

An Alternative To Divorce

by Marilyn Conrad

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Foreword

Well-meaning Christians throughout the world have asked me numerous questions about their marriage problems and situations. They have asked their pastors, their parents, their friends and even strangers, only to hear the word, "divorce." In their dire state of hopelessness they assumed they had no other option.

God has a different viewpoint. It is the viewpoint that produces life not death; hope not despair; healing not pain. God desires for you to stand for your marriage covenant. Marilyn's book presents God's option of marriage restoration by applying Biblical principles to the dismal situations in which we often find ourselves. Her book is easy to understand and clear in its approach to the subject. She brings to light the fact that there is little understanding of the covenant of marriage, even in Christian circles.

My wife and I pray that pastors all over the world will embrace the power of covenant marriage. It is easy to utilize the world's system for dealing with the problems of marriage. That system embraces divorce and minimizes the effects of divorce on the lives of the children. The church should depart from the worldly systems of fallen man and return to the system of God through covenant. Marilyn does a great job of bringing the reality of covenant to bear on the issues that confront marriages today. This book is a valuable tool to refocus one's hurts from the problem to the solution found in Jesus and the understanding of covenant marriage.

God does have a plan and you do not have to walk down the road of divorce and despair. This book will give you the foundational truths necessary to see how you can walk in the reality of covenant and begin the process of healing for your marriage. Along with the Elders of our church, my wife and I endorse this book and the ministry of Covenant Keepers. There is an alternative to divorce!

Kenneth Savage, D. Min
Senior Pastor, Cornerstone Family Church

Dear Friends,

Covenant Keepers was formed to offer an alternative to divorce. When my own marriage was attacked several years ago I was shocked at the lack of help or encouragement available in the church for reconciliation and restoration. On the other hand, I discovered abundant counsel on divorce and making a new life for myself. However, I knew I had committed myself to my husband "until death do us part" and God was a witness to our covenant. I began to search the scriptures to gain God's perspective on marriage and divorce.

As a result I opened my home to others in the same situation. Soon I was asked to volunteer for a marriage healing ministry and eventually went on staff for four years. Covenant Keepers is a result of those years of ministry to others and the Biblical principles learned during that time.

It is not my desire to bring condemnation to those already divorced or remarried. However, I believe that individuals committed to the permanency of marriage should be given an option in the Body of Christ.

Marilyn Conrad, President
Covenant Keepers, Inc.

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An Understanding Of Marriage Covenant

In order to understand marriage healing as an alternative to divorce, we must have an understanding of God's position with regard to covenants. In this day when promises are so easily made and so easily broken, it is difficult for us to understand the true weight of a covenant agreement. Marriages are often regarded as contracts; however, in God's eyes they are covenants. To understand marriage as God sees it we must understand covenant as God sees it. In this chapter we will look at the meaning of covenant, how it applies to marriage and how God views our covenant relationship.

God honors His Word above His own name. His will **never** is in contradiction to His Word. God's will is revealed through His Word, the Bible, and to know God's will on a matter we must know what God's Word says about it. We need to approach the Word with a teachable heart, then the Holy Spirit who is the teacher will be able to lead us into the truth. *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."* John 8:31-32 KJV

It is when we **know** God's will that we can ask in confidence and receive it, and we can learn God's will for marriage through studying God's will for covenant relationships. *"And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hearth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of Him."* 1 John 5:14-15 KJV

God Functions Through Covenants

A covenant is an agreement between two people that is sacred and binding. The Bible tells us of several important covenants God made with individuals, especially the covenant He made with Abraham in the Old Testament establishing the Jewish nation. *"...and I will establish My covenant between Me and you, and I will multiply you exceedingly. ...As for me, behold, my covenant is with you, and you shall be the father of a multitude of nations. ...And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your descendants after you."* Genesis 17:1-7 NAS

In the New Testament we learn that those who receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior are partners in a new covenant with God. Jesus is now the mediator of a "better covenant" which was established on better promises. *"But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises."* (Hebrews 8:6 KJV) Jesus is still a "**covenant maker**"!

Throughout Scripture we see that God remained faithful to His covenant promises even when man, His covenant partner, failed to keep his end of the bargain. God is a **covenant keeper**. *"Nonetheless my loving-kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail. My covenant will I not break nor alter the thing that has gone out of my lips."* Psalm 89:33-34

In our culture we are accustomed to contracts whose obligations are limited and are often written with loopholes to provide escape from the terms. Contracts are not covenants. A covenant carries unlimited obligation. In Biblical times and in many cultures today, covenant meant strong commitment and loyalty, even unto death.

Covenant partners agree to lay down their lives for each other, to place the needs of the other partner ahead of their own. *"Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly even notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. **If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him, and always stand your ground in defending him.**"* 1 Corinthians 13:4-7
TLB

Covenants Have Promises, Terms & Tokens

Covenants are made through mutual agreement and every covenant contains promises and terms which are specific to it. The Bible calls marriage a covenant relationship in Malachi 2:14: *"...because the Lord was witness **to the covenant made at your marriage....**"* When you married you entered into a covenant. As part of the wedding ceremony you and your spouse made certain promises to each other. The words may differ but most ceremonies usually include something like "love, honor, cherish, obey, etc."

