

## Sacred Marriage Covenant

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Tomorrow there's going to be a wedding and I have a once in a lifetime opportunity. I told Rachelle years ago that when it came time for her to marry that I would love to give her away and then perform the ceremony. That's what I'm going to do tomorrow. We're very happy about it, very excited about it.

There are some very important things concerning marriage and concerning the whole plan of God and the creation of God, and all these things are tied up in it. I think today we live in an age where we have been so far removed from personal relations, because we have all kinds of machines, gadgets, computers, telephones, e-mail and whatever, that we can handle so many things without really, as they say in the technological world, interfacing with each other.

Let's understand something about the human creation, which is different than all of the rest that God created. There's something very special that relates to man and to woman and to marriage and how God wants us to lead our lives as married people. One thing that is always important is that you always need to keep the *ideal* and the *perfection* of what God has given you in the marriage as the vision and the goal to strive for throughout your marriage. That is how then you are inspired.

The way people are able to change the most; the way people are able to grow in knowledge and understanding—after all, our whole lives are involved in growing—is that we be inspired. The reason is because if you're inspired ***then you will want to do, from the heart, what God wants you to do!*** That's why it's so important.

If you don't have it in your heart to do it, then it becomes a mechanical thing. Then it begins to break down and carnality begins to weave in-between it. When that happens you have to have the perfection of God's intention and original creation in mind, and how that being husband and wife, being together, this is meant to uplift us and draw us closer to each other and closer to God.

Let's begin first of all and see that human beings are far different than any of the creation that God has created on the earth. This will be fitting, too, because tomorrow we'll be rejoicing.

Psalm 33:1: "Rejoice in the LORD, O you righteous ones; praise is becoming for the upright. Praise the LORD with a lyre; sing unto Him with a harp of ten strings. Sing unto Him a new song; play skillfully with shouts of joy, for the Word of the

LORD is upright; and all His works are *done* in faithfulness. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the loving kindness of the LORD. By the Word of the LORD were the heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathered the waters of the sea together like a heap, putting the depths in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him, for **He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast**" (vs 1-9).

This is a great basic principle for us to understand concerning God's way in everything. Whenever God speaks it is truth. Whatever God says becomes reality. That's why when we look at God's Word—if we look at it from that point of view, every bit of it—then we can begin to come to a great and a full understanding of the Word of God through His Spirit. Whereas, the world says, 'We're going to pick and choose, and we don't believe God. What we agree with, that's fine and God will come to you on that basis, then we'll be righteous before you.' *That's not the way that God wants it and they miss so much because of it!*

We have to conclude that all things that God has done is all righteous and goodness and perfection in everything that there is. When God created all He had to do was speak. Here again is a Psalm of praise to God:

Psalm 148:1: "O praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise Him in the heights. Praise Him, all His angels; praise Him, all His hosts. Praise Him, sun and moon; praise Him, all you stars of light. Praise Him, you heavens of heavens, and waters that are above the heavens. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for He commanded and they were created" (vs 1-5).

All God has to do to create something is to command it. That's quite a fantastic thing! That shows the power of God. What I want you to do is begin thinking about God's creation of man and woman.

Verse 6: "He has also established them forever and ever; He has made a decree, which shall not pass away. Let praise be to the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters, and all the depths; fire and hail, snow and vapor, stormy winds fulfilling His Word, mountains and all hills, fruitful trees and all cedars, beasts and all livestock, creeping things and flying birds, kings of the earth and all people, princes and all judges of the earth, both young men and maidens, old men and children; let them praise the name of the LORD, for His name alone is

exalted; His glory is above the earth and the heavens. And He has also lifted up a horn for His people, praise for all His saints, even of the children of Israel, a people near to Him. O praise the LORD!” (vs 6-14).

This is actually a Psalm that shows what the whole Millennial setting is going to be when Christ and the saints are ruling here on the earth. The way that that is going to be done, it’s going to be that we are going to teach the people of the world for the very first time why they were born, why they are here, why they are made in the way they are, and God’s great plan for them. It will be taught to them with the love of God.

The most important thing to remember is this: *Without the love of God you miss the fullness of what God wants you to have, and what God wants you to be!* But we’re also going to see that in order to understand the fullness of God that sometimes you’ve got to have your ups and downs in life. That’s so you can appreciate what God has done.

