

For Better or Worse

Pastor Ken

Week 3, June 4, 2023

²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. ²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Eph 5-NIV)

Let me give you an outline that will serve as a tool to help you remember God's word.

Husbands, your scriptural position is leadership, your supreme passion is love. Wives, your scriptural position is submission, and your supreme passion is respect.

These last 2 messages about marriage, For Better or for Worse, will spell this out. I will define these responsibilities for each of you. There you have it, this is where you gain your **authority** (scriptural position) from God in the marriage and where you enjoy your **affection** (supreme passion), in the marriage.

The man-leadership and love. Headship and affection.

The women-submission and respect. Equality and completion.

You marry for love; you stay married because of commitment. And this commitment is defined by **faithfulness**.

So, here is the best definition of what Faithfulness means. You would think that we would all know what faithfulness means. This definition has taken some thought and prayer. What does faithfulness mean?

Faithfulness is someone keeping a promise (that is not all there is)
...It is someone keeping a promise over a long period of time.

Over a long period of time. And it is over a long period of time where the emotion really lies. Where the experiences build.

Many of you sitting here today, it might be good before you leave this room, to make a fresh commitment to one another using this **definition of faithfulness**. Faithfulness is keeping a promise over a long period of time.

¹⁹ Now the Lord God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰ So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. (Gen 2-NIV)

After an endless parade of face-to-face contact with...aardvarks and armadillos,
baboons and beavers,
...hippos and hyenas,
...llamas and lions,
... peacocks and penguins,
...turtles and turkeys and wart hogs and weasels,

...and every other creature that you could name came sauntering, slithering and sidling up to Adam, Adam was all dressed up with no place to go. The animals all had dates. Adam was a solitary being.

Then Adam was done with the animals and done with the alphabet. **Adam was feeling a little blue**. Adam thought, “with these feelings of sadness and blueness, the only solution is a good long nap.”

Mind you, I did put in a few hours cataloguing the boss’s creation. And off to sleep he goes. Adam awakens to a **big surprise**. Adam awakens to find **not** another four-footed creature but a woman.

Gorgeous, amazingly beautiful, and naked, may I add. Unlimited hours of enjoying beauty and nakedness. Together. His reaction? The same as ours-**she's hot!**

Imagine with me for a moment. Those first hours and days. Every activity, every thought, every word spoken provided unlimited joy and pleasure for one another. Sounds like courting. Dating. Don't you think?

The thought of keeping anything from each other just simply did not cross their minds. Literally, they had nothing to hide. There was no concealing. No guilt and shame. No mistrust, no destructive behaviors or words or secrets to separate them.

I came to Danice's church, in 1985, while I was in Seminary, in Ft. Worth, Texas. She was a graduate of UTA, with a degree in computer science. I was just arriving; she was just leaving.

I fell in love with Dance while she was in Shanghai, China teaching English as a second language. She was teaching nuclear physicists, government leaders, ...and top businesspeople who might one day come to America. Doing missions and traveling was so attractive to me. She not only looked great, but she also acted great-adventuresome.

The fact is this type of love and approach to marriage is fleeting. We know this as **romantic love**.

When you dated you were captivated by each other? You talked for hours, drove for miles, and spared no expense to show you loved her. To love him.

Her smile made your knees weak; his smile sent you dreaming that he was Mr. Right. Her voice silenced all naysayers, and his touch caused your pulse to spike.

When you were around each other you felt more - **complete**, more - **safe** and more - **full of life**. You did the marital dance of disclosure (**explain**) and believed that each would value, complete, and compliment the other. **Forever**.

Life would be an endless array of marital happiness.

A kaleidoscope of experiences with love and kindness.

A Faris wheel of unlimited fun.

Then you got married. A man fell in love with an opera singer. Every night he paid top dollar for the best seat in the house, and he sat enraptured by the beauty of her voice as she sang into the night.

After a while he got up enough courage to ask her out. He asked, she said, "yes." They dated. He fell in love. They got married. There's was a story book wedding. Friends and family offered them congratulations with gifts and words of blessing. They ate. They danced. They dreamed of life together.

Then they went on their honeymoon. As they were getting dressed for bed the opera singer took off her hair, she was bald. The man was shocked.

She hiked up her lingerie and took off her wooden leg. The man gasped.

Then she took out her glass eye and put it on the lamp stand and the man said, "**sing baby, sing.**"

The problem of divorce is massive and tragic. Over the last 50 years divorce has skyrocketed by 700%.

Over 50% of marriages end in divorce, and that doesn't count the many couples who never marry, that are just living together. Those are some staggering stats; they tell us a story of how far marriage has drifted from God's design in Genesis 1 & 2.

Far too many marriages have drifted off the road and landed in the ditch. This has been made worse by the court's allowance called no fault divorce. Divorce is always somebody's fault. No fault divorce is some of the worst legislation ever to come out of American government.

So, we live in a day when divorce is easily granted. This results in commitments that are always faltering at worst, and flimsy at best. Let me go back to my opening comments.

You marry for love; you stay together because of commitment. And commitment is defined as faithfulness over a long period of time.

Danice and I have this agreement about divorce, if one of us should want to talk about divorce, the other person gets to kill them, and tell God they died. We call it no fault murder!

Bad plan in our family to talk about divorce. Better plan to stay married and stay alive. Faithfulness is keeping a promise over a long period of time.

