

Jason Smith – For Better or Worse Part 1

The Covenant of Commitment

Genesis 2:24

²⁴ Therefore, a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

Marriage is more than a contract; it is a sacred covenant established by God. When we understand the depth of this commitment, we can approach both the joys and challenges of marriage with humility and faith.

This week, reflect on how you view your marriage. Is it a covenant or a contract?

Commit to viewing your relationship with your spouse through the lens of God's design for marriage: a lifelong, unbreakable bond rooted in love, respect, and selflessness.

Introduction:

The first dance at a wedding is one of the most beautiful moments. Two people—dressed to perfection, glowing with joy—step onto the floor.

The music begins, and for a few minutes, they're locked in rhythm, seemingly perfect.

But then the dance ends, the music fades, and reality sets in. You're not just signing up for a perfect moment—you're signing up for a lifetime of imperfection.

Marriage is hard work. It's filled with highs and lows, joy and heartbreak, and everything in between. And yet, many of us start with unrealistic expectations.

We expect a fairy tale but end up with something much more complicated. Society tells us that when things get hard, we can simply walk away.

But God's design for marriage calls us to a different standard: not a contract that can be broken but a covenant that binds us together for life.

Genesis 2:24 says, "That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh." **That word "united" means to be joined, glued, or bonded together.**

Marriage, as God designed it, is the most intimate and sacred human relationship—a reflection of God's unbreakable covenant with His people.

Over the next few weeks, we're going to dive into what it means to navigate the ups and downs of marriage.

Today, we'll begin by exploring the foundation of it all: commitment.

1. Marriage Is a Covenant, Not a Contract

Scripture: Genesis 2:24

When God created marriage, He didn't design it as a casual agreement between two people.

It wasn't meant to be a "you scratch my back, and I'll scratch yours" kind of deal.

Genesis 2:24 teaches us that marriage is a covenant—a sacred promise made before God. When we say, “for better or worse,” **we’re making a lifelong commitment, not a conditional arrangement.**

Contracts are based on mutual benefit: If one party doesn’t hold up their end of the deal, the other party can walk away.

Pittsburgh Steelers Le’Veon Bell **(SHOW PIC)** sat out the entire 2018 season and forfeited his entire \$ 14 million salary because of contract disputes.

When a contract is in play, it serves with a selfish motivation. What can be done for the individual, and often requires the best deal.

But a covenant is different.

It’s rooted in faithfulness and selflessness, even when things get hard.

Think about God’s covenant with us—He remains faithful even when we fall short. Marriage reflects that same kind of unbreakable bond.

A Contract Protects Rights — A Covenant Surrenders Them

- In a contract, I guard what’s mine.
- In a covenant, I **give myself fully**—not just what I have, but **who I am**.

This is why **biblical marriage** is a covenant. It’s not 50/50. It’s 100/100.

Application:

- This week, take some time to reflect on how you view your marriage. Are you keeping score, or are you committed regardless of the circumstances?
- Remember that a covenant is built on grace. How can you extend grace to your spouse in a way that reflects God’s grace to you?

Marriage as a covenant means sticking together through thick and thin. It's not always easy, but it's always worth it.

When we embrace this mindset, we can begin to see our marriage as God sees it—a beautiful reflection of His love and commitment to us.

2. Commitment Requires Sacrifice

Ephesians 5:25

Paul writes in Ephesians 5:25, **“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.”**

Christ's love for the church wasn't convenient or easy—it was sacrificial. True commitment in marriage requires us to follow that same example of sacrifice.

In marriage, sacrifice might look like giving up your need to be right during an argument or choosing to put your spouse's needs above your own.

How many of us realize this is really easy to do? Wrong! For those of us here this morning that's not married, this is for you as well.

In relationships, we must learn to set aside our pride and be willing to put the other person above ourselves.

This is not asking you to let people take advantage of you, but it is an appeal to set aside your pride.

It's not always dramatic, but it is intentional.

Think of it like this: **every time you choose to serve your spouse, you're investing in the foundation of your marriage.**

Small sacrifices, made daily, lead to a marriage that can weather any storm.

Application:

- Identify one area where you can put your spouse's needs above your own this week. It could be as simple as taking care of a chore they dislike or spending time doing something they love.
- Reflect on how Jesus' sacrifice for you can inspire you to love your spouse selflessly.

Sacrifice isn't always easy, but it's the glue that holds a marriage together.

When both spouses choose to lay down their own desires for the good of the other, they create a partnership that can thrive even in the toughest seasons.

3. Commitment Is a Daily Choice

Luke 9:23

Jesus said, **"Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me"** (Luke 9:23).

While Jesus was speaking about following Him, this principle also applies to marriage. Commitment isn't a one-time decision; it's something we choose every single day.

Marriage is filled with moments of choice: choosing to forgive, choosing to communicate, choosing to stay even when things feel impossible.

It's in these daily decisions that we live out the vows we made on our wedding day.

There will be days when love feels easy and days when love feels like hard work, but every day, we have the opportunity to choose commitment.

Application:

- Start each day with a prayer asking God to help you honor your marriage covenant through your words, actions, and attitude.
- Make one intentional choice each day to strengthen your marriage, whether that's through a kind word, an act of service, or simply spending quality time together.

Marriage is built one choice at a time.

By committing daily to love, serve, and honor your spouse, you're not just building a stronger relationship—you're reflecting God's unwavering love and commitment to you.

Conclusion:

Marriage is a gift from God, but it's also a calling. It requires us to step outside of ourselves, to love when it's hard, and to commit when it's inconvenient.

Just as God remains faithful to His covenant with us, we are called to remain faithful to the covenant we've made with our spouse.

This week, let's ask God to help us see our marriage through His eyes.

Let's choose to embrace the sacred nature of this commitment, to sacrifice for one another, and to recommit daily to the promises we made.

Whether your marriage feels like it's on solid ground or shaky territory, know this: God's grace is sufficient, and His design for marriage is good.

This week, take time to reflect on the covenant you made on your wedding day.

Write down one way you can honor that covenant in a tangible way—through forgiveness, acts of service, or intentional time with your spouse.

Pray together, asking God to strengthen your bond and help you live out the “for better or worse” part of your vows. Remember: marriage is hard, but with God at the center, it is always worth it.