Let’s see how these Psalms come together to show how God created everything that there is. Let’s just begin right in the beginning (Gen. 1). When we go through this, when we come to the creation of man and woman we are going to see God did something very special, and very different from the rest of His creation.

Genesis 1:1: “In *the* beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

I’m not going to go through a technical explanation of the time-setting on this, but just to go through and read this. Remember, He spoke and it existed. Let’s see how He does it with the power of His Spirit.

Verse 2: “And the earth was without form and void, and darkness *was* upon the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And God said... [He spoke!] ...‘Let there be light.’ And there was light. And God saw the light that *it was* good; and God divided between the light and the darkness. And God called the light day, and He called the darkness night. And the evening and the morning were day one” (vs 2-5).

Notice that everything that God did was, v 6: “**And God said**, ‘Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters *from* the waters.’ And God made the firmament, and divided the waters, which *were* under the firmament from the waters which *were* above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament heavens....” (vs 6-8).

We all flew in heaven to get here. Every

time I travel I go to heaven. It’s always humbling to fly, because you get up there about 35,000 feet and you look down on the earth and you realize that you’re just nothing but kind of like a little speck. If you get up high enough you can see how the clouds just form around the earth and you can actually tell that the earth is round. Then it’s really interesting taking off, you see it all disappear, but when you land and you come down closer and closer and you begin to see cars on the road and the landing strip and then you’re down. But that’s always quite an experience, in flying. It keeps one’s perspective. You don’t get all lifted up in how great you are.

- Verse 9: “And God said...” *He’s doing all the commanding!*
- Verse 10: “And God called...”
- Verse 11: “And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth vegetation—the herb yielding seed and the fruit tree producing fruit after its kind...’”
- Verse 14: And God said, ‘Let there be lights in the firmament... And it was so.’
- Verse 20: “And God said, ‘Let the waters abound *with* swarms of living creatures...’”

Have you seen some of these Discovery films where it shows all the fish under the water and you see these great, huge schools of fish? Can you imagine that by God’s command there they were suddenly filling the ocean? *All kinds of creatures, all for a specific purpose!*

- Verse 21: “And God created great sea-animals... [all of them] ...**after their kind**...”

Verse 22: “And God blessed them, saying, ‘Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters of the seas, and let the fowl multiply in the earth.’”

Verse 24: “And God said, ‘Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind—livestock, creeping things, and beasts of the earth—each after its kind.’ And it was so. And God made the beasts of the earth after their kind, and the livestock after their kind, and every creeping thing upon the earth after their kind. And God saw that it was good” (vs 24-25).

Then we come to the creation of man. God did all of this in a lesson to show that *there is nothing like the creation of man and woman; that their creation is special!* They are the highest of everything that God created on the earth.

*So special are they that*, v 26: “And God said, ‘Let Us make man **in Our image, after Our likeness**...’”

That’s quite a thing to contemplate! *That we are made in the image and likeness of God!* No other creature is made like that. That’s why when

you look at all of the other creatures you find none like man. None who is able to:

- think
- create
- build
- have emotions
- have capacity for love

An animal, like a dog, has a certain capacity for love; that they can come and nuzzle you and if they really like you, if you put your hand down beside the chair they'll come and put their snout up under it because they want to be petted. But an animal like that does not have the things that human beings do.

- we can talk
- we can communicate
- we can have great feelings and emotions

***We're made in the likeness of God!*** That is what is so fantastic.

Whenever you get down on yourself, or down on human beings, or down on the troubles and difficulties that you have, the way that you pick yourself up is to come to God and be thankful that ***you are made in the image of God for a great and a Divine purpose!*** To actually become as we know the whole plan of God, to become part of the Family of God, with a great and a glorious and eternal destiny that is so fantastic; it is just marvelous!

Notice what else He did, v 26: "...and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that crawls upon the earth."

God made this beautiful earth and everything that is here for all of mankind, and He blessed them.

Verse 27: "And God created man..." *We're going to see how He created man, which is different than creating all the rest!* All He did was 'command' and they came into existence. With mankind it's different. He did not command.

"...in His own image, in the image of God..." (v 27). *If you want to know what God looks like, just like a human being, because we're made in His image!*

"...He created him. He created them male and female. And God blessed them. And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of heaven and over every living thing that moves upon the earth'" (vs 27-28).

