

SERIES ONE

*Principles
for
Marriage
Healing*

**A BIBLICALLY-BASED CURRICULUM
WRITTEN AND DEVELOPED BY
COVENANT KEEPERS, INC. ®**

Mission Statement

Our mission is two-fold. First of all, we desire to facilitate spiritual growth, maturity and victory in the personal lives of those individuals desiring the healing of their marriages. Second, we teach how broken marriage relationships can be healed through applying Godly principles.

Cover design by Richard Hight

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Reprinted 2004

Revised 2006

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PREFACE

Welcome,

When divorce ended my twenty-seven-year marriage I found no place to go to receive healing or encouragement for restoration. As I searched the Word of God the Lord began to instruct me and give me hope for my seemingly impossible situation.

Before long God began bringing others across my path who also needed help. I opened my home and shared what the Lord had taught me.

As a result, Covenant Keepers now has an entire set of curriculum to study. While the truths presented in our materials may be familiar, the application to marital situations should be new and helpful. Each lesson 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: forgiveness, freewill, double-mindedness, how to avoid strife, patience and sowing and reaping.

I pray the Lord will use these lessons to help bring encouragement, hope and faith to you as you stand for the healing of your marriage.

I want to thank everyone who has worked so hard editing and proofing the lessons and especially Dan Gabel for his help in developing the curriculum.

In covenant love,

Marilyn Conrad

Founder

“And the LORD answered me, and said, Write the vision, and make it plain upon tables, that he may run that readeth it.” Habakkuk 2:2

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How To Pilot Your Marriage Through A Storm



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How To Pilot Your Marriage Through A Storm

Introduction

Jesus often used stories, parables, and analogies to teach God’s principles to the people He met. He used anecdotes and experiences that were common and familiar to those He interacted with. This curriculum, designed to provide you with tools and keys to restore and strengthen your marriage, begins with a modern analogy. Your marriage is compared to an aircraft, and the crisis in your marriage is a patch of unexpected turbulence you are currently flying through. By examining principles and procedures necessary for the successful flight of an aircraft, you will learn parallel truths to help you during a marital emergency.

For every pilot, the laws (or principles) of aerodynamics and navigation, an understanding of his aircraft, and the proper use of flight controls and equipment are all vital to enjoying a safe flight. These become even more critical during turbulence, storms, or equipment failure. In the same way, understanding Biblical principles, knowledge of our needs and limitations as humans, and familiarity with the necessary “tools” are all imperative for those desiring marital reconciliation and restoration.

When you have completed this lesson you should be able to:

- 1) Understand the role of the Holy Spirit as we navigate life’s challenges.
- 2) See how “going by the instruction manual” brings stability to your life and healing to your marriage.
- 3) Combat the disorientation of fear and its attendant problems.
- 4) Name three keys to staying emotionally and spiritually level in a crisis.
- 5) Recognize the roles of faith and patience in seeing God’s promises fulfilled.
- 6) Take steps to combat fatigue.

As you study these lessons and read the Bible passages, ask God to show you how to not only survive the storm you’re in, but bring your marriage to a safe landing with your co-pilot at your side.

NOTES: _____

Spiritual Aerodynamics

My co-pilot (spouse) and I named our airplane "COVENANT" because we felt such closeness when we were flying it together. Over the years we had flown many hours and through many situations. But in the good and bad experiences we had grown, learned and become better pilots.

Lately we'd been flying in some miserable weather. The visibility was deteriorating and the forecast wasn't good. The plane was getting older, but I felt it was reliable, familiar, and just plain comfortable. I felt we would come through this storm without any problem, just like we had done in the past. In time things would get better. So shock set in when my copilot decided to bail out. Suddenly I was alone and it was up to me to keep "Covenant" on course. Without the help of my co-pilot it seemed like a crash couldn't be avoided, but if a safe landing was possible—then it was up to me to do it.

It was important right now to maintain lift. If lift were maintained the airplane would fly. That force of lift is present and at work—even in the midst of a storm. The key is to have that force work for my benefit.

Getting a Lift

Airplanes can fly because there is an unseen aerodynamic lifting force that is always present. Psalm 46:1 says that God is our refuge and strength and a **very present help in trouble**. He has provided for you a force that is always present and will provide you with support and lift.

