

# Marriage Covenant

Fred R. Coulter—February 21, 2009

Today we're going to have a special presentation because Brandon Alexander and Alisa Bonhert from Canada—I don't know what the connection between Texas and Canada is, but some way it works out. There's going to be a little presentation for them, because they are planning on the official wedding to be sometime in June and I think Wayne Stenhouse is coming out to do it. So because of that—and I think it was a little over ten years ago that Chad and Rachelle were married. I was blessed to be able to marry them. I guess all three of us had shaking knees and all this sort of thing and it was really quite a tremendous thing to do. Now his brother Brandon is a young man, and he's found a young woman from a far land, if we could put it that way. So they're going to get married.

So what we are going to do, we are going to go through *The Sacred Wedding Ceremony*, and let's see what God requires of us. For Brandon and Alisa this will help them understand what they're getting themselves into. For everyone who is married, this will help you reconfirm what you need to do. Let's understand this: marriage is not a commitment; *marriage is a covenant*. A covenant is far different than a commitment. Today in the world that we're living in, which is just obsessed with sex, there's hardly any true knowledge of what is right and what is wrong and what it means to be married, and what it means to be in covenant marriage with your husband and wife vs what many people do live together, and they don't know whether they will marry or not.

My wife, Dolores, because she can't stand a lot of the TV, she has her favorite program, which is called House Hunters. No porn, no heavy music, no hard rock, and she gets to see many different houses that they have. But she was telling me how there are two things that people do today. People do not have children, they have animals, and they are more concerned about the space for their animals than anything else. The other one is that there are many people/couples, who live together, and they are supposedly committed to each other, but they're not yet married. Some of them have been that way for years.

Let's look at what God expects. What is the right and the correct standard to receive the blessings of God, to be in contact with God, to have the kind of marriage that God wants us to have. After all the love and all the emotions and everything, all of that gets all settled in, then marriage becomes a little

different than the idealistic, wondrous dreams that people have.

So let's begin:

The Sacred Wedding Ceremony,  
Paraphrased Translation of the Scriptures.

We will make comments and we will go to different Scriptures as well as the ones that are here. So I have this printed front and back for you.

This is a happy and joyous occasion. Marriage is a natural union, but a divine institution... [It has not been instituted by man.] ...ordained at creation by Almighty God. This intimate love relationship was created by God Himself, because GOD IS LOVE.

And human beings were made to receive and to give love, not only from each other as husband and wife, but each other as brothers and sisters in Christ, each other as neighbors to neighbors, different levels of love and consideration and understanding, the most intimate being that of marriage.

God does not approve what they have in many, many states in America today—homosexual marriages, and those kind of things we know from the Word of God are perversions and are meant to destroy the true understanding of marriage. Because Satan the devil knows that if you destroy the marriage, if you get everyone selfish and self serving, and if you get them wanting their own way in stubbornness and in carnality, and you destroy it and you cause divorce, then you destroy the relationship the children need to grow up to be responsible adults. That's what he wants.

That's why the NOW. gang and the NARLs all want single-mother support, and they glorify single mothers. Well, the truth is, single mothers are still married. *They're married to the state*. And look at the obscenity of it, the abomination of it out there in California. There are a lot of abominations take place out in California, because what happened when the U.S. tilted to the left, all the fruit and nuts ended up there.

God's way is *the* way. The others are men's ways and Satan's ways. It has to be based on love and love is not just an emotion. Love constitutes of faith, loyalty, trust, honesty, and in the roles that God created us to fulfill. Those are the proper roles because He made us. Now here's a key thing that is lost in everything that the world has concerning marriage:

Physically and spiritually the marriage estate portrays mankind's supreme destiny of ONENESS with God...

That's tremendous, because God is a family. So then you can look at it this way: when you are married and you bring children into the world, it also helps you to understand how God has to deal with us, because you have to deal with your children. So it is a perfect picture of what God wants, and we all fall short of that perfect picture. That's why there's repentance, and that's why there is redemption.

...with God and His family in His eternal kingdom forever.

Remember, New Jerusalem has no temple, because God the Father and the Lamb will be there and They are the light of it. So it will be this intimate relationship with God forever on a high spiritual plane.

Since God Almighty is the Supreme, Sovereign Ruler, He is our Creator, therefore, it is only fitting and right that we use the laws and principles of God's Word as the fundamental authority which governed this sacred marriage covenant to which you are both now entering.

A covenant. Now let me just state this: ***A covenant is a commitment to death.*** Once you pledge in a covenant relationship—that is unto death. I hate to use the word commitment, because it's so loose and non-binding today.