That's quite a blessing! That God would create all of this and give it to mankind and say, 'It's yours!' However, there are some laws and commandments that God gave, so it can be taken care of properly.

Genesis 2:7: "Then the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being."

Human beings are so special of a creation that God *hand made* Adam and Eve. That's quite a thing to understand. All the rest He just commanded and they were. But human beings He made! Crafted! Planned ahead of time! We have the marvelous creation that we have of the human body, the human mind where we're able to:

- think
- talk
- see
- walk
- build and craft
- think way beyond ourselves!

As a matter of fact, our minds are so unique that we cannot think of a time when we never have been, nor can we think of a time when we never will be. Though at one point in time we were born into the world, which that is also a special creation by God.

That's the tremendous difference. God *made* man with His own hands. God *personally* breathed into him the breath of life. With that breath of life He also gave the *spirit of man* so that we can have the capacity of thinking.

Verse 15: "And the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden of Eden to dress it and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'You may freely eat of every tree in the garden... [He's given free choice] ...but you shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for in the day that you eat of it in dying you shall surely die'" (vs 15-17). *Right away He instructed them!*

Adam and Eve were also a very unique creation compared to the rest of mankind!

Verse 18: "And the LORD God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone. I will make a helper compatible for him.' And out of the ground the LORD God *had* formed every animal of the field... [He did that by command] ...and every fowl of the air—and brought *them* to Adam to see what he would call them. And whatever Adam called *each* living creature, that *became* its name" (vs 18-19).

Adam was created with a language, ability to think, ability to analyze and categorize. Right

away, God gave Adam all this responsibility of naming all of the animals, because Adam was going to have to deal with them in ruling the earth. I'm also sure that he understood, because of the blessing that was given to be fruitful and multiply.

Verse 20: "And Adam gave names to all the livestock, and to the birds of the air, and to every animal of the field, but there was not found a helper compatible for Adam. And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall over Adam, and he slept. And He took one of his ribs, and *afterward* closed up the flesh underneath. Then the LORD God made the rib (which He had taken out of the man) into a woman, and He brought her to the man" (vs 20-22).

Adam knew what was taking place. He knew what was going to go on. What he says afterward tells us that there must have been a discussion between God and Adam to tell him what he was going to do. He said, 'Adam, you've named all these animals here, do you see any of them that look like you?' *No!* 'Do you see any of them that can talk like you and I can talk?' *No!* 'What I'm going to do is I'm going to put you in a deep sleep and I'm going to take one of your ribs and I am going to make you the perfect helpmeet.' After it was done, He brought her to him.

Verse 23: "And Adam said, 'This *is* now bone of my bones... [he knew what was going to take place] ...and flesh of my flesh. *She* shall be called Woman because *she* was taken out of Man.'"

The reason that it was done this way is to show the special *created relationship* that husband and wife are to have.

Verse 24: "For this reason shall a man leave his father and his mother..."

If Adam said this, which I've gone back and forth as to whether Adam said this or God said this—or someone else put this in, like Moses, when he put together the book of Genesis. But the more I read it, the more I think that Adam knew it and understood it, and he said it.

"...and shall cleave to his wife—and **they shall become one flesh**" (v 24).

God made man in one way; made woman in another way *so that they are perfectly compatible to become one flesh!* That's why the older that people get, the longer that they have been married, the more that they think alike. They are to be one. So, a man without a wife is deficient; and a woman without a husband is deficient, ***because God made it that way!*** It doesn't mean that they can't exist separately or single, but it just means that in the creation of God's plan this is what He created to begin with, that it be right and good altogether.

Verse 25: "And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and they were not ashamed." *That's before they sinned!*

We won't go through the sin part of it. This is a day to look at the good part, to look at the ideal part and see what God wants.

After they were created, they had a tremendous blessing. They were able to see their Creator, talk with their Creator, and also they had the very first Sabbath. The very first Sabbath on earth was where two or three are gathered together: Adam, Eve and the Lord. This is why God created the Sabbath Day, that His creation of humankind could:

- fellowship with Him
- know Him
- talk to Him
- see Him
- to understand Who God is

Can you imagine a more inspiring Sabbath than this very first Sabbath?

Genesis 2:1: "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And by *the beginning of* the seventh day God finished His work, which He had made. And He rested on the seventh day from all His work, which He had made. And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because on it He rested from all His work, which God had created and made" (vs 1-3).