Read John 14:16-17.

1) What term is used to describe the Holy Spirit?

2) How long does verse 16 say He will be with you?

3) Where does verse 17 say He will be?

Read John 14:26-27.

1) What does verse 26 say the Holy Spirit will do?

2) What does verse 27 say that Jesus left us?

NOTES: _____

Don't Forget Your Instruction Manual

One thing I knew was that my thoughts and emotions had to come under control. I could not afford to spend time in sorrow, but instead I needed to pilot the aircraft. No matter how hard or impossible it seemed, now was not the time to let my thoughts and emotions run my life. A phrase that a friend once told me kept running through my mind, "If emotions run your life they'll ruin your life."

According to the book, pilots are destroyed for lack of knowledge or because they don't use the knowledge they do have. I'd had friends who had been involved in crashes over the years. The thing that so many of those crashes had in common was that the pilots followed their instincts instead of using the sound principles found in the knowledge and training they had received. Pilots who lose their sense of reference experience "vertigo." Instincts cannot be trusted because there is no horizon or outside point of reference. You can dive the plane and feel as if you are flying level.

I knew that I did not want to follow the example of so many others and allow my "Covenant"

to crash. If what I was taught was true, then my only real option was to rely on the rules of flight. I made a commitment right then to not follow my feelings because I knew they would be tricked by the forces of nature around me.

Additional Scriptures: Isaiah 58:10-12, 2 Corinthians 10:5

NOTES: _____

Flying by the Book

Going by the Book is just as important in healing your marriage, as it is to follow the book in flying an airplane.

Read Hosea 4:6.

1) What happens when God's people lack knowledge?

2) What is the result of rejecting the knowledge that God has given you?

Read Matthew 7:26-27.

1) To whom does God compare anyone who hears His Word but doesn't follow it?

2) In verse 27, what was the result of not following God's Word?

Staying on the Level

Severe turbulence hit without warning. To make matters worse, no longer could I see what lay ahead. The horizon, which served as my reference to the outside world, was missing. The visibility outside was zero. It seemed so unusual to feel airsick. In the past I'd always been able to handle any problem, but "Covenant" was being tossed so severely that I was nauseated. Fear was so real I could feel its presence. I knew that this kind of turbulence could produce stress capable of tearing our aircraft apart and at times I had thoughts of just letting it all end. I determined that I could last a bit longer and focused my mind on what I knew to be true.

One of the first flying lessons I learned was to slow down and "level the wings" whenever I encountered turbulence. I learned that slowing down reduces the stress on the airplane and leveling the wings helps avoid three bad conditions.

- 1) Wings that are not level cause you to get off course.
- 2) Wings that are not level cause you to lose altitude.
- 3) Wings that are not level increase the stress on the airplane.

Additional Scriptures: 1 John 4:7-12, Galatians 6:9, Habakkuk 3:19

NOTES: _____

Regaining Control

When marriages run into turbulence people experience the same three problems that pilots have in trying to regain control of their airplanes.

- 1) It's easy to get disoriented and head in the wrong direction.
- 2) There is a danger of hitting obstacles (from losing altitude).
- 3) You can cause overstress.

The solution to encountering turbulence in marriage is the same as in an aircraft. We need to slow down and we need to level our wings.

When an airplane slows down it can handle the turbulence. Slowing down also reduces the stress.

Read and write out Isaiah 40:31.

What does this verse say will happen when we slow down and wait on the Lord?

How To Keep Your Bearings

"Keep the wings level..." it sounds so simple, and during good weather it is not a problem. But in rough times and without an outside reference, I found it could be the hardest job I ever had.

To maintain level, wings require constant checking and continual adjustment. Without an outside reference even in smooth air, you can stray off course without realizing it. In turbulence it takes constant vigilance and paying close attention to the instruments. (Romans 10:17, 2 Corinthians 5:7)

Several instruments were available to help me keep the wings level and it was important to use all of them.

Pilots commonly get in trouble through "fixation" (looking only at one instrument). When you look at only one instrument, while you can keep it on the right track, you can be fooled into a false sense of security. For example, you can keep the right heading but lose airspeed or altitude. You can keep the right altitude but lose your heading. It is only by maintaining a scan of the basic instruments and checking one against another that safe flight can be maintained.