In the beginning, after the Lord God had created Adam, He said, "It is not good for man to be alone, I will make a helper, suitable and compatible for him...."

And *suitable and compatible* also means—as you will read in the margin of the Bible—a *counterpart, a sustainer beside him*. That is the most accurate translation of 'compatible for him.'

"...So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then God took one of the man's ribs...and from it He fashioned a woman, and brought her to the man. And the man said... [after he was quite amazed] ...'This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.'"

So that's quite a thing—isn't it? God never intended the woman to be a separate authority aside from a man when she's married. Before she's married, she is. But just like when we are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, we are no longer authorities to ourselves.

- God is our authority.
- His Word is our authority.
- His way is how we are to live and walk.

So likewise, when there is marriage, God made it so that the woman is to be in subjection to her husband, but the husband is to love his wife.

"For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh" (Gen. 2:18, 21-24). So God performed the first wedding ceremony.

Then God blessed them and saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth."

Of course, that's what's happening today, although not in the way that God intended. That creates a lot of problems in the world and society and in people. So when we have the marriage ceremony, and we come before God, we are asking God to be part of this marriage union that He created, that He designed.

Today, in the presence of these witnesses... [that is not today, but that is when the wedding takes place] ...we are asking the Lord God Almighty, in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, to bless this marriage, with love, understanding, faithfulness, dedication to each other, knowing that marriage is honorable in everything.

So you need to come back to this, because every marriage is going to have its ups and its downs. It's going to have its good; it's going to have its bad. One thing what marriage does, it also can bring out the best in you, and the worst in you, and that's where the problems are created.

As a husband and wife you need to understand: What does God expect? If you understand what God expects and requires, and you ask God to bless you in fulfilling that. I can tell you this from multiple years of counseling people: The most pitiful thing is a family without a father. Boys and girls need fathers. Also it is true that the father can have more authority over boys than women. Seventy percent of your juvenile delinquencies come from homes with no fathers.

Now there are some mothers who understand, because of their circumstances, they have to raise the family alone. They are to be commended when they really do a good job and look to God. But what they have to do, they have to exert a great deal more effort, because not only do they have to be mother, they have to replace father. That is very, very difficult. So this is the ideal of what God wants.

If you do these things, you will have a good marriage. You will want to work out your problems. And where there are difficulties, give each other some space, so you can overcome the difficulty and always follow the guideline, which is this: *Never let the sun go down on your wrath*. That will help you solve more difficulties and traumas and disputes if you do that.

Jesus upheld this honor by teaching, “He who created them in the beginning, made them male and female, and said, ‘For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and shall cleave unto his wife and the two shall become one flesh....’

Isn’t it interesting?—*become*. It’s a process. It takes years and you have to work together.

...Consequently, they are no more two, but one flesh....”

Let’s come back here to 2-Timothy 3 and we will see what destroys marriages in this world and what destroys the society in the world, as well. Here are the things that we are confronted with in a magnified way in this world, especially with all the media, the television, everything else that you have. I am constantly amazed how many people cannot get along without being plugged in. They have to have their ear phones, they have their IPOD going, they have their telephone going, they have their Blackberry going, and when they sit down they’re so hyped up in doing things with it that they have to play their computer games on their phones, text message to everybody. That’s why I don’t have a cell phone. Now you couple all of that together with the now-generation, ‘I want it now. I want it here. I want it my way.’ Sound like some TV ads? *Yes!*

2-Timothy 3:1: “Know this also, that in *the* last days perilous time shall come... [they’re here] ...For men will be **lovers of self**... [That is the key problem in the whole world today—lovers of self. The modern phrase for that is narcissistic—it is called narcissism, and if you have that, you are narcissistic. That means everything in the whole universe in your life centers around *you and your desires* and your *emotions* and your *whims* and your *tastes*, and everyone has to kowtow to that. This is fostered by the media and Hollywood in particular. You can probably think of the names of quite a few people who are that way.] ...lovers of money, braggarts, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents... [And childrearing comes in when the children come along.] ...unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, slanderers, without self-control, savage, despisers of those who are good, betrayers, reckless, egotistical, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God” (vs 1-4).