Most ceremonies include certain terms. For instance, "for better or for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health." And the promises and terms probably concluded with these words, "until death do us part." We call these wedding vows. The Bible is very clear about making vows. *"When you make a vow to God, do not delay in fulfilling it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it."* Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 NIV

God, knowing man's need for a visual reminder, has included as a part of the covenant, a token to represent the covenant. In God's covenant with Noah the token was a rainbow. (Genesis 6:18 and 9:8-17 AMP) In God's covenant with Abraham the token was circumcision. (Genesis 15:18 and 17:10-14 AMP) The token of our

covenant with Jesus is a circumcised heart. We are told that the Holy Spirit seals our hearts when we enter into covenant with Christ. (Ephesians 1:13-14) In marriage, the wedding band represents the token of our marital covenant and is a constant reminder of the covenant with our mate.

We need to look at two types of covenants contained in Scripture: those made between God and man and those made between men. In God's covenants with man, He reveals His perfect will and purpose and reflects His love, grace and mercy. Grace is not only God's unmerited favor, it also means the strength and ability to do what you need to do. In His covenant partner role it is evident that it is God who enables and strengthens man to keep the covenant. *"such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God. Not that we are competent to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant – not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."* 2 Corinthians 3:4-6 NIV

Marriage Is A Covenant Relationship

Marriage is recognized as a covenant relationship by the Word of God. The covenant agreement obligates the partners to the relationship and to ensuring its continuation. Even if one partner has left the marriage, God still considers the covenant in force. *"...because the Lord was witness [to the covenant made at your marriage] between you and the wife of your youth against whom you have dealt treacherously and to whom you were faithless. Yet she is your companion and the wife of your covenant [made by your marriage vows]."* Malachi 2:14 AMP

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

Although God is a witness to marriage, if He is only a witness and does not live within either partner, it is only a man-made cov-

enant. However, a man-made covenant in marriage is still subject to all God's principles.

The scripture found in Matthew 19:6, "*What God hath joined together,*" does not apply only to those that He has chosen as marriage partners for each other. Even if couples are not born-again when they marry, they have chosen God's plan for man and woman. **When they enter into marriage they are joined together in God's system of marriage.** Although seeking God for a spouse is best, very few couples know that they were called to marry each other. Even if God is not consulted by a couple when a covenant is entered into, it must be honored.

In Joshua chapter 9 a covenant was entered into with deceit and without consulting God. Yet God required that the covenant be honored. God expects no less of us in our marriages even if circumstances are less than His best. For example, if a spouse finds out after marriage that her mate concealed homosexual behavior, that does not give reason to nullify the covenant even though deceit was involved.

God Can Be A Partner In A Marriage Covenant

When God instituted marriage in the Garden of Eden He intended to be a covenant partner in every marriage. His initial covenant with man was closely tied to the original marriage of man and woman. (Genesis 1:27-28) As such, marriage is the earthly representation of the covenant unity of God and man.

The benefits of marriage covenant as God intended it, however, are available only to those in covenant with God. (Ephesians 2:12-13 and John 14:6 AMP) God witnesses our marriage on our wedding day but if neither partner is a Christian, His hands are tied and He cannot enter into the marriage. (Malachi 2:14) When God is present within the life of at least one of the mates, the covenant takes on a new dimension. **God becomes not just a witness, but**

also a partner in the marriage covenant. All God's resources and power become available to bring restoration and reconciliation.

Even if both partners were unbelievers when they married, there is good news. For through His grace, God will enter into the marriage covenant when at least one partner receives Jesus. The unbelieving spouse then is sanctified (set apart) by the believing spouse. The unbeliever also has access to covenant benefits such as divine protection through the prayers of the believer. *"To the rest I declare, I, not the Lord [for Jesus did not discuss this], that if any brother has a wife who does not believe [on Christ], and she consents to live with him, he should not leave or divorce her. ...For the unbelieving husband is set apart (separated, withdrawn from heathen contamination and affiliated with the Christian people) by union with his consecrated (set-apart) wife; and the unbelieving wife is set apart and separated through union with her consecrated husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean [unblessed heathen, outside the Christian covenant], but as it is they are prepared for God – pure and clean."* 1 Corinthians 7:12-14 AMP

A Personal Covenant With Jesus Is Needed

Salvation is a part of our personal covenant with Christ, not a part of our marriage covenant. Therefore, each partner must make a personal commitment to Jesus to receive salvation. (Romans 3:22-24) If you have not entered into a covenant with Jesus Christ you may do so right now. *"If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you confess and are saved."* (Romans 10:9-10 NIV) If you desire to enter into a personal covenant with God, repeat this prayer aloud:

"Heavenly Father, I acknowledge my need for Jesus in my life and I desire to enter into covenant with You. Jesus, I believe that you died and shed your blood for my sins. I believe in

my heart that you were raised fro the dead and I confess with my mouth that you are my Lord and Savior. Amen"

Be sure to tell the news of your new covenant with Christ to another person. Sign and date below to remind yourself when you entered into this commitment.