From the other things we know here, He had conversation with Adam on the sixth day and I believe (speculation) that Eve was created somewhere in the afternoon on the sixth day.

On the Sabbath He rested. I just imagine that He sat down and He talked with Adam and Eve—they talked back and forth. He told them His plan, what they were going to do and why He wanted to them to eat of the Tree of Life. He warned them concerning the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Just like anything else God does. He doesn't let something happen to you until you know! Until you have been told and warned! Likewise with them.

I do not believe that God turned Satan loose on Adam and Eve just minutes after they were created. I believe they were fully instructed so that what happened when they did eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil they were aware of it. God instructed them on what they were to be as human beings. Also, He blessed them and told them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth and subdue it.' Of all the creation of God, man and woman are the only ones who, in love together, face each other face-to-face. That is a tremendous and

wonderful blessing that God gave in the creation of man and woman, that He gave to no other animals.

The lesson for that is that God wants us to understand that the relationship of husband and wife together is coming together *as one*. In this coming together as one they also have the great and the tremendous blessing that God has given to bring forth children. In bringing forth children they are actually participating in God's creation plan.

Yet, God's love is so great, and God's love is so particular, and God's creative powers are so fantastic that when husband and wife come together and procreate the new creation of their children, ***their children are made after the kind of husband and wife!*** Each one of the children born in a family are different and separate and distinct, even though they have the same mother and father. We know that scientifically.

Nothing can beat the plan of God! So, God has made this special creation of man and woman, husband and wife, and the reason that He wants it in marriage is because he wants the children to understand that they came from *father and mother*. That's why the family is central in everything that God does. Children born of that marriage are a very special gift of God. The way the world is, sometimes they don't turn out to be the gift that we would like them to be. But nevertheless, they are still the gift of God.

Understand this, remember this: One of the reasons why there is the story of the prodigal son in the New Testament, is because God is showing that in spite of the sin of mankind, God is also able to bring them back. In spite of all the difficulties that may come along and happen in the family, God has not given up on any person or the human race or anyone who has had any difficulty at all, and He wants them always to know ***there is hope, there is redemption, there is change*** and all of these things are possible because God is greater than all human beings together.

Marriage is quite a wonderful thing. What I'm going to do is go through the marriage ceremony. If anyone would like to have a copy of the Sacred Wedding Ceremony go to **truthofGod.org** I've done what you might say is a reaffirmation of the vows of older married couples who say at their 25-year anniversary they want to reaffirm their vows to each other. I change it just a little bit. But the wedding ceremony and everything that is here is one of the things that will help draw you closer together.

When we're all in love and before we're married and all these things come along, everything is wonderful and great and marvelous and perfect

and everything like that. Then BAM! one day here comes a dispute! What are you going to do? God gave the rules for what you are going to do. Let me just read this:

### **The Sacred Wedding Ceremony**

*A Paraphrased Translation of Scriptures*

{booklet found at **truthofGod.org**}

This is a happy and joyous occasion. Marriage is a natural union, but a Divine institution, ordained at creation by Almighty God. This intimate love relationship was created by God Himself, because GOD IS LOVE.

I tell you, that's the most important thing to remember. Through thick and thin, up and down, love is the thing that is going to glue husband and wife together.

Physically and spiritually the marriage estate portrays mankind's supreme destiny of ONENESS with God in His family, in His eternal Kingdom forever.

This is the ideal that God wants us to always keep in mind. The reason that He wants us to keep it in mind and to look to that always is so that when trouble comes along it can be repaired and it can be overcome.

1-John 1 pictures the relationship, here's what God wants us to have between each one of us and God the Father and Jesus Christ. When I was on a trip recently down to Opp, Alabama, I had a 14-year-old girl ask me—because I was giving her a ride over to church—'What does it feel like to be the head minister?' I said, 'Well, I've never really thought of it, because as far as I know Christ is the Head of the Church.' Christ is the head of every one of you. The Church is the Body of Christ. When we gather together in assembly like this, then our true fellowship is to be like this first Sabbath between Adam and Eve.

God's Spirit is to be here among us. He is to teach us with His Word. His Spirit is something that leads us and guides us with His Word and Truth so that we understand God's way. Then we have a unique thing that takes place, which is that God fellowships with us. Just like marriage is to be a special, intimate relationship between husband and wife, so the Sabbath is to be a special gathering together of God's people so that we can have fellowship with Him. The Sabbath becomes a very special day, because God puts

- His presence in it
- His love in it
- His grace in it

*He gives us instruction and correction!*

1-John 1:3: “That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ.”