So this is what people are confronted with in the world today and confronted with in their own lives. And living in this society and watching these things on television and seeing how things are, we fall victim to it ourselves—don’t we? And I think the epitome of this is—it happens all the time, whenever I go into the supermarket, because I do some shopping at the supermarket—never fails, you’re going to see a narcissistic little brat of a kid, a boy or a girl, mom is trying to shop and the kid is going, ‘waaaa,’ and they don’t know how to control them. I remember one kid I was afraid he was going to fall down. He was standing up in the shopping cart, the place where you’re supposed to seat them, he was standing up there and the mother couldn’t get him to sit down. I walked up and I just pointed my finger to him and I said, ‘Sit down.’ He looked at me and sat down. The mother said, ‘Thank you, thank you.’ So it starts early.

We are to love each, cleave to each other and it’s a process. Finishing the last sentence down here on the bottom of the first column:

“...Consequently, they are no more two, but one flesh.’ Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man separate” (Mark 10:6-9).

Too many marriages today are centered around this: ‘Well, if it doesn’t work out, I can always leave.’ *When you enter into that you are already double-minded and unstable in your ways and selfish in what you’re thinking, and you have doomed it to collapse in failure*. Because you’re not ready to face the reality that life is difficult. Marriage can be difficult. Understanding and getting along with each other takes a lot of love and effort and kindness and understanding and forbearance. That’s just the way it is because of the nature of human beings.

If you understand this: that you are *not* separate, that this is *binding until death*, that will make your marriage work better. God, through Christ, gave one escape hatch, which is the next paragraph.

Also, He said, “Whoever divorces his wife, except for the cause of sexual infidelity...” (Matthew 5:32).

Because sexual relations between husband and wife is sacred, is honorable, and is bringing the two together as one flesh, physically, spiritually, mentally, and there is a special thing that happens—especially to women—that their emotions and their hormones work together so that that relationship with their husband bonds them to the husband and the husband to the wife. If you understand there is no divorce except for this, but when sexual infidelity takes place, and it takes place because of what?

*Selfishness, narcissism, lust, greed, unfaithfulness, deceitfulness.* Everyone who lies, cheats, steals, commits adultery, they know what they're doing—right? *Yes, they do!* They don't even have to have the Bible to tell them it's wrong. They know it's wrong, most people do. Well, some of the new generation today, they don't. So that's the only cause, and if it's not for that cause and you remarry, you commit adultery.

So we see that it is God who joins a husband and wife together as one flesh....

This is from God, because He made you, He created you. You're not of yourself. *You have nothing you didn't receive.* Let's look at another Scripture here, which is good to put at this place—Psalm 16. Here is a wonderful Scripture. Every time you get up on your high horse, or you hoity-toity about this or that, or you think how great you are or what you've done, how good you are, whatever.

Psalm 16:1. "Preserve me, O God, for in You do I put my trust.... [That's where both husband and wife have to have trust in God completely. That's why you both need to pray, you both need to study, you both need to yield to each other, etc.] ...I have said to the LORD, 'You are my LORD; I have no goodness apart from You'" (vs 1-2).

Think on that. Every time you get to thinking how good you are, whatever goodness you have comes from God—right? Whatever goodness you have is because it's in line with the Word of God—is that not correct? *Yes!* It all comes from God, because you see, by ourselves 'our hearts are wicked and deceitful above all things, desperately wicked,' and no one can know it. So keep that in mind. *You have nothing you didn't receive and you have no goodness apart from God.* That'll keep you humble.

So we see that it is God who joins husband and wife together as one flesh. What God has bound...

Because you come before God, you take the name of God, you call upon God, and you ask God to bind this marriage and you ask God to bless this marriage, God is involved. And you cannot turn around and defy God and expect everything to go well.

...what God has bound, man is commanded by that authority not to separate. What God has bound only God can loose as revealed in His Holy Word.

A marriage so bound and blessed by God is binding for life, for better or for worse...

You have the good times and the bad times. You have the ups; you have the downs.

...for better or for worse, in sickness and in health... [And when sickness comes, you always realize how helpless you are.] ...in want or in wealth...

And the way today's economy is going, it's going to be more in want than in wealth.

...unto death do they part.

Just think: if every married couple in the world had this understanding, and attitude, and really went God's way, just think—be no adultery, there would be no fornication, there would be no homosexuality, there would be no lesbianism, there would be none of those things. It would put the hooker business completely out of business.

Now here are the instructions, and it's amazing how few instructions are in the Bible on how to have a happy marriage. Now remember this: *happiness is not a state of emotion.* That's only one aspect of it. Happiness is the knowledge of God's Word and the knowledge of your covenant relationship with each other in the marriage estate, so that you know that in spite of whatever may come along, that everything is going to be right in the long run. That's where happiness comes from. Seeking an emotional state of happiness, puts you into the narcissistic way of wanting your own way.