(signature)

(date)

Misunderstandings About Divorce And Remarriage

*"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife **except for sexual immorality**, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorces commits adultery." (Matthew 19:9 NKJV)* Some believers use this passage as justification for divorce and remarriage. It is commonly called "the exception clause." Scholarly research has shown that this passage is linked to incestuous relationships, homosexual marriages and unfaithfulness during the betrothal period. For further reading we recommend, *"Help! My Spouse Wants Out,"* by Craig Hill (see order form in back of book).

In the time of Christ an engaged couple was considered to be legally married. Therefore a legal divorce was required to break the engagement. Joseph considered quietly divorcing Mary when he discovered that she was pregnant during their betrothal period before they consummated their marriage.

Even though it is tempting to assign guilt and think in terms of an innocent party and a guilty party, by looking at God's standards we see that both partners are guilty. God does not have degrees of guilt even if the other partner is the "major contributor" to the marital problems. *"Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water of the word, that he might present it to himself, a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle,*

or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." (Ephesians 5:25-28 KJV) "In like manner you married women, be submissive to your own husbands – subordinate yourselves as being secondary to and dependent on them, and adapt yourselves to them. So that even if any do not obey the Word [of God], they may be won over not by discussion but by the [Godly] lives of their wives, when they observe the pure and modest way in which you conduct yourselves, together with your reverence [for your husband. That is, you are to feel for him all that reverence includes] – to respect, defer to, revere him; [revere means] to honor esteem (appreciate, prize), and [in the human sense] adore him; [and adore means] to admire, praise, be devoted to, deeply love and enjoy [your husband]." 1 Peter 3:1-2 AMP

Scripture is clear that there is no basis for remarriage while a covenant partner still lives. *"Now to the married I command, yet not I but the Lord: a wife is not to depart from her husband. But even if she does depart **let her remain unmarried** or be reconciled to her husband. And a husband is not to divorce his wife." (1 Corinthians 7:10-11 NKJV) "For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies she is released from the law of her husband. So then if while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man." Romans 7:2-3 NKJV*

Perhaps you have experienced divorce and remarriage or have married a divorced person. We must assume that this was the result of a lack of knowledge both for you and for those who counseled you. This is by no means meant to put anyone in condemnation. **When we discover that we have gone against God's will in any area of our life, the clear path to follow is to repent, receive forgiveness and go on.** While remarriage following a broken covenant is adultery, forgiveness is available for the asking. It is im-

portant that this area be dealt with if you desire the healing of your marriage, because unconfessed sin could hinder reconciliation. If you have this issue in your life and have not dealt with it, pray the prayer below.

Prayer Of Repentance

"Heavenly Father, I confess to you as sin the adultery I committed through my marriage. I come into agreement with your Word and thank you for the cleansing blood of Jesus. I receive your forgiveness and mercy. Thank you that my marriage is cleansed from unrighteousness according to your Word in 1 John 1:9. Thank you for being a partner with me in my covenant marriage to (spouse's name). I recommit myself to my covenant with (spouse's name) and I will rely on your grace and strength to hold my covenant firm. Amen."

Once you have confessed your sin and received your forgiveness, do not allow the enemy to harass you anymore about this issue.

For years, Deuteronomy 24:1-4 has been confusing to divorced people who feel God has called them to remarry each other despite an interim marriage by one of the partners. *"When a man takes a wife and marries her, if then she finds no favor in his eyes because he has found some indecency in her, and he writes her a bill of divorce, puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house, and when she departs out of his house, she goes and marries another man, and if the latter husband dislikes her and writes her a bill of divorce and puts it in her hand and sends her out of his house; or if the last husband dies, who took her as his wife, then her former husband, who sent her away, may not take her again to be his wife, after she is defiled; for that is an abomination before the Lord; and you shall not bring guilt upon the land which the Lord your God gives you for an inheritance."* (AMP) In Jeremiah 3 where Deuteronomy 24:1-4 is quoted, God divorced Israel but not Judah where this was not the custom. God is a covenant keeper for the nation of

Israel, for even though He was required to divorce her He has not disavowed His covenant with her. Over and over He extends the invitation to, "Return thou unto Me."

Many today are forced into a divorce by the law where they reside. They too have not broken covenant but are covenant keepers despite the decree. Close study of Deuteronomy 24:1-4 indicates that **both parties disavowed their covenant**. The man refuted his vows by instigating the divorce and the woman disavowed her covenant through her remarriage. Deuteronomy 24:1-4 does not apply **where the covenant has not been broken but is held by one partner** standing with God.

In Jeremiah 3 where Deuteronomy is quoted, we see where God gave Israel a bill of divorce. However, He has not disavowed His covenant with her. Over and over He extends the invitation, "Return thou unto Me."

The Non-Covenant Marriage

God will not honor a new covenant that violates an existing one. In a will the property cannot be distributed before the death of the owner. In the same way the estate of a covenant cannot be distributed before the death of the old covenant. This principle can be found in Hebrews 9:16-17 where the word "diatheke" used for the word testament is the same Greek word as is used for covenant. So just as property in a "diatheke" cannot be given to someone else prematurely, a marriage partner cannot enter into a new covenant while another covenant still exists. Romans 7:2-3

God Is On Record To Reconcile Covenants

God is on record to reconcile established marriage covenants. We see this illustrated several times in scripture. In Genesis 16 and 21 Hagar, the non-covenant wife of Abraham, had to leave. Hagar was given to Abraham as a wife after he was married to Sarah. But she was not the covenant wife of Abraham and attempted to take

Sarah's position. Even though Hagar and Ishmael were sent away from Abraham because Ishmael was not the promised child of the covenant, God did bless them and His angel took care of them. Galatians 4:22-30

In Hosea 2 and 3 (TLB) Gomer was restored to Hosea out of a non-covenant marriage. Although Hosea and Gomer were divorced and she was married to another, Hosea stood for their covenant and she was restored to him. All of this was commanded by God to be an allegory of what God, Himself, would do for His adulterous bride, Israel.

