

Theme: Marriage is a life-long covenant between a man and a woman to be exclusively faithful to one another.

## I. Intro – A Vow-less Marriage?

- A. Article on refusing to vow till death do us part
- B. “Don’t promise what can’t keep”
- C. Is marriage really a covenant?
- D. If so, covenant of what? How long?

## II. What Is A Covenant?

- A. A working definition
  - 1. See the statement at end
  - 2. This is general but sufficient to understand
- B. Parts of making a covenant
  - 1. Two parties
  - 2. Stipulations governing relationship
  - 3. Ceremony to swear & seal by oath
    - a. Often witnesses called to observe
    - b. Often a sign given to confirm
  - 4. Often followed by a meal

## III. The Covenant Nature of Marriage

### A. Marriage is a covenant with one another

- 1. Mal 2:14-16 – marriage covenant; break faith
- 2. Ezek 16:8 – solemn oath; entered covenant
- 3. Prov 2:16-17 – partner of youth; covenant of God

### B. The covenant nature of the wedding ceremony

- 1. PP Slide - covenant components & wedding
- 2. Marriage is a covenant!

### C. Religious & social implications of marriage covenant

- 1. Marriage is NOT a private affair!
  - 2. Marriage is a covenant before God (v14; Pr 2:17; v13-14)
    - a. God is a witness - v14
    - b. Covenant before God – Proverbs 2:17
    - c. God holds us to marriage covenant – v13-14
- 3. Marriage is also a social contract

## IV. The Lifelong Nature of the Marriage Covenant

- A. Marriage is “one flesh” – no separation (v15; Gen 2:24)
- B. Marriage is meant to last until death (Matt 19:4-6)
- C. Will deal with divorce & remarriage later in series

## V. The Exclusive Nature of the Marriage Covenant

- A. Marriage: Covenant of two becoming one (Mt 19:4-6)
- B. This excludes all others from this relationship

Communion  
Numbers 6

## **VI. Conclusion & Summary**

- A. Singles – realize the serious nature of marriage
  - 1. Don't enter this lightly!
  - 2. Lifelong union – even if you try to change vows!
- B. Married – keep your covenant vows
  - 1. All marriages are full of good and bad
  - 2. This is why vows have rich, poor, sick, health, etc.
  - 3. Contrary to quote at start – we can keep promises!
  - 4. Covenant is what gives marriage power!
- C. Everyone – live as covenant people in 2006
  - 1. God's people are to be covenant people
  - 2. We are to keep our promises (Ps 15:4)
  - 3. We are in covenant with God - Who gives us power
  - 4. Our covenant ceremony - Communion

### The Covenant Nature of Marriage

Malachi 2:13-16  
January 1, 2006

Sharon Naylor, the author of *Your Special Wedding Vows* said she has heard such vows as “until our time together is over”. “Yet these people take the institution very seriously, especially if they are on a second marriage. They understand that you do not make a promise that you cannot keep.” ... When the actors Brad Pitt and Jennifer Anniston married in 2000, she promised to make his favorite banana milkshake while he vowed to split the difference over the temperature they wanted in their home. After their separation Pitt said he still considered the marriage a “total success.” That is five more years than I made it with anyone else,” he said. Quoted in London Times, July 31, 2005 – Brides Refuse to Vow to the inevitable

A covenant is an oath between two parties that defines the terms and conditions of their relationship

Two parties

Stipulations governing relationship

Ceremony to swear & seal by oath

c. Often witnesses called to observe

d. Often a sign given to confirm

Often followed by a meal

8 Later I passed by, and when I looked at you and saw that you were old enough for love, I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness. **I gave you my solemn oath and entered into a covenant with you**, declares the Sovereign LORD, and you became mine. Ezek 16:8

16 It will save you also from the adulteress, from the wayward wife with her seductive words, 17 who has left **the partner of her youth** and ignored **the covenant she made before God**. Proverbs 2:16-17

2 parties – man and woman

stipulations – God’s Law and civil law

ceremony – wedding, especially vows

witnesses – family and friends

sign – rings

meal – reception

17 who has left the partner of her youth and ignored **the covenant she made before God**. Proverbs 2:17

24 For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and they will become one flesh. Genesis 2:24

4 "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' 5 and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? 6 So they are no longer two, but one. **Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate.**" Matthew 19:4-6

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Matthew 19:4-6