That really means our true fellowship. If you have that, brethren, in your prayer, in your study during the week, then when you come together at Sabbath services you automatically bring to a minimum and eliminate all the politics of Church, all the social clubbing of getting together,

1. you come together because you love God
2. because you love each other

Your fellowship is with God’s Spirit and with you and God the Father and Jesus Christ *in* you and with the brethren one to another. That is the ideal fellowship that we are to have as a Church. It’s the same way the ideal fellowship we are to have as husband and wife and it follows along the same way.

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

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. 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 God fashioned a woman, and God brought her to the man.

*That’s what it really means. He fashioned with His very own hands!*

“And the man said, ‘This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man.’ For this cause a man shall leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh” (Gen.2:18, 21-24).

*What we have here, when this takes place—when the marriage covenant and ceremony and coming together takes place—God has created a brand-new relationship between husband and wife!*

Just like when God calls us and gives us of His Spirit, we are brought into a relationship of fellowship with Him. Likewise when there is a marriage and those who know God and love God and are doing it according to God’s way, this is a

brand-new created relationship. This brand new created relationship then is a *covenant relationship*.

Then the Lord God blessed them saying, “Be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth.”

Today, in the presence of these witnesses, we are asking the Lord God Almighty, in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, to bless this marriage with love, understanding, faithfulness and dedication to each other, knowing that marriage is honorable in everything.

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

A unique thing happens when you really love each other and cleave to each other and become one flesh. As one woman said recently, ‘I can’t remember a time when I was not married.’ That is something! That’s the way that God wants it, then the blessing of love can flow from that.

Therefore, what God has joined together, let no man separate” (Mk.10:6-9).

So, ***the marriage covenant is binding unto death!*** Just think how much better the world would be if that were that way today; how much better the families would be and the lives of those involved would be if that were the standard today. *Quite different!*

(go to the next track)

I’m sure that that’s what it’s going to be in the Kingdom of God during the Millennium, that there are going to be blessed marriages and the knowledge of God is going to cover the earth as the seas cover the earth.

Can you imagine the kind of marriages and families and the kind of understanding and teaching? If you think we have done intellectual things in this age, I can hardly wait until the Kingdom of God is here and we find out what things will be done then. I think it will be greater and more fantastic, because if the Kingdom of God is not greater than the greatest that man can do, well then, God has failed. ***I don’t believe God is going to fail!***

Also, He said, “Whosoever divorces his wife, except for the cause of sexual infidelity and marries another, commits adultery.

*That is to safeguard the marriage!*

And if a woman divorces her husband, and is married to another, she commits adultery” (Mat.5:32).

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

God created you for that very purpose. Since God is actually doing all of the creation, even though it’s by human pro-creation, then I think if each one coming together in the marriage estate views it from the point of view that God created this man for me, and God created this woman for me, so that when you come together you will love each other more and love God even more. And let that be an ideal to which you always project your life in.

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, in sickness or in health, in want or in wealth unto death do they part.

*The reason is this:*

Whenever you enter into a covenant relationship of this importance this covenant relationship is pledged by your life. Let’s use the example of baptism. Baptism is a covenant pledge, and a covenant pledge is guaranteed by your death; meaning that you will be faithful in this covenant pledge and relationship until you die.

Our covenant relationship begins with Christ in the Church. Christ has already died. He has given His life in the covenant pledge. It comes to us with baptism.

Romans 6:1: “What then shall we say? Shall we continue in sin so that grace may abound? MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin, how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many **as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?**” (vs 1-3).

When you’re put under that watery grave, you’re really put into a grave. It is a symbolic grave, granted, but if you were never lifted up out of the water you would be dead indeed! It is a covenant pledge that *you* will be faithful unto death just as Christ was faithful unto death. So, you see why baptism in the covenant relationship is not like a ritual ceremony. What you’re actually doing:

Verse 4: “Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into the death; so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of

the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness of His resurrection*” (vs 4-5).

This is the covenant pledge that we have made to God. When you come to fully understand about baptism and the covenant pledge of baptism, you have pledged faithfulness unto your death, or if unfaithful the Lake of Fire. That’s why baptism is not for infants, because you have to be knowledgeable enough to know to make that kind of covenant commitment to God. There’s no going back on it, likewise with marriage.