So many fail to realize their marriage is not only God designed, but **witnessed by God.**

God attended the ceremony. God celebrated that special wedding day with your family and friends. God heard you say your vows. God saw you exchange rings. God heard the minister pray prayers.

God went on your honeymoon. God has been present even in the bedroom.

Another way to say it is... Your marriage has been witnessed by God, thus making your marriage a covenant.

*¹⁴ You ask, "Why?" It is because the Lord is the **witness** between you and the wife of your youth. You have been unfaithful to her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. (Malachi 2-NIV)*

She is your wife by covenant. Many of you have entered into a contract, which is an agreement by two parties about a certain issue. Stipulations are given. Agreement is reached. Ratification of the document is signed.

Remember, you signed a marriage certificate to make the marriage legal. You have that document in your file or somewhere hanging on your wall.

Then you became legally bound to the stipulations of the contract. That is a contract. A Covenant includes a contract, but it is more than a contract.

What makes a covenant more than a contract is that it is tied to relationship. Not just to an agreed upon issue for services rendered. You don't need a relationship to do business, I don't have to like you to do a contract, I just have to like the deal.

A covenant is more than how we relate to the agreement, deal or services rendered, it is about how we relate to the person (spouse) involved in the contract, **which elevates it to a covenant.**

A covenant is a contractual arrangement between two parties, or two groups (Israel and God), that is tied together by a legal agreement. And that legal agreement is defined by faithfulness.

You marry for love; you stay together because of commitment. And commitment is defined by **faithfulness**. What does faithfulness mean? Faithfulness is keeping a promise over a long period of time.

Now, the bible features 3 kinds of covenants. Let me spell each out. The first two, I will spell out briefly, the last one will take us back to our biblical text in Eph 5. It will use up the remainder of our time and we will finish it off next week.

The bible has 3 covenantal institutions. Covenants that God created to carry out his purposes in the earth with mankind.

1. God has created a covenant of marriage. (Gen 2:20-22)

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. (NIV) Here is my translation, the man needs help. The word helper in the Hebrew is *ezer* (helper), *keneghdo* (like him or suitable).

A man needs the help of a wife in every way. First, in order to have children, then in order to remember what groceries to bring home, to remember where he placed his keys and to remember where he parked his car.

Let me provide you with the Ken Squires Marriage Version (KSMV) of Gen 2:20, but for Adam no suitable helper was found.

This man is often helpless. (KSMV)

Can I get a witness from the ladies? Some of the best features of my marriage are the encouragements and contributions, Danice has made to my life. Ok, the rest of the verse.

21 So the Lord God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. 22 Then the Lord God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. (Gen 2-NIV)

Remember God created marriage to bear his image. To mirror his image. God's intent is to trinitize marriage. As God exists as a trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the family exists as a Husband, Wife and Children. A trinitized marriage. A trinitized Godhead. Even trinitized humans-Adam and Eve. Body. Soul and Spirit. (1 Thes 5:23)

And the reason any other definition is an affront to God, offends God, is not only because it is a sin of rebellion, but it strikes a blow to the definition of trinity. To the definition of God. To the definition of the Godhead.

Just as you cannot change the definition of God as a trinity, you cannot change the scriptural definition of marriage. Family!

Scripture is true, not because it is in God's word; it is true because it is God's word. (Ken Squires-FB Post)

If you are listening to this message in person or online, God will hold you accountable. If you turn your screen off or get up and leave, which you could do, you will still be held accountable, because you could have learned God's design for marriage, but chose not to.

Friend, you are in trouble either way, so why not surrender your life to Christ, and quit fighting God's plan and purposes for you personally and for your marriage and family?

2. God has created a covenant of family. (Gen 1:27-28)

God created marriage to have a family. To have children. To have babies. The bible makes grand statements about having babies. In fact, God says the more the merrier.

Blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them. They will not be put to shame when they contend with their opponents in court. (Psalm 127:5-NIV)

Keep on having them. Why? Why the big deal about having kids? God blessed them and said to them, *“Be fruitful and increase in number, fill the earth and subdue it. (Gen 1:28-NIV)*

Even before God created man, God laid out the plan. This multiplication was to create dominion over the earth. The reason why God wanted married couples to have babies, wasn't just to have some look-a-likes, running around the house and terrorizing the dog.

That wasn't it. God wanted the theology of dominion to extend to the ends of the earth. Reproduce yourself and spread all over the planet, so that at every corner of this planet there will be somebody ruling in every area of economy, government, family, market, and church. Under God's rulership.

Children are God's plan to make sure that God's authority in the earth, is lived out without challenge.

Is it possible that we are living in the last days for two reasons:

Christians are having no kids or fewer kids; thus, God's rulership is diminishing in the earth, and babies are getting aborted, thus rulership is destroyed? I need to say that again. Repeat!

God's dominion in the earth is diminishing by fewer kids; God's dominion is being destroyed by abortion.

When my kids move out and relocate, get married, have families, the grace of God, the image of God, the mirror of God moves to all corners of the earth.

The purpose of having babies was so there would be divine dominion. God's rule everywhere.

So the bible says, *“blessed is the man whose quiver is full of them”*. So, Danice, are you ready to go 1 more round?

3. God has created a covenant through his church. (Eph 5-NIV)

A man's scriptural position is to lead.

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. (Eph 5)

A man's supreme passion is to love.

²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... (Eph 5)

A women's scriptural position is to submit. *²² Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. (Eph 5)*

A women's supreme passion is to respect.

³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband. (Eph 5)

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