

CARE RESOURCES

LIVING TOGETHER BEFORE MARRIAGE

It is becoming increasingly popular for couples to first live together before considering to pursue a marriage commitment. When God first spoke about this issue, He said that both a man and woman would leave their parents and join together to form a new home and a new union in marriage. (Gen 2:24). But many couples want to see first how they will get along before considering to commit to marriage. While it may seem convenient to follow what the world says about marriage, the Bible makes it clear that God has a different view about marriage, something which was His idea to begin with.

SET CLEAR BOUNDARIES

The key to a great relationship before marriage is clear communication and boundaries. If one person is really pushing the other to live together, they are most likely doing it for **selfish reasons**. **They are focusing on what they want, rather than the well-being of the relationship or other person.** Don't expect your partner to be strong enough to avoid temptation for both of you. Have an honest conversation about realistic boundaries that you can set to keep your relationship pure. The standards set early on will lead to true intimacy in marriage. Therefore, understand what marriage is all about before you get involved in any relationship.

GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR MARRIAGE

God sees marriage as a holy covenant before and between Him, you and your spouse. (Mal 2:14-16) God is witness of this holy covenant and unless you understand what a covenant is, and what God's will for your marriage is, **you will date the wrong people if you are single and you will get involved in relationships you should have never gotten involved with.** To enjoy marriage as God has intended for you starts with having the right perspective about holding marriage in high regard.

WHAT IS A COVENANT?

A covenant is a very serious agreement one person makes with another and it has binding powers. The breaking of such a covenant always leads to destruction. A covenant is an awareness of a holy union. It is an all or nothing agreement. The Hebrew word for "covenant" in the OT means "to cut". The idea is to cut or to bleed. It is a blood covenant. It is the concept of the blood of the one that mingles with the blood of the other. An awareness of a holy union.

Covenants made between God and men always had (1) a promise (2) a condition (3) were sealed with blood and (4) confirmed with a sign.

EXAMPLES OF COVENANTS

- **Noah.** (Gen 8:20-21) Promise: God would wipe out sin, save Noah's family and never destroy the earth in such a way again. CONDITION: Build an ark, get your family and animals in. God will close the door. SEALED WITH BLOOD: When they came out of the ark, they build an altar and blood flows. (Gen 9:11-15). THE SIGN: Rainbow
- **Abraham:** PROMISE: Your descendants will be as many as the stars in heaven and the sands. CONDITION: Leave the land of your father and go to the land I will show you. SEALED WITH BLOOD: (Gen 15:9-11, 17) When the sun had gone down, a flaming torch passed between the pieces sealing the covenant. THE SIGN: Circumcision (Gen 17). Blood flows again.

- **Jesus:** PROMISE: Forgiveness of our sins and eternal life. CONDITION: Believe in Jesus, repent of your sins and commit your life to Christ. SEALED WITH BLOOD: Jesus sealed this covenant with His blood on the cross. THE SIGN: Jesus said: It is finished. Darkness covered the earth, the veil in the most holy was torn and we have access through this holy covenant that was made with the blood of Jesus, to God. And the sign is THE HOLY SPIRIT.
- **Marriage:** PROMISE: A promise is made that you will become one flesh. CONDITION: Leave and cleave. SEALED WITH BLOOD: When a man and wife comes together for the first time, if you know the anatomy of a woman you will know that blood flows and this is a sealing of the covenant. THE SIGN: Wedding ring.

Marriage is an intermingling of holy life and blood. It is an irrevocable union of unconditional love towards an imperfect person just like you, forever.

THREE IMPLICATIONS OF THIS COVENANT

(Eph 5:31) For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

(1) LEAVE

- You leave anything from your past and your parents. You are now a new family unit.
- All other relationships are secondary and your primary relationship is this person you are married to.
- You don't run to your parents when you have problems.
- You do not allow your parents to manipulate you financially or emotionally.

(2) JOINED TO (CLEAVE)

- You are permanently out of circulation for other relationships and glued together.
- It means when you drive you don't look around to see if there is someone nicer in another car.
- You don't fantasize about other people, not even through romantic stories, television or magazines.
- You have a holy covenant to leave and then to cleave.

(3) BECOME ONE FLESH

- Cleaving is about becoming one.
- There is an intermingling taking place.
- God sees two that became one. *(Gen 2:24 AMPL) Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and shall become united and cleave to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. (Gen 2:25 AMPL) And the man and his wife were both naked and were not embarrassed or ashamed in each other's presence.*
- It is called intimacy.
- It is to look someone in the eyes and not just physical but spiritual and emotional, you know that you are being understood and loved. The only way you dare do that is when you know there is no backdoor out of this marriage.
- The only place to be completely vulnerable, is when two people are forever one. Then there is no manipulation, games.
- You become one spiritual, emotional and physical.

WHEN YOU LEAVE, CLEAVE AND BECOME ONE, THERE ARE A FEW THINGS THAT HAPPENS

(1) DIVORCE IS NOT AN OPTION

- God hates it. I understand there are times when it is unavoidable (1 Cor 7; Eph 5).
- The problem in the church unfortunately is not all divorces are done on Biblical grounds.
- If you dishonour and defile it, God is holy and it will bring destruction and chaos in your life.
- Divorce brings depression, poverty and not a hot single's life as some believe.

