means* of 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

Become 1 flesh as God intended with a commitment to *regular, other-oriented* PI

- And finally, become one flesh with a C to *pleasurable* PI

You don't have to read The Song of Solomon very long to realize that sex in the context of marriage should be off-the-charts *pleasurable*

In fact, if you know what you're reading, the 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; 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. [Hint: this isn't a 4-H fieldtrip; these are metaphors for their bodies and their love-making] *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

Experienced that firsthand one year on vacation when Becky read Intimacy Ignited

(essentially a commentary on Song of Sol) to me while I was driving

It was so steamy that I had to ask her to stop!

Commit to that kind of pleasurable PI; Pursue it

And don't give up on it – it's too good to miss

And goes a long way toward becoming one flesh in a God-honoring marriage

Song – Be Glorified

Close

Next week – Roles in Marriage