A marriage so bound and blessed by God is binding for life, for better or for worse, in sickness or in health, in want or in wealth unto death do they part.

Now, let us understand the New Testament instructions concerning the marriage estate:

This becomes very important. Always remember this: God does not have a moveable 50-yard line. You are to become one flesh together.

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

Think how many marriages would be that much better off if that were done. God doesn’t ask for submission to put women down by the heavy hand of men. He does not expect that.

...because the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the Head of the Church...

The husband is head of the wife by creation. There’s no hierarchy here. A *created relationship* is not a hierarchy. Can people make a hierarchy out of it? *Yes!* When they take away love and devotion and service and put in authority, fear and intimidation, they have created a hierarchy and you have destroyed a marriage. We’ve seen plenty of that—haven’t we? This is why God says ‘submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord.’

...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.

It is a voluntary thing by love, devotion and choice. You’re going to run into difficulties in your marriage because your husband doesn’t make the right choice all the time in everything. But he will be able to recover himself from it if you support him and love him and submit yourself to him and help

him. Then I'm sure you'll be guaranteed there will be fewer mistakes.

Let's look at it this way: Man was never perfect before he was married, and the woman was never perfect before she was married, so you have two imperfections coming together to become one perfect flesh. That's going to take some time. Notice what Christ says to the husbands:

"Husbands, LOVE your wives...

*That means in everything!* She's going to have good days and bad days, too. How are you to love your wife?

...in exactly the same manner as Christ also loved the Church, and gave up Himself for her...

You're to love her emotionally, physically, spiritually, work, provide, protect, toil—all of those things. If women think it's a big responsibility to submit to their husbands, let me tell you, it's a bigger responsibility for a husband to be the head of the wife. You need to understand that. He gave Himself up:

...in order that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of the water through the Word of God; that He might place her beside Himself 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.

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

If every marriage could keep that in mind, and every time you get a little ripple or wave coming through—maybe even storm or tornado will come through your marriage—you can still have here your great insurance policy from God, that it can be rebuilt. It can always be upgraded in Christ.

All wives know that men are cowards when it comes to their own bodies. When they have pain it really hurts. When they don't feel good, they have to be taken care of. Women are blessed with one thing—you can consider it a blessing or however you want to—that, men, you don't know pain and never will, because you cannot have children and never will. Every woman that has had children knows that for a fact. The only dispute that women have with the Scriptures is that when a woman is travailing in pain, to give birth, when a man child is born she 'has joy and the travail is forgotten.' That is the one verse that most women say, 'not quite!'

When you're sick and down your wife will take care of you, and when she's sick and down you help her and take care of her. When you're sick and down you're cranky. I know when I had my bad hip, I got cranky; did I get cranky! Delores was kind and understanding, bit her lip and chin and all that sort of thing. There are times when you have to tolerate each other—when those times come along. But that's all part of love.

The man who is loving his wife in this manner loves himself, 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, of His very own flesh, (through His crucifixion—and all that it means)...

Remember, the great lesson in the physical marriage is that Christ is going to marry the Church and that is a spiritual lesson; so that we become one with Him. To be married to Christ for all eternity is going to be a tremendous and fantastic thing, brethren.

...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).

I remember the first time I read Eph. 5 I could not understand it. I couldn't understand it until I went back and really understood the creation of woman from man, and that compared to the Church.

Ephesians 5:30: "For we are members of His body—of His flesh and of His bones."

This is talking about through the very crucifixion. We are part of the Body of Christ. We are given forgiveness of sin through His sacrifice, through His flesh—because he was beaten and scourged, and of His bones. When I saw that I said *how could that be?* Not one bone of His was broken.

What could this mean? *Nothing other than it goes back to the creation!* God took a rib out of Adam and created Eve, so that the Church is created just like Eve from the innermost part of Christ. Think on that! When you have the Spirit of God, Christ is in you. That's all it could mean 'with His bones.'

"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).

We are to think of the oneness that we will be with Christ as the Church, as the bride, working together, loving each other and bringing new children into the Kingdom of God beginning in the Millennium. If we keep all of that in mind in relationship to the physical human marriage, then this gives us the inspiring ideal to always shoot for. This gives you the desire to say:

- I forgive you
- I love you
- I understand, because you really do

And all of those things that are necessary to function as husband and wife in a close relationship that we grow together in Christ.