(2) ADULTERY IS A VERY SERIOUS BREAKING OF THIS COVENANT

- (Heb 13:4) Let marriage be held in honour (esteemed worthy, precious, of great price, and especially dear) in all things. And thus let the marriage bed be undefiled (kept undishonoured); for God will judge and punish the unchaste [all guilty of sexual vice] and adulterous.
- You do not play around. You do not fantasize.

(3) SEX BEFORE MARRIAGE IS A DEFILING AND BREACHING OF THIS HOLY COVENANT OF GOD

- (Eph 5:5) For be sure of this: that no person practicing sexual vice or impurity in thought or in life or one who is covetous [who has lustful desire for the property of others and is greedy for gain] – for he [in effect] is an idolater – has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.
- If you are sexually involved with someone you are not married to, it is God's will for you to stop.
- If you live with someone you are not married to, it increases the chances with 20-25% that you will have sexual problems in your marriage.
- The best reason why you don't just live together: you are more worth than that, don't cheapen God's covenant.

(4) SEXUAL RELATIONS WITH THE SAME SEX ARE FORBIDDEN

- It is a dishonouring and defilement of God's design. God very clearly made us man and woman. (1 Cor 6:9) Do you not know that the unrighteous and the wrongdoers will not inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived (misled); neither the impure and immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor those who participate in homosexuality. (1 Cor 6:10) No cheats (swindlers and thieves), nor greedy graspers, nor drunkards, nor foulmouthed revilers and slanderers, nor extortioners and robbers will inherit or have any share in the kingdom of God.

Fornicators are people having sex outside the union of marriage. Adulterers are those who are married but having sex outside of that union with other people. Sodomise is homosexuality. It is a defilement / desecration of the covenant of God and when you dishonour it, it brings in destruction in your heart, your spirit, your relationships, your children's lives. God says don't even go there.

DOING THE RIGHT THING

Wherever you may find yourselves right now when it comes to dishonouring God's covenant, there is forgiveness. If you are involved in a sexual relationship, repent and turn away from your wrong ways and allow God to forgive you and find people to help you. The problem is not Hollywood and the media, the problem is our hearts. We defiled the marriage covenant. You know where you are and what you need to do. God wants you to have a great family. Wherever you are, it is not too late to start a new journey with God of restoration and forgiveness. But you have to go to God. **You will never make progress in your life until you own stuff.**

GOD'S PURPOSE FOR MARRIAGE: GOD CREATED MARRIAGE FOR YOUR GOOD

- It was totally God's idea and today that fact is being ignored.
- The idea is that a man and woman in marriage, makes a covenant, a life-long commitment. And that is God's idea. It is His plan and this is how it works.
- There is not a salad bar option of how people can successfully live together.
- (1 Cor 6:18) Shun immorality and all sexual looseness [flee from impurity in thought, word, or deed]. Any other sin which a man commits is one outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. (1 Cor 6:19) Do you not know that your body is the temple (the very sanctuary) of the Holy Spirit Who lives within you, Whom you have

received [as a Gift] from God? You are not your own. (1 Cor 6:20) You were bought with a price [purchased] with a preciousness and paid for, made His own]. So then, honour God and bring glory to Him in your body.

- Sexuality and spirituality is close to each other. If you have sex with a prostitute, because of God's design, you are glued together and when you try to tear apart from each other there will always some glue that still cleaves to the other and part of the other will always be there. It is the foundation of marriage.

THE PURPOSE OF MARRIAGE IS INTIMACY AND UNITY IN THE RELATIONSHIP AS A WHOLE

We are spirit, have a soul and lives in a body. God seeks unity in each of these areas. You are joint-heirs of the grace of God.

(1) YOU ARE FIRST BROTHER AND SISTER IN CHRIST (SPIRITUAL)

- You will be surprised how your relationship will change when you see your spouse also as your brother/sister in Christ.
- People that come together before God. Who prays together, worships together.
- People who share what God is teaching them.

(2) SECONDLY YOU ARE BEST FRIENDS (SOUL)

- God says you are joint-heirs, co-worshippers, spiritual partners and soul mates.
- God wants you to be best friends with your spouse.
- God longs for you to enjoy the comradery of your spouse and laugh together, play together, have fun together. Enjoy life with each other.

(3) LASTLY YOU ARE LOVERS (PHYSICAL)

- (Heb 13:4) Sex is God's idea and not an activity, but the completion of the marriage covenant and unity which already took place in your spirit and soul before God as an expression of your love.
- Sex may under no circumstances be used to manipulate.

MARRIAGE IN WHOLE AND IN UNITY IS A GIFT FROM GOD TO

- Solve the problem of loneliness;
- Bring you joy;
- To ensure godly offspring; and
- To reflect God's relationship in a lost world. (Eph 5:23-33)

To love someone so unconditionally in a marriage as God expects us to do is humanly impossible. Very soon in married life you realize that you need a higher hand to help you to be all in the marriage that God expects you to be. Then you realize that without God and without His Holy Spirit you will not have this supernatural love for your spouse in your heart.



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