The Apostle Peter is writing this:

"Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands, as unto the Lord...

You might want to think on that and pray on that. Also, husbands, remember, when your wife submits to you in this way, you better not have a heavy hand and you better not be arrogant and you better not be demanding and things like this just because she submits to you. There's another half of the equation, we'll read of here in just a little bit.

...because the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church, which is His body, and He is the Savior, Deliverer, and Provider of the body. In exactly the same manner as the Church is subject to Christ, even so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything in the marriage estate.

Husbands, LOVE your wives, in exactly the same manner as Christ also loved the Church, and gave up Himself for her, in order that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water through the Word of God.

For this purpose:

“That he might place her beside Himself... [Now notice how that ties in with Gen. 2, that she is a sustainer beside him.] ...as the glorious, untarnished Church, not having a single spot or stain, wrinkle or blemish, or any such thing; but that she might be consecrated, Holy and completely blameless.”

If you love your wife that way, I guarantee you she will be submissive to you, because God guarantees it.

“In exactly in the same manner, the husbands are duty-bound and under obligation to God to love their wives as their own bodies....”

And every wife knows that when the husband gets sick, ‘Oh, you’re just a little coward.’ Isn’t that true? ‘Oh, I’ve got a headache.’ ‘You’re just feeling sorry for yourself.’ Dolores told me that a couple of times.

“...because no one truly hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, exactly as the Lord does the Church. For we are members of His very own Body...”

Here is a tremendous thing we need to understand.

(go to the next track)

With no other human being are you going to have such a close personal relationship. Here’s what it’s picturing, so keep this in mind. When things don’t go exactly well, have God let you picture in your mind what it should be and strive toward that.

“For we are members of His very own body, of His very own flesh, (through His crucifixion—and all that it means)...

Didn’t Jesus say we’re bought with a price?

...and of His bones (that is, the Church is a special spiritual creation. For in the same manner as Adam’s wife was created from his own rib; so also, as a counterpart for Christ, the Church is created from His innermost being).”

That’s why we have the Scriptures, ‘Christ in you, the hope of glory.’ Close intimate relationship spiritually with God the Father and Jesus Christ—correct? ‘Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.’

So just as we work and develop in our marriage and love each other and love our children and all the ups and downs with them. The reason that we have children is so God can fulfill His plan. And we are participating in His creation and He is so great and marvelous, that what has He done? He has made it so that you create your own children after

your own image. ‘Oh, he looks like his dad. Oh, she looks like her mother.’ Supposed to be—right? *Yes!* Isn’t that terrific? You wouldn’t want to have your children look like some whatever—would you? *No!* Isn’t that something?

And to ensure that there will be children, God gave sex and passion and emotions and they will come, sometimes without expectation. We are created as a counterpart for Christ. So then Paul writes:

“This mystery is great, immense and supreme...”

Now stop and think about it. God did not create angels to marry or have offspring. They assist God in carrying out His work. We participate with God in His creation in bringing forth children made in our image, *after God’s image*, so that they can become, when they become grown and adult, and so forth, become part of those who receive the Holy Spirit of God and are able to enter into the Kingdom of God. So that’s a tremendous thing.

So the next time—and I know dad’s do not like poop diapers, I don’t. But the next time you’re cleaning one of those and cleaning up your own child, just think of this: one day this squalling little child is going to have an opportunity to enter into the Kingdom of God as a spirit being and ‘I had a part in bringing forth this child and helping God create His family.’ When you understand that, that’ll help lift a lot of burdens, lift a lot of frustration. That doesn’t mean that you don’t have the teaching and discipline and love and all of this sort of thing with it. That all goes with it.

“This mystery is great, immense and supreme: For I am speaking concerning the relationship between Christ and the Church (the bride of Jesus Christ and their eternal destiny).

However, let everyone of you, also, be loving his own wife as himself, and the wife should see that she reverence her husband” (Eph. 5:22-33).

When you’re in the right relationship with God, you’re not going to be carnal and want to impose the superior fist of authority.

The Apostle Peter continues God’s instructions, “In the same way, you wives be submissive to your own husbands from your heart...”

‘Well, I know God says so, so I’m going to.(mumble, mumble).’ No, from the heart. You may have to pray about it. You may have to ask God to help change your heart. You may have to ask God to

help change your attitude. Likewise, with husbands loving their wives. What if she gets into a snitty attitude and you don't like it? That'll happen! I'm not going to ask you to raise your hands if it happened to you. I should ask, 'Raise your hands if it hadn't.' And I'm not going to ask it, because no one would raise their hands.