Balance Brings Stability

We level our covenant wings by balancing two areas in our lives. The first wing is spiritual warfare.

Read Ephesians 6:12-13.

1) According to verse 12, whom do we do spiritual warfare against?

2) According to verse 13, what do we need to wear to help us in spiritual warfare?

Read 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

1) According to verses 3 & 4 do we war in the flesh?

Satan functions to steal God's word and to plant thoughts and imaginations in our minds that we must refuse to consider.

2) According to verse 5, we are to _____ down arguments and bring every thought into _____.

Read Joshua 1:8.

When we meditate on God's Word, what will be the result?

NOTES: _____

Don't Exhaust Your Fuel Supply

When airplanes are flying by instruments, they must have a clearance (to avoid other aircraft) and they follow routes that have minimum safe altitudes. The charts clearly specify what the minimum safe altitudes are. While you are assured of terrain clearance if you remain on course and at or above the MEA (minimum enroute altitude), if you stray from the route you cannot be sure of whether you will clear the obstacles or not. It is very possible to run into broadcasting towers, mountains, or other obstacles that would be fatal.

Another reason I wanted to stay on course is to avoid wasting fuel. While aircraft are required to carry enough of a supply to reach an alternate airport (with reserve), if you don't follow your course, if you waste time and fuel, it is possible to exhaust your fuel supply.

I knew that running out of fuel is always a hazardous condition in an airplane. Many have done it and made emergency landings. However, to run out when you are in a storm, with no visibility, is fatal.

You Have To Walk Before You Can Fly!

God's word tells us that the second wing that provides lift to your covenant is "walking in love." Love is what fuels our stand for our marriages and keeps us from crashing.

Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8.

1) Listed below are some techniques that are often tried to bring about reconciliation. Verses 1-3 say they will all fail without love. Write the verse number where each method (technique) is described.

___ convincing, persuading, reasoning (smooth talk)

___ wise marriage counseling, psychologists (knowledge)

___ letting them have everything (generosity-martyrdom)

___ being a good spirit-filled Christian (prophecy/faith)

2) List four (of the fifteen) characteristics of a walk of love listed in verses 4-7.

3) What does verse 8 say about love?

Read 1 John 3:18-23.

1) According to verse 23, in addition to believing on Jesus Christ, what does God command us to do?

2) According to verse 22, what do we receive as a result of believing on Christ and walking in love?

NOTES: _____

Staying On Course

The primary instrument that told me whether I was maintaining or straying from my course was the D/G (directional gyro). While other instruments could tell me if I were climbing, descending or banking in a turn, the D/G would show me the direction I was headed.

Sometimes your wings may be only slightly tipped. Because you are only a little off, the turn is so gradual that you don't notice it. In fact, your altitude and airspeed may stay the same but if you are checking all your instruments, you will see the D/G soon showing you that you are not aligned to the right direction and are straying off course. The D/G acts as a compass to reflect the direction that the plane was headed and indirectly indicates which wing is higher.

As I tried to control "Covenant" it seemed that first one wing and then the other would provide more lift. It was reassuring to know that I could depend on the D/G to not only show that a correction needed to be made, but to give me guidance on the direction needed to get back on course.

Know Your Primary Instrument

Emphasis on either spiritual warfare or walking in love to the neglect of the other will cause your covenant to stray from the course toward reconciliation. The Word of God is the primary instrument that is needed to help maintain the proper heading and keep us on course.

Psalm 17:4 says, *"Concerning the works of men, By the word of Your lips, I have kept myself from the paths of the destroyer."* (New King James Version)

The Word of God's lips is GOD'S WORD. By it we can avoid the routes that Satan would have us take.

Read 2 Timothy 3:15-17.

1) In verse 15 what will scripture accomplish in you?

2) List four functions of all scripture found in verse 16.

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

d. _____

3) According to verse 17 why has God provided us scripture?

NOTES: _____

Filing Your Flight Plan

There are two failure factors, factors that seem to be a major contributor in every crash I'd heard or read about. It seems incredible that so many aircraft crash every year from running out of fuel.