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).

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

You can be guaranteed one thing: If you really submit from your heart in a loving way, you are going to receive back so much more than if you try and stubbornly get your own way. I guarantee it! Because God does! That will happen!

...with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. Thus, did Sarah obey Abraham, calling him lord...

Well, Sarah was no little wallflower, wilting up there on the wall and falling to the ground, was she? *NO!* When God talks about these things and these are the instructions, He doesn’t mean that at all.

...and you have become her daughters if you do what is right... Likewise, you husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way...

Just like the wives understand their husbands, the husbands need to understand their wives. That’s a hard thing to do. It’s always easier to say, ‘Obey me and submit.’ Well, you haven’t understood a thing! That’s why what happens when you come together this way, 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-Pet. 3:1-7).

That’s important to really realize and understand. That’s great, and that makes the marriage and

everything perfect. These are the things that are very important concerning the wedding ceremony.

Now then, when you have children—all of ours are grown up. I remember when each one was born. They were all born at home. They charge and ‘arm and leg’ and half a body in a hospital today. If you can find a midwife and deliver them at home and everything is right and no complications happen, deliver them at home. The first one born at home—Jonathan—cost us \$35.

Another thing, too; I have seen this and it is true. When women have children, and ten days later ship them off to the daycare center, children lack emotional attachment, they lack identification, they become fidgety and I think that’s where a lot of the ‘hyperactive’ children come from, because they’re not there with their mothers to nurse them, to feed them, to take care of them, to be there when they’re home and all that sort of thing has a part to do with it.

God has designed everything to be in a loving relationship. That’s what’s important, likewise with children. And with children you always learn love in spite of everything. Children, when they are born, other than being physically put together, they’re imperfect in every way. You have to watch over them, feed them, diaper them, but there are always the joys. You see them grown and see that innocent look and there’s a special something that only a mother can appreciate, because none of you are nursing fathers.

There is the love that is so great when children are born that way and are fed from their mother’s breasts. Plus, not only that, all the babies fed that way—which God intended.... Babies are not born with a bottle of Similac in their hands. By the way, that’s the worst kind of thing you could ever give your children. I know some people may be mad at me, but I’m just telling you the straight facts.

When children are nursed by their mothers, they pass on all the immune to their children. Did you know that? That helps hold down a lot of these so-called ‘childhood’ diseases. Certain sicknesses come along so that the baby’s body can build up it’s own antibodies, as well.

We have learned that when our children would have a fever... and I never will forget when I came home from a long trip and David was cutting his eyeteeth, and they were just something. When they cut teeth they get cranky and miserable and irritable. Their diapers and everything becomes almost like they’re putting out a pure acid, which eats everything up. I came home from this trip and poor Delores was sitting there after being up night

and day for two days. I walked in and she said, 'Here, I'm going to bed.'

I said, 'Wait a minute.' I fixed up a poultice to go on his chest and on his back and in five minutes, just the greatest, longest, greenest gob came out of him and he was much better from that time on. That also helps build up immunity in the system. Little childhood sicknesses that come along, don't fret and don't run off to the doctor immediately. If they've got a temperature that's a little bit of temperature, don't worry about it. God made the temperature to kill the virus or the bacteria, or whatever it is.

Now, if it is something serious and you need the help of a doctor, well, do that. You need to also pray for your children, have them anointed; God will intervene and heal and raise them up. That's all part of life.

I met Great-Grandpa Alexander today. I looked at him and said, 'Look what you started!' You never know what your family is going to grow to. All of those things are really very important, and if through it all you can keep:

- love for each other
- love for God
- love for your children
- love for your family

*because you're going to have all the ups and downs of every family!*

How many have had a perfect marriage, with perfect children and never had one bit of trouble in all their lives? *No takers!* What we go through is common to all human beings and all marriages. ***But God has called us to rise above it!***

When we come together in the wedding tomorrow, we're all coming before God to rejoice in God's creation, God's love, God's goodness, and bringing together a young man and young woman.

#### Your Sacred Marriage Covenant

We are here today in the presence of God...

*Just like we are on the Sabbath!*

...coming before His very throne in heaven above and we asking God to join you as husband and wife. Therefore, in accordance with God's Word, each of you should 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.