"...from your heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God."

- This doesn't mean you make yourself a doormat.
- This doesn't mean that you don't have character.
- This doesn't mean that you don't have ability.

You go back and read the Proverbs 31 woman. She had a lot of ability, a lot of skill, bought and sold property, traded the goods that she made and things like this—a lot of ability. But she didn't stand up and take her husband's place. And her husband said, 'Look at my wife. Boy, she can do all these things. She's a wonderful wife.' So there's the relationship. Continuing now:

"Thus, did Sarah obey Abraham, calling him lord... [Now you don't have to quite go that far, 'Oh, my lord and master,' and so forth.] ...and you have become her daughters if you do what is right..."

I have a sermon I did years ago, *The Human Nature of Abraham and Sarah*. They had their faults. Abraham had a deceitful streak. Remember, he comes to Abimelech and says, 'Oh, my sister.' Later on, 'Why didn't you tell me she was your wife?' *I was afraid*. Do what is right.

"Likewise, you husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel..."

And I'll tell you that women are weaker vessels. That's just the way that it is. I can verify it with the anointed cloths that I send out. They run five to one, women vs men. That's why women should not be put into situations, which brings extreme stress upon them. That's what single motherhood does. It's difficult. Men's bodies are designed to take more stress—to work, to lift, to heave, to bang, to pound, to climb, to conquer, to fight, to war, all of those things. And yes, we're created differently. I notice this with some of the soldiers on the planes when you come down this way. Here they have this nice strong back, slim waist, strong arms, and then their girlfriend comes out to meet them and, WOW! what a difference between the two. Just keep all of those things in mind.

"...in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, and grant her honor as a fellow-heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered" (1-Peter 3:1-7).

So if you're not loving your wife in the way that you should, you may have some hindrance to your prayers. Do you want that? *Of course not*.

Now here is the marriage covenant and you will be surprised how few words and how quickly it transpires that you make a decision for life. Let's read it.

We are here today in the presence of God, coming before His very throne in heaven above and we are asking God to join you as husband and wife. Therefore, in accordance with God's Word, each of you should solemnly promise...

And remember what did God say, what did Christ say? 'Let your *yes* be *yes* and your *no* be *no*.' So if you solemnly promise, you are bound before God.

...solemnly promise before God and in the presence of these witnesses to accept the sacred marriage covenant according to the conditions set forth and imposed by Almighty God as revealed in His Holy Word.

Now, we're down to business.

Do you, [the groom's first name], enter into covenant with God... [because God created you and God created your wife, so it's with God.] ...in the presence of these witnesses... [because there always has to be a witness to the covenant] ...to take her, [full name of your wife], to be your lawful wedded wife until death...

When you make this covenant and you know that it is this way, you're not going to give yourself any wiggle room for unfaithfulness or duplicity anywhere down the rest of your married life. It's good to go back and go over these words and make sure that you understand them. And you will grow in the understanding of these.

...to be your lawful wedded wife until death and as the Scriptures command, for better or for worse, in sickness or in health, in want or in wealth, to cleave unto her, to love her as Christ loves the Church, to honor her, cherish her and provide for her?

You are the bread-winner. That doesn't mean that wives cannot undertake employment, but never do it to the detriment of the children. Now let's also

understand something: begins with the husband, then to the wife.

Now then do you [her first name] enter into covenant with God, in the presence of these witnesses to take [his full name] to be your lawful wedded husband, until death as the Scriptures command, for better or for worse, in sickness or in health, in want or in wealth; and to submit yourself to him as unto the Lord, in everything in the marriage estate, as the Church does to Christ; and to honor and reverence him?

And you are bound by two words: *I do!* Isn't that simple? Then we ask a special blessing and prayer on the marriage.

Since we are asking God to join you as husband and wife...

Don't look to the minister, don't look to the man, it is God.

...and praying for His binding and blessing of this covenant marriage... [Remember that, it is a **covenant marriage**.] ...it is appropriate to follow the Biblical example of laying on of hands to set you apart for this sacred covenant.

So then they join hands, kneel down and pray. Weddings are my favorite thing. So that's what entails 'getting hitched.'

- God created you
- God wants you to marry
- God wants you to have children

and you are in a covenant relationship with Him and with each other.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Genesis 2:18,21-24
- 2) 2-Timothy 3:1-4
- 3) Mark 10:6-9
- 4) Matthew 5:32
- 5) Psalm 16:1-2
- 6) Ephesians 5:22-23
- 7) 1-Peter 3:1-7

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Proverbs 31