Pilots are taught how to prepare a flight plan. They learn how to calculate accurately the amount of fuel that is needed. And they are required to carry a reserve in order to meet unexpected delays. Yet I personally knew pilots who were much more experienced than I, pilots who I respected and admired for their flying skills, pilots who I really expected to last through any storm. Yet these were pilots who crashed because they had run out of fuel.

It reminded me of the parable of the ten virgins that Jesus told in Matthew 25. Five foolish ones ran out of fuel for their lamps. It was an oversight and that seems to be the cause of so many pilots who run out of fuel. They just didn't pay any attention to it until it was too late.

Even with adverse headwinds, I knew that if I stayed on course and did not stray, there was fuel

to reach the destination. To stay on course and not run out of fuel I needed to follow the flight plan and avoid taking routes that were not in the planning, no matter how tempting they appeared. Ephesians 4:11-16

Faith Fuels Your Flight

The "fuel" that keeps your covenant flying is FAITH.

Read Hebrews 11:1 and define faith below:

Read Matt 8:5-13 and Mark 5:27-34.

What did Jesus say was the basis for receiving from God in each of these passages?

Read Mark 11:22-24.

Does verse 24 restrict or limit receiving to only "spiritual" things?

Faith begins where the will of God is known. To have faith that God will heal your marriage you must know it is His will to heal your marriage.

Read Malachi 2:16.

What is God's attitude toward divorce?

Read Romans 5:10.

Who is our source of reconciliation?

NOTES: _____

Failure Factor I

Patience—that's what I really needed. I just wanted to get through the storm. It was so tempting to put on full power and blast through the mess, but that would just waste fuel and increase the stress on the plane. If I patiently kept doing the things that I knew I should do and if I followed the principles I had been taught, I knew our plane would come through this and there would be better weather ahead. James 1:12

It seemed that patience was tied to controlling my thoughts. It's when I thought about the situation that I longed for it to be over and I got impatient. This plane just wasn't made to be piloted by one person—yet with God's help I could do it. Hebrews 6:10-12

I knew that I needed to direct my energy into doing "right" things to fly the plane instead of allowing those imaginations to divert my attention and drain my energy. The inattentiveness that those imaginations caused, could and would literally destroy our aircraft.

Five Products of Patience

Patience works with **FAITH** to produce five benefits. (Note: The word "patience" in the KJV may be translated differently in other versions.)

Fruit that blesses others. Read **Luke 8:15** and **2 Corinthians 12:12**. The miracles done by the apostles were done in all _____.

Achievement and success in our own lives. According to **Hebrews 10:36**, if we have patience and do God's will, what do we receive?

Inner health and peace. Our souls involve our emotions. According to **Luke 21:19**, how do we possess it?

Tenacity that overcomes any circumstance. Patience is a fruit of the Spirit. As we feed on God's Word, the God of patience grants us: (See **Romans 15:5 & 6**)

Hope that allows faith to grow. Hope is an essential part of the life of faith. It acts as a goal and also a container for faith. From our experiences we are able to have hope and then faith in future situations. In **Romans 15:4** what produces hope?

Read Romans 5:3-4.

Tribulations brings _____, which brings experience, which brings _____.

Additional Scriptures: James 5:7-11

NOTES: _____

Failure Factor II

It is the constant battling that drains energy and weakens hope that brings the second failure factor. Other than running out of fuel most accidents happen from pilot fatigue. How ironic that so many pilots allowed fatigue to overcome them just before they were safe. I recently read of a pilot who crashed next to the runway. Fatigue had overcome him and he fell asleep on the final approach to landing.

I knew that if I had patience and did not weaken or faint that I would make it through. Fuel and fatigue are two major obstacles. However, if I wasn't distracted and flew a straight course my fuel would last and if I could overcome fatigue I would reach my goal.

Communication is a primary tool to fight off fatigue. Keeping in contact and talking it through with those that understand the situation you are facing helps to keep you awake and alert. Encouragement from those who are in agreement that our plane would survive provided me with strength. In fact, communication is so important that most aircraft have not just one, but two radios.

While communication couldn't fly my "Covenant" for me, it did give me the strength to get through the storm. The encouragement of others and the vectors to the proper headings helped me pilot my aircraft through the storm. While I haven't landed yet, the weather is clearing and I expect my co-pilot to be waiting to greet me at the airport.

