



Covenant:

Binding promises made before God



A covenant is a relationship between two people who make binding promises to each other and work together to reach a common goal. Covenants are accompanied by oaths, signs, and ceremonies; i.e. in marriage, the marriage ceremony where husband wife *vow* live life together for the rest of their lives. Biblically, marriage is a covenant, a commitment without reservation. A covenant commitment is a 100-0 relationship - just as Jesus Christ gave everything for you, you are called to give all in your marriage without expectations of return. Nelson's Bible Dictionary states, "A covenant, in the biblical sense, implies much more than a contract or simple agreement. A contract always has an end date, while a covenant is a permanent arrangement. Another difference is that a contract generally involves only one part of a person, such as a skill, while a covenant covers a person's total being." It is a choice couples make to commit all of themselves to their marriage for life.

Marriage as a covenant makes sense. Becoming one doesn't involve part of a person, it involves the whole person; mind, body, and soul. Marriage vows should mean more than a loan contract or business agreement. God is serious about the marriage covenant and couples also need to take it seriously. The world may think that a marriage contract works fine, but many people now see the shallowness of that lack of commitment. God established marriage as a covenant not a contract.

Covenants define obligations and commitments, but they are different from a contract because they are relational and personal. A contract is an agreement that involves the exchange of services. The 50/50 or 60/40 relationship is contractual. One person gives as long as the other person does their part. When you said your wedding vows, you made a covenantal oath to love your spouse *no matter what*: In the good times and bad, in health and sickness - the covenant you made with your spouse didn't state that you would love them when they behaved correctly or as long as they didn't sin against you - you promised to love them for life!

Do those around you see that your marriage is a covenant - that you are committed to love your spouse and work through the problems you *will* experience? Are you living out those binding promises you made before God? Be totally and completely committed to your marriage; yes, set boundaries and confront sin, but be committed to working through the problems so that *your* marriage will be a testimony of God's love for mankind.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

The Fortified Marriages Manual & Workbook helps couples live out the covenant they made at their wedding.

Articles to check out:

5 Ways to Keep Your Marriage Covenant by Dennis Rainey - www.familylife.com

What Is a Covenant Marriage? by Rachael Pace - www.marriage.com

An article about the practicalities of the marriage covenant