In 1 Samuel 18:17-30 and 2 Samuel 3:13-16 we read that Michal was restored to David, the husband of her youth, after ten years of marriage to another person. David kept the covenant of his marriage with Michal and when the promises of his kingdom were manifested, Michal was returned to him although she had married someone else. She had been given in marriage to another man by her father, King Saul, without David's consent while he was in exile. In 2 Samuel 3:14 David says, "*Deliver me MY WIFE, Michal, which I espoused to me for an hundred foreskins of the Philistines.*" David refers to the legal covenant (espousal) by which she was given to him and did not count his covenant to be broken by her interim marriage to another man.

In Ezra 9 & 10 God, through the priest, Ezra, instructed 113 men to divorce their non-covenant wives and return to their covenant marriages. "*Therefore let us make a covenant with our God to put away all the foreign wives and their children, according to the counsel of my Lord and of those who tremble at the command of our God: and let it be done according to the law.*" (Ezra 10:3 AMP) The Hebrew word used for foreign wives (nokriy) is defined in *Strong's Concordance* as "adulterous" wives. These were women who were not under the covenant that God had made with Israel. If you have an Amplified Bible available be sure to read the footnote to this passage.

Ezra and Malachi were prophets who ministered during the same period. The tears shed in Malachi 2 were shed by the covenant wives who trusted God to restore their husbands to their rightful places. Divorce decrees only dissolve legal relationships. **They do not break covenants.** *"And this you do with double guilt; you cover the altar of the Lord with tears [shed by your unoffending wives, divorced by you that you might take heathen wives], and with your own weeping and crying out because the Lord does not regard your offering any more or accept it with favor at your hand."* Malachi 2:13 AMP

Taking a stand for your marriage may seem unusual by today's standards where marriage is usually viewed as a contract. However, as we can see from this study on covenant relationships, God's standard for marriage is Matthew 19:6 (KJV), *"What God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."*

Important points to remember are:

- To know what God's will is, we must know His Word.
- God's nature is to keep covenant no matter what the circumstances.
- With God a covenant is an unchangeable commitment, not a contract that can be broken.
- It is God who is our source of strength enabling us to keep covenant.
- Although man tries to justify divorce, God permits divorce only when a covenant does not exist.
- Covenants do not exist in homosexual or incestuous relationships or if another marriage covenant still exists.
- Adultery or any other sin is not strong enough to break a covenant.

God's Word has given us the covenant right to stand for the restoration of our homes and families. However, **this is a decision that must be made individually** between each person and God. We must not put guilt or condemnation on those already divorced, those remarried or those who choose not to hold their covenants.

An Understanding Of Faith Substance

Hope is the first step in marriage healing. According to Hebrews 6:19 hope's function is to anchor and stabilize the soul (mind, will and emotions). However, hope must be combined with faith for us to inherit God's promises. Hebrews 11:1 says, "*Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.*" In other words, without faith, the things hoped for will never become reality. Proverbs 13:12 states, "*hope deferred makes the heart sick.*"

Hope Keeps Us From Fainting In Our Minds

Hope can be thought of as a "container" for faith. Both are important; faith for the spirit and hope for the soul, (mind, will and emotions). We must develop a stand of faith if our marriages are to be healed. Faith produces results. Hope and faith are an unbeatable combination!

The Definition Of Faith

1. If you own your home you have a deed. That deed proves the house is yours. No one can take it from you. In the same way, if you have faith for the healing of your marriage no one can take that assurance from you. It is the title-deed for your miracle. Look up Hebrews 11:1 in the King James, Living, and Amplified versions of the Bible. Write out the verse from the Amplified Bible on the lines provided.

2. The word used for faith in the Bible is defined in *Strong's Concordance* as: confident person; confidence; setting under; support; to stand; to abide; to establish; to hold up; to continue.

Faith Must Be Conceived

1. Mary, the mother of Jesus, conceived by the Holy Spirit when she agree with God's Word given by the angel Gabriel (see Luke 1:26-38). In like manner our faith must be conceived.
2. Just like Mary, when we believe God's Word we become pregnant with our miracle. Write out Luke 1:38 below:

3. The Word of God is the seed which grows into substance when we agree with it. Write out the references below:

Luke 8:11

1 Peter 1:23

-
-
4. God's Word can be trusted. Write out Isaiah 55:11 below:

How To Release Faith

The Bible is the general Word of God (logos) to us. To have faith that gets results we must also have a personal word from God (rhema) quickened to us by the Holy Spirit. Rhema is a specific word for a specific situation. Faith is more than mental assent, although mental understanding of God's Word is necessary as a starting place. Faith is having a knowing in our "knower"!