Additional Scriptures: Psalm 23, 2 Thessalonians 3:13, 1 Corinthians 1:27, 2 Corinthians 12:9-10

NOTES: _____

Don't Grow Weary in Well Doing

The main reason for failure when someone is actively trusting God to reconcile a relationship is weariness. Read **Galatians 6:6-10**. Notice that the promise to reap is in the context of having fellowship with others.

To fight off weariness and fatigue we need strength. The joy of the Lord is our strength and this comes as we worship and fellowship with other believers. You need the encouragement and support of a group that will stand in agreement with you, pray for you, and minister to you.

Read Hebrews 10:23-25. Two benefits of fellowship according to verse 24 are to stir up:

1) _____

2) _____

Love is expressed through action. You are an encouragement to others in your group. According to **Ephesians 2:10**, for what purpose were you created?

How To Have Faith To Heal Your Marriage



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How to Have Faith to Heal Your Marriage

Introduction

In this lesson we are going to look at an area that is essential for your marriage to be healed. Scripture associates faith with healing and restoration. Without faith, none of God's restorative works can take place. Jesus was not able to perform many miracles in his own hometown because of unbelief (Matthew 13:58).

Faith is the substance that fuels the miracles God performs. When you have faith, you have a substance that brings inner strength no matter what circumstance you face. When you are in line with God's Word in the area of faith, you will be

able to fight in a different way against the enemy. You will be on the offensive instead of recovering from what Satan has done to you.

God is using the experiences you are now going through to develop the substance of faith. The faith substance you develop while you are keeping your covenant will bring blessing and provide direction in difficult circumstances when your mate returns.

During this lesson we will study the importance of faith and the ability to keep our covenant as well as its role in bringing reconciliation and healing to our marriage. We will learn why faith is important, what we must have in order to conceive faith, and how to effectively use faith.

When you have completed this lesson you should be able to:

- 1) State the definition of faith.
- 2) Explain how faith is conceived.
- 3) Describe the process needed to release faith.
- 4) Describe the relationship of faith to obedience.
- 5) Explain why faith is needed to keep covenant and to have a healed marriage.

NOTES: _____

Hope is the Prerequisite for Faith

Hope is the first step in marriage healing. Well-intentioned friends, who don't want to see you hurt, will say *"Don't get your hopes up."* Without realizing it, they are totally wrong. You must get your hopes up! According to Hebrews 6:19 the function of hope is to anchor and stabilize the soul (mind, will and emotions). Proverbs 13:12 says that *"hope deferred makes the heart sick."* Hope functions as the container to hold our faith. Without faith the things we hope for will never become a reality. Hope must be combined with faith for us to inherit God's promises.

The soul is composed of the mind, the will, and the emotions. Both faith and hope are vital to be able to keep your covenant! Faith produces results and we must develop a stand of faith if our marriages are to be healed. Hope keeps us from fainting in our minds. God's Word (Galatians 6:9) promises that if we don't get weary in well doing (keep up that hope!), then we will reap if we don't faint. Hope and faith together form an unbeatable combination.

Read Hebrews 11:1.

Hope functions as the container for faith. Write out the first phrase of this verse that describes the relationship between faith and hope.

Read Hebrews 6:18-19 (Use the New American Standard Version if available for this reference.)

Hope stabilizes the soul just as faith stabilizes the spirit. In this verse what is hope compared to in describing its role in bringing stability?

Additional Scriptures: Lamentations 3:25-26, Psalm 37:4-5, 119:49, Isaiah 40:31, Habakkuk 2:3-4, Romans 4:18-21, 5:3-5, 8:24-25, 28, 10:11, 15:13, Colossians 1:5, Hebrews 6:12, 10:23, 10:35-39, 12:1-3.

NOTES: _____

The Meaning of Faith

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. Any and all of these meanings have direct application for the kind of inner strength you need right now during this period of trusting God to heal your marriage. It is God's will that your marriage be healed and faith is your assurance that it will be healed.

