



COVENANT CHURCH

In Covenant – Part 2

“Inner Covenants”

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Main Idea – The only covenants that matter are the covenants God made on your behalf through Himself. Do not make any vows to yourself that are not already part of God’s covenants with you. If you have - in the past - made unhealthy inner covenants, you can replace them with the life-giving promises of God.

Life is about relationships

- The intangible things – the ideas in your head – are the things that most matter.
- Covenants guide your relationships with others, as well as your own ideas about yourself.
- Covenant is a God-word. The concept of covenants is His idea.
- The only good covenants originate with God, and are instituted by Him.
- **Genesis 15** tells the account of God’s covenant with Abraham. In this covenant, God did all the work in a vision; Abraham was an observer. All of the vows, sacrifices, and energy were taking place within the Godhead. **Hebrews 6: 13-20 – For when God made a promise to Abraham, because He could swear by no one greater, He swore by Himself, saying, “Surely blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply you.” And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. For men indeed swear by the greater, and an oath for confirmation is for them an end of all dispute. Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which enters the Presence behind the veil, where the forerunner has entered for us, even Jesus, having become High Priest forever according to the order of Melchizedek. (NKJV)**
- Trust - and know - there is no good purpose in life for you to make your own promises in addition to what God has already accomplished for you. Covenants are all about God. **Matthew 5: 33-37 – “You have also heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not break your vows; you must carry out the vows you make to the Lord.’ But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, ‘By heaven!’ because heaven is God’s throne. And do not say, ‘By the earth!’ because the earth is his footstool. And do not**

say, 'By Jerusalem!' for Jerusalem is the city of the great King. Do not even say, 'By my head!' for you can't turn one hair white or black. Just say a simple, 'Yes, I will,' or 'No, I won't.' Anything beyond this is from the evil one." (NLT)

Some earthly vows serve good purposes

- "Vow" can be defined as: a solemn promise, pledge, or personal commitment that commemorates a written declaration.
- Examples of typical earthly vows are the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, marriage ceremony vows, citizenship vows, etc.
- Those, of themselves, can serve good purposes.

However, self-made inner vows are harmful

- Jimmy Evans defined an inner vow as "a self-directed promise resulting from an unpleasant experience or hurt."
- The Bible says that if you have unwittingly made an inner vow, you have fallen into a trap. **Proverbs 20:25 – An impulsive vow is a trap; later you'll wish you could get out of it. (MSG)**
- Satan will use an inner vow to plant a false idea into your own belief system.

Words of some typical inner vows that will take away God's lordship in your life

- "*I will never* . . .
 - *trust*." Such a vow will lead to loneliness.
 - *have kids*." This type of vow will lead to missed opportunities for life's blessings.
 - *go to church*." This vow will result in spiritual ineptness.
 - *be poor again*." This self-made promise often results in materialism and a lack of generosity.
 - *be like my father and mother*." Unforgiveness, bitterness, and pride result from this type of vow.
- Give God control of your life. Don't try to take control of it yourself – you will become unfulfilled and unhappy if you do.
- Trust God more than you trust yourself.
- Another harmful inner vow might be something like: "*I (or it) will always* . . ." Such a vow will lead to despair, discouragement, and an unwillingness to grow or change. The Bible says in **Proverbs 3: 5-6 – Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths.** (NKJV)

- Or, “*No one will ever. . .*” This inner vow will lead to rebelliousness, lack of respect for authority, and an eventual inability to receive correction and direction. The Bible says in **Proverbs 21:23 – Those who guard their mouths and their tongues keep themselves from calamity. (NIV)**

How to break inner vows

1. *Reinstate God as Lord over your life.* Put God back in His rightful place over your ideas. Subject your will to His will. **2 Corinthians 4:5 – For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake. (ESV)**
2. *Repent of having made the wrong kind of vows.* There is no Godly reason for having manufactured your own inner vow. **Leviticus 5:4-5 – Or suppose you make a foolish vow of any kind, whether its purpose is for good or for bad. When you realize its foolishness, you must admit your guilt. When you become aware of your guilt in any of these ways, you must confess your sin. (NLT)**
3. *Recognize the Holy Spirit has the power to establish new internal vows.* **Hebrews 4:13 – Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. (NIV)**
4. *Forgive.* Forgiveness opens up to you the blessings of God’s love, and the gift of restoration. **Ephesians 4:32 – Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (NIV)**
5. *Replace.* Install God’s promises where your old internal vows had been. Do not leave yourself open to more of Satan’s ideas. **Matthew 13: 43-45 – “When an unclean spirit goes out of a man, he goes through dry places, seeking rest, and finds none. Then he says, ‘I will return to my house from which I came.’ And when he comes, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes and takes with him seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and they enter and dwell there; and the last state of that man is worse than the first. So shall it also be with this wicked generation.” (NKJV)**

God is the way-maker, the promise-keeper

- Fill your soul with the knowledge of God’s covenants. God has already supplied you with all the vows you will ever need. Learn what they are. Meditate on them, accept them, and declare them.
- **Proverbs 18:21 – Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruits. (ESV)**
- **Philippians 4:19 – And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. (NKJV)**

Reflective Questions for In Covenant – Part 2

1. Pastor Stephen presented some phrases that typically reflect bad internal covenants (see above). Have you ever declared similar ideas to yourself? What was the outcome?
2. Why is it important, and necessary, to go through a step-by-step process of restoration (as described above) if you have unwittingly adopted harmful inner covenants?
3. If you believe God's covenants are the only vows you will ever need to know, what do you need to do to learn more about those covenants?