Knowing what God's Word says about divorce is not enough. The Word must become revelation knowledge (rhema). How does the general Word of God become a person Word from God for our marriage healing? Work through the points below to find out.

1. Find God's will on marriage and divorce. Write out:

Malachi 2:16

Matthew 19:6

2. Jesus is the source. He became the manifestation of God's Word on earth and by receiving the Word, we receive faith. Write out:

Hebrews 12:2 TLB

John 1:14 TLB

Romans 10:17 KJV

3. We release our faith by agreeing with God's Word. We do this by speaking forth this agreement. (See **Scripture Prayers** beginning on page 19.) Write out:

2 Corinthians 4:13 KJV

Romans 10:9-10

Faith Is Related To Obedience

The early Christians had enough faith to pray when Peter was thrown into prison. They didn't know how it was going to turn out, but because they prayed, God released Simon Peter from prison. Acts 12:5-16

Just as Satan instigated the imprisonment of Peter, he desires to imprison your mind, your finances, your children, your spouse and your marriage. Satan will use chains of judgment, bitterness, unforgiveness and deception, but the good news is that truth, through Christ, brings release and freedom.

Your faith may not be perfect but if you have faith enough to pray, you can move the hand of God. Let's pray together and agree with God's Word concerning divorce. Remember Mary spoke her agreement, "*...be it unto me according to thy word.*" Luke 1:38 NAS

"Father, according to your Word you hate divorce and marital separation. You say I'm not to let man put asunder what you've joined together. You joined together (spouse's name) and me so I speak to the mountain of divorce and separation. I say to the mountain, 'Be thou cast into the sea. I doubt not in my heart and I believe that what I say will come to pass.' I speak this in the name of Jesus, my Lord. Amen."

Sign and date your prayer of commitment below. If possible have a friend who is in agreement with you sign and date as a witness.

(your signature)

(date)

(witness in agreement)

(date)

Scripture Prayers

Proverbs 18:21 states that there is life and death in the power of the tongue. The tongue can be used for good or evil. We can speak about our bad circumstances or we can speak God's Word over the circumstances.

Speaking God's Word can make us successful in every area of our lives. Psalm 107:20 says, *"The Lord sent His Word and healed them and delivered them from their destruction."* NAS

We encourage speaking God's Word out loud daily. The Word is the seed and the way to plant it is to say it. By speaking God's Word the mind will be renewed, the spirit man will be strengthened and faith will grow. *"Faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God."* Romans 10:17 KJV

In the beginning as we speak God's Word over our families and homes we may feel like we're being hypocritical, but God says to *"...call things that be not as though they were."* (Romans 4:17 KJV) According to Hebrews 4:2, when united with faith, the Word works! Eventually, our circumstances must line up with God's Word, but it takes time. Speaking God's Word is not a one-time event. It must become a way of life.

Agree With God To Renew Your Mind

Speaking out or confessing what God's Word says about divorce is not enough. The word that is translated *confess* in the New

Testament means to "agree with God." We are agreeing that what He is saying to us is right.

The Word must become revelation knowledge to us. To have faith that gets results, the logos, must become rhema to us: a personal revelation quickened by the Holy Spirit. The mind has been brainwashed by the world concerning divorce and remarriage. The mind needs to be washed by the water of God's Word (Ephesians 4:26), but this renewing will take time.

A Word Of Warning

Don't get into bondage when praying the Word. Yes, we need to allow time to read, meditate and pray the Word, and we need to do so daily. However, if you miss a day it doesn't mean your marriage won't get healed. Use wisdom and remember that it is God who is the healer. Performance and ritual do not please God or bring His blessings. He loves us just as we are. Endeavor to spend time in the Word and prayer until it becomes not just a discipline, but a delight. An important objective is to spend time with Jesus because of who He is, and because we love Him – not just to get something from Him.

Determine to speak life. Ephesians 4:29 (KJV) says, *"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."* God's Word is a good place to find words of life. Find verses that apply to your need and be diligent in speaking them. Following are some prayers based on scripture that can be used to speak life into your marriage.

Paraphrased Verses For Covenant Keepers

I will be earnest and unwearied and steadfast in my prayer life being alert and intent (in my praying) with thanksgiving. Colossians 4:2

I will reap if I do not grow weary. Galatians 6:9

I am a new creation in Christ Jesus, old things have passed away and all things have become new. 2 Corinthians 5:17

I know the truth and the truth has made me free. John 8:31-32

Sin has no dominion over me. I am not under the law, but under grace. Romans 6:14

I believe that I receive the ability, the power, the life and the joy of God operating in me. Mark 11:24

I submit myself to God and His Word. James 4:7

I resist the devil and he flees from me. James 4:7

I build up myself praying in the Holy Ghost and keep myself in the love of God. Jude 20-21

I take the shield of faith and stop every fiery dart of the wicked one. Ephesians 6:16

I am transformed by the renewing of my mind. Romans 12:1-2

I am prospering and in health in spirit, soul and body. 3 John 2

I let patience have her perfect work that I may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing. James 1:4