If you own your car you have a deed or a title proving that you are the owner. The title is not the car. You can't drive your title, yet it is necessary in order to own your car. No one else can own that car as long as you have the title. While you can decide to give it up, no one can take it from you. In the same way, faith serves as a title or deed for the healing of your marriage. Faith is your proof that your marriage is healed. While it is possible for you to give it up, no one can take that assurance from you. Faith is the title deed to your miracle.

Additional Scriptures: Jeremiah 17:7, Romans 4:20-22, 10:11

Read Hebrews 11:1 in at least three different versions of the Bible. (Suggested are King James, The Amplified Bible, and The Living Bible.) Write out this verse that defines faith from each version in the space provided below:

Version 1: _____

Version 2: _____

Version 3: _____

NOTES: _____

Faith Must Be Conceived

A principle of life is that anything bringing life must first be conceived. If faith is necessary in order to bring life to our marriages, then that faith must have a start. It must be conceived. The Gospel of Luke provides an excellent illustration of the process of conceiving faith in the very context of conceiving the earthly life of Jesus Christ. In Luke 1:26-38 is the story of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and how she conceived by the Holy Spirit when she agreed with God's Word given by the angel, Gabriel. Mary followed the same three steps necessary to conceive faith that we must follow.

1) Mary **received** God's Word.
Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God.
Study Scripture to know God's Word about your marriage.

2) Mary **agreed** with God's Word. Faith is *agreeing with God by what you say, what you believe, and what you do.*

Faith can be a seed that is planted by the Word of God (Luke 8:11-18) but it takes our agreement in order for it to germinate.

3) Mary **vocalized** her agreement with the Word of God. When we enter into covenant with Jesus we must both believe in our hearts and confess with our mouth (Romans 10:10). There is power in the tongue that affects the spiritual domain. When we confirm our agreement aloud, it takes affect.

Additional Scriptures: Joshua 1:8, Psalm 33:6, 9, 119:89-90, Proverbs 30:5, Ezekiel 12:25, Matthew 24:35, Mark 4:24, 1 Peter 1:25

Like Mary, when we believe God's Word we become pregnant with our miracle. Write out **Luke 1:38** below:

To conceive faith, we must receive God's Word. Write out **Romans 10:17** below:

To conceive faith, we must walk with God by agreeing with His Word. **Amos 3:3** says:

Confirm your conception with verbal expression. Write out **Isaiah 55:11**. (use the New International Version if available)

Faith Must Grow

For something to be alive it must grow. It is when growth stops that aging and death become dominant. For faith to be vital and living it must not be stagnant but growing (2 Corinthians 10:15).

The first requirement for faith to grow is that it must be nourished. Faith is nourished through the Word and through prayer.

The second requirement for faith to grow is that it must be protected. Just as a pregnant mother takes care to avoid situations that would damage the life growing within her, we need to exercise wisdom in what we see, hear, and do to avoid situations that would tear down our faith.

The third requirement for growing faith is that it be exercised. Faith grows as it is exercised and developed just as muscles develop through exercise. We exercise faith through our talk and through our walk. As we reach out and minister to others our faith is exercised, grows, and is perfected. (refer to Psalm 116:10 for possible additional material)

Additional Scriptures: 1 Timothy 4:14, 2 Timothy 1:6-8

Read 2 Timothy 3:14-17. It was the Holy Scriptures that enabled Timothy to have faith in Christ for salvation. This had been a growing process since Timothy's childhood. As we study the Word, what will happen to us?

Read Acts 12:1-17. Early Christians had enough faith to pray when Peter was thrown into prison even though they didn't know what would happen. But because they prayed, what did God do?

Hold fast to God's Word when others try to prove you scripturally wrong. **Read Titus 1:9.** Write it out below:

Don't listen to worldly counsel and clichés. **Read Titus 1:13b-14.** List below one example of worldly counsel to avoid.

Maintain good works and avoid disputes and justification of your stand to others. **Read Titus 3:8-9,14.** In verse 14 what may be the result of not maintaining good works?

Exercise your faith through your words and actions. **Read 2 Corinthians 4:13 and James 2:26.** If our faith is alive what will be the result?

Productive (Pregnant) Faith Becomes Evident to Others

Your faith and obedience will bring purpose and poise that will be evident to others.

Just as faith in a doctor's knowledge allows obedience to the doctor's direction, so our substance allows us to