Do you, (his first name) enter into covenant with God, in the presence of these witnesses to take (her full name) 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? (I Do!)

I told Chad, when I say 'provide' *it's bucks for her, fella!* That's when you are to say 'I do.' When the money is on the table, it's 'I do.'

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? (I Do!)

Since we are asking God to join you as husband and wife, and praying for His binding and blessing of this 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, you will now join your right hands with the laying on of my hands, we will ask God to join you as husband and wife.

Let us kneel!

Special Prayer Blessing the Marriage

Presentation of the Rings

You may kiss the bride!

By the authority vested in me as a minister of Jesus Christ—in the Name of Jesus Christ, I now pronounce you husband and wife.

I thought since the wedding is tomorrow and all of our minds are on that, that it would be good not only for the wedding coming tomorrow, but for all of us, that if we could go back and understand about the whole purpose of marriage, creation and God's great plan for us, brethren.

When we do that and really understand that and see what Christ has for us then we can be inspired and want to change, grow and overcome. Inspired to change our lives and let Christ's Spirit change it for us, so that we can be in the blessing of God in everything that we do.

There's going to be a wedding ceremony in heaven above with the first resurrection. It's going to be a grand wedding ceremony, and there's going to be a grand wedding supper. All the angels are going

to do the providing for us. I wonder what kind of food we're going to eat? *The kind of spiritual food that is going to be absolute perfection that we're going to eat at the wedding feast.*

I wonder what it's going to be like when God the Father is standing there and Christ is at His right hand and the whole Church standing there on the Sea of Glass before Him. The special wedding ceremony and the special wedding covenant is given between Christ and the Church. God the Father then goes through and gives the covenant. That will be a whole different covenant for us when that marriage covenant takes place and then Christ says, 'I do!' This time it will be for all eternity!

Then God the Father looks out to all of those who are the Bride of Christ and He reads the covenant words for the covenant marriage between the Lamb and the Bride, and all those of the Bride say, 'I do!' That's going to be some ceremony!

Revelation 19:1: "And after these things I heard *the* loud voice of a great multitude in heaven..."

There will be those in the first resurrection, part of the Body of Christ that will rise and meet Christ in the air. That's not the third heaven, clear up to where the Throne of God is, because God is going to bring the Throne down to the Sea of Glass. It will be right there in the clouds. We'll be up there until the wedding ceremony is over and all that has to take place then. Then we come back to the earth. You talk about congregational singing! You talk about shouts of joy! This is what he heard:

"...saying, 'Hallelujah! The salvation and the glory and the honor and the power *belong* to the Lord our God. For true and righteous *are* His judgments; for He has judged the great whore, who corrupted the earth with her fornication, and He has avenged the blood of His servants at her hand.' And they said a second time, 'Hallelujah! And her smoke shall ascend upward into the ages of eternity.' And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshiped God, Who sits on the throne, saying, 'Amen. Hallelujah!'" (vs 1-4).

Verse 5: "And a voice came forth from the throne, saying, 'Praise our God, all His servants, and all who fear Him, both small and great.' And I heard a voice like that of a great multitude, and like *the* sound of many waters, and *the* sound of mighty thunderings, saying, 'Hallelujah! For *the* Lord God Almighty has reigned. Let us be glad and shout with joy; and let us give glory to Him; for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.' And it was granted to her that she should be clothed in fine linen, pure and bright; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he said

to me, 'Write: Blessed *are* those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb.' And he said to me, 'These are the true words of God'" (vs 5-9).

That's how every marriage that we have within the Church, this is the ideal that we need to look to. Whenever our marriages—because of human nature and things have difficulties and problems—always remember the perfection that God has called you to and aim to that. Work for that and grow in grace and love, in service, so that all of these things can work together for good.

*Brethren, that's the whole purpose of marriage!* I really hope and pray that this can help many, many people in their marriages and help them to refocus on the whole purpose of God because of it.

Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version*

#### Scriptural References:

- 1) Psalm 33:1-9
- 2) Psalm 148:1-14
- 3) Genesis 1:1-11, 14, 20-22, 24-28
- 4) Genesis 2:7, 15-25, 1-3
- 5) 1 John 1:3
- 6) Romans 6:1-5
- 7) Ephesians 5:30
- 8) Revelation 19:1-9

Also referenced: Booklet:

*The Scared Wedding Ceremony*

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