I hide the Word in my heart that I might not sin against Thee. Psalm 119:11

The Word is alive and powerful in me. Hebrews 4:12

I lay aside every weight and the sin which has so easily beset me. Hebrews 12:1

I think about things that are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report. Whatever has virtue and praise, I think on these things. Philippians 4:8

I follow peace with all men and holiness. Hebrews 12:14

The Word is working mightily in me for I believe. 1 Thessalonians 2:13

God perfects everything that concerns me. Psalm 138:8

I walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

The love of Christ controls my life. 2 Corinthians 5:14

Healing And Salvation For The Home

Give us gladness in proportion to our former misery! Replace the evil years with good. Let us see your miracles again; let our children see glorious things, the kind you used to do, and let the Lord our God favor us and give us success. Psalm 90:15-17 TLB

Father, I thank You that You are hastening Your Word and performing it in our home. Jeremiah 1:12

And he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, lest I come and smite the earth with a curse. Malachi 4:6

I thank you Father that our children shall be disciples, taught of the Lord, and great shall be their peace and undisturbed composure. Isaiah 54:13 AMP

I believe on the Lord Jesus, and I and my household are saved. Acts 16:31 NAS

I thank You, Father, that reverence for God gives _____ deep strength; his/her children have a place of refuge and security. Proverbs 14:26 TLB

Wisdom And Renewing Of The Mind

_____ 's thoughts and attitudes are all constantly changing for the better. Yes, he/she is a new and different person, holy and good. He/she is clothing himself/herself with this new nature. Ephesians 4:23-24 TLB

I thank You Father that _____ desires the sincere milk of the Word that he/she may grow thereby. 1 Peter 2:2 KJV

For God hath not given _____ the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind. 2 Timothy 1:7 KJV

I thank You that _____ has Your wisdom: pure, peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits without partiality or hypocrisy. James 3:17-18 KJV

_____ lets not kindness and truth leave him/her. He/She binds them about his/her neck and writes them on the tablet of his/her heart. _____ prizes the wisdom of God highly and she exalts him/her. Proverbs 3:3; 4:8 NAS

Wisdom will bring _____ to honor because he/she has embraced her. For the Lord is _____ 's confidence, firm and strong and shall keep his/her foot from being caught in a trap or hidden danger. Because _____ puts Your Word first place in his/her life he/she is like a tree firmly planted and tended by streams of water, ready to bring forth his/her fruit in its season: _____ 's leaf also does not fade or wither, and everything he/she does, including our life together, prospers and comes to maturity. Proverbs 4:8; 3:26 & Psalm 1:3 NAS

When _____ goes, the Word or wisdom of God shall lead him/her. When he/she sleeps, it shall keep him/her. When he/she wakes, it shall talk to him/her. Therefore, he/she speaks excellent and princely things and the opening of his/her lips shall be for right things. All the words of _____'s mouth are righteous, upright and in right standing with God, and there is nothing contrary or crooked in them. Proverbs 6:22; 8:6-8 AMP

Healing And Reconciliation

Father, I thank You that because _____ and I are both reconciled to Jesus by the blood of His cross, _____ and I are also reconciled back to each other regardless of anything we have done to each other in the past. Colossians 1:20-22 NAS

And now, Oh Lord, You are confirming forever the Word which Thou hast spoken concerning me and _____ and our marriage and You are doing as you have spoken. Now, therefore, it pleases You to bless our marriage and it shall continue before You forever, for you have promised and with blessings shall the house of _____ and _____ be blessed forever. 2 Samuel 7:25, 29 NAS

No weapon formed against our marriage has prospered and every voice raised against our reconciliation God is showing to be wrong for this is my heritage as a child of God. Isaiah 54:17 NAS

I thank You, Father, for speedily avenging Your Word in our marriage. Luke 18:8 KJV

I thank You, Father, for showing Yourself strong on behalf of my marriage and reconciliation with _____ for I am perfect in Jesus. 2 Chronicles 16:9

I thank You, Father, that you are giving us one heart, putting a new spirit within _____ and taking away the stony heart and giving him/her a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 11:19; 36:26

I thank You, Father, that You are healing us. Hosea 6:1 NAS

I thank You, Father, that You are speaking tenderly to _____'s heart. Hosea 2:14 AMP

I thank You, Father that we are one-flesh and one in the Spirit. I thank You that I am _____'s companion and the husband/wife of our covenant made by our marriage vows. Malachi 2:14-15 AMP

I thank You, Father, for sending Your Word and healing our marriage and delivering us from all destructions. Psalm 107:20

I thank You, Father, that the gates of hell are not prevailing against me and my marriage for I am the Church and Jesus said no gate or circumstance from hell would prevail against me. (Matthew 16:18 AMP) Therefore the Word of God is prevailing in all circumstances in _____'s and my marriage according to Your promise in Acts 19:20. AMP

Godly Repentance In A Mate

I thank You, Father, that You will grant _____ repentance leading to the knowledge of truth and that _____ will come to his senses and escape out of the snare of the devil, having been held captive by Satan, henceforth to do God's will. 2 Timothy 2:25b – 26

I pray that _____'s heart will be flooded with light so that he/she can see something of the future Christ has called him/her to share. Ephesians 1:18 TLB

For God is at work within _____ helping him/her want to obey Him and then helping him/her do what He wants. Philippians 2:13 TLB

I thank You that Your goodness brings _____ to repentance.
Romans 2:4 NAS

Instruct _____'s heart in the night seasons. Psalm 16:7

Instruct _____ in the way he/she should go and counsel him/her with Your eye upon him/her. Psalm 32:8 NAS

Create in _____ a clean heart, and renew a right, persevering and steadfast spirit within him/her. Psalm 51:10 AMP

You will not despise _____ for his/her spirit is broken before You; _____'s heart is broken and contrite (with sorrow for sin and humbly penitent). Psalm 51:17 AMP

Restore to _____ the joy of Your salvation, and uphold _____ with a willing spirit. Psalm 51:12 AMP

_____ will run the way of Your commandments, for You have given him/her a heart that is willing. Psalm 119:32 AMP

You will heal _____'s faithlessness, and love him/her freely, for your anger is turned away from him/her. Hosea 14:4 AMP

_____ is wise and prudent, that he/she may know Your ways, and _____ shall walk in them. Hosea 14:9

_____ loves the habitation of Your house; he/she gathers not with sinners and is not swept away with them; he/she walks in integrity, for You redeem him/her and are merciful and gracious to him/her; _____'s foot stands on an even place, and in the congregation he/she will bless the Lord. Psalm 26:8-12 AMP

Many plans are in _____'s mind, but it is your purpose for him/her that will stand. Proverbs 19:21 AMP

Restored Affection From Mate

I pray and believe Father that _____ and I will drink water out of our own cistern of pure marriage relationship and fresh running water out of our own well, that _____ will confine himself/herself to me alone, and our children will be for us alone and not the children of strangers with us – that our fountain of human life will be blessed with the rewards of fidelity and that we will rejoice with each other. I pray that I will be as a loving hind – tender, gentle and attractive, and _____ will always be transported with delight in my love. Proverbs 5:15-19 AMP

And we will say our wedding vows and be betrothed forever. Hosea 2:19 NAS

I thank You that we will be betrothed to You in stability and faithfulness and will cherish You. Hosea 2:20

I thank You, Father, that many waters have not quenched _____'s love for me, neither have floods drowned it. Song of Solomon 8:7

I thank You, Father, that You surround me with favor as with a shield and therefore I have favor in _____'s eyes above every man/woman on earth. Psalm 5:12 NAS

I praise You, Father, that _____ kisses me with the kisses of his/her mouth. Song of Solomon 1:2

I thank You, Father, that I am _____'s beloved, and his/her desire is toward me. Song of Solomon 7:10

_____ will live considerately with me, with an intelligent recognition of our marriage relationship. 1 Peter 3:7 AMP

I thank You, Father, that _____ loves me and that he/she is affectionate and sympathetic with me. I believe in Jesus' Name that

he/she is not harsh or bitter or resentful toward me, because _____ loves me, in a sense as his/her own body and as Christ Jesus loves the church. Ephesians 4:32; 5:28 AMP

I confess that we are of one and the same mind, united in spirit, compassionate and courteous, tenderhearted and humble minded.... I believe for our welfare, happiness and protection because _____ and I love and respect each other. 1 Peter 3:8-9 AMP

Freedom From Sexual Sins

I thank You that _____ walks by the Spirit; he/she does not fulfill the lust of the flesh. Galatians 5:16

I thank You, Father, that you are hedging up _____'s way with thorns, making a wall, and he/she will not find his/her paths. Hosea 2:6 NAS

I thank you that discretion watches over _____ and understanding keeps him/her, to deliver him/her from the strange man/woman, from the outsider with his/her flattering words. You have cut asunder the thick cords of lust, adultery and all physical and emotional attractions and attachments by which Satan has enslaved my husband/wife. Proverbs 2:16; Psalm 129:4 AMP

According to Your Word, Father, in Galatians 3:13 Jesus has freed me from the curse of the law by being made a curse for me. Since Your Word is truth, I refuse the curse of the law in Deuteronomy 28:30 of having my betrothed husband/wife lay with another. I remind You of the Blood of Jesus and that the word of my testimony is this; my husband/wife _____ lies only with me. In Jesus' Name. NAS

The Purpose Of Covenant Keepers

Covenant Keepers, Inc. was formed as a Ministry of Helps to local churches to give Biblical instruction on separation, divorce and remarriage. Through weekly home meetings men and women who do not have the cooperation of their partner but who want to save their marriages, and are willing to do so alone, are taught the benefits of working toward reconciliation and restoration, instead of choosing divorce.

The purpose of Covenant Keepers is, first of all, to bring about growth, maturity and victory in the personal lives of those individuals desiring the healing of their marriages. Through teaching and ministry the Lord stabilizes emotions and heals broken hearts. Once healing and emotional stability has occurred individuals are then able to walk in the God-kind of love with their mates found in 1 Corinthians 13.

Members share concern for mental and emotional hurts as well as the spiritual needs of those going through divorce or separation. Groups have banded together for prayer support and to study God's Word as it applies to marriage healing. While the truths presented may be familiar, **the application to marital situations may be new and helpful.** Where a mate is unsaved, members support each other in fervent prayer for their salvation. While Covenant Keepers is not a ministry to children, the principles taught for healing relationships apply to parent-child problems that broken marriages

always create. Prayer support is provided for salvation, emotional and spiritual healing and restoration of the entire family.

Covenant Groups are led by approved leadership called and anointed by God to reach people throughout the land who are seeking an alternative to divorce. Leaders, assistant leaders and advisor couples are trained through leadership workshops and seminars held in cities across the nation and in several foreign countries. Leaders teach prepared curriculum, based on scriptural principles, that will bring about reconciliation, healing and restoration and replace the devastation of broken relationships in the lives of those who will take God at His Word.

Group Curriculum Is Based On Scripture

Covenant Keepers has three objectives within its curriculum. First of all is a commitment to Jesus and to the marriage covenant is taught. Malachi 2:14 AMP says, *"The Lord was witness to the COVENANT made at your marriage"* and 2:16 says, *"I hate divorce and marital separation says the Lord God of Israel."* Second, the husband or wife is taught how to obtain healing for their emotions and broken hearts. *"...He has sent me to bind up and heal the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the [physical and spiritual] captives and the opening of the prison and of the eyes to those who are bound."* Isaiah 61:1-3 AMP And third, the members are taught to face their own failings and shortcomings and to allow God to change them. *"Don't criticize, and then you won't be criticized. For others will treat you as you treat them. And why worry about a speck in the eye of a brother when you have a board in your own? Should you say, 'Friend, let me help you get that speck out of your eye,' when you can't even see because of the board in your own? Hypocrite! First get rid of the board. Then you can see to help your brother."* (Matthew 7:1-5 TLB) As a result members learn to remain totally committed to their partners and their marriage covenants at all cost.

Each lesson in the curriculum teaches one or more spiritual principles based on God's Word. These principles deal with growth and maturity, spiritual warfare, healing and other areas. Some principles taught include:

- Double-mindedness
- Forgiveness
- Freewill
- Binding & Loosing
- How to Avoid Strife
- The Role of Patience
- Sowing & Reaping

Lessons contained in the curriculum include:

- Is It God's Will For My Marriage To Be Healed
- How Long Will It Take To Get My Marriage Healed
- Will I Ever Stop Hurting? (How to deal with emotions)
- What Should I Do When My Mate Is In Adultery?
- How Do I Handle Disputes? (Property, child custody, support)
- How To Deal With Deception
- How To Have Joy
- Finances

Covenant Keepers approaches the scriptures on marriage from Matthew 19:4-6 where Jesus said, "...*What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.*" The Pharisees had asked Jesus if it was lawful for a man to put away (divorce) his wife for every cause. Jesus simply went back to God's original plan for marriage. "*And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made them at the beginning made them male and female, and said, for this cause should a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder.*" God made no provision for divorce when He instituted marriage. (Genesis 2:23-24) God takes vows very seriously. "*When you make a vow to God, do not be late in paying it for He takes no delight in fools. Pay what you vow! It is better that you should not*

vow than that you should vow and not pay." (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5 NAS) *"It is a snare to a man to utter a vow (of consecration) rashly, and not until afterward inquire [whether he can fulfill it]."* Proverbs 20:25 AMP

Marriage Is A Covenant Witnessed By God

Both Old and New Testaments teach that God is a covenant keeper. God's nature is to keep covenant no matter what the circumstances. With God a covenant is an unchangeable commitment, not a contract that can be broken by one mate. It is God who is our source of strength enabling us to keep covenant.

Both Old and New Testaments teach that it takes two or three witnesses to establish any matter. *"One witness shall not prevail against a man for any crime or any wrong in connection with any sin he commits; only on the testimony of two or three witnesses shall a charge be established."* (Deuteronomy 19:15 AMP) *"But if he does not listen, take along with you one or two others, so that every word may be confirmed and upheld by the testimony of two or three witnesses."* Matthew 18:16 AMP

In Malachi 2:14 God says He is a witness to the covenant made at your marriage vows. The husband and wife are the other witnesses. If one mate leaves and files for divorce, the covenant can still be held of record by the remaining mate because God is a witness and therefore two witnesses remain. The covenant remains because it is being held of record. However, if both mates choose by words and actions to divorce, the covenant is broken. God remains as the only witness and by His own Word one witness does not establish a matter.

Marriage without God is only a two-party covenant. But when God is present within the life of at least one of the mates, the covenant takes on a new dimension. God becomes not just a witness, but also a partner in the marriage covenant. All God's resources

and power become available to bring restoration and reconciliation.

When the partner, out of obedience to God's command in Matthew 19:6, develops a stand of faith and holds that covenant, a divorce decree does not end the covenant in the spiritual realm. In the earthly realm we recognize the divorce and realize that we give up the privileges of being married. Divorces are man-made decrees. Their outcome can be changed through fasting and prayer. One example is found in the book of Esther when the Jewish people fasted and prayed and God turned the heart of the king. A decree that ordered the killing of all Jews was canceled and instead became a source of victory for the Jewish nation.

God's Word has given us the legal right to stand for the restoration of our homes. However, this is a decision that must be made individually between each person and God. We must not put guilt or condemnation on those already divorced, those remarried or those who choose not to hold their covenant. While God holds us accountable for the truth He reveals to us, and there are consequences when we disobey, His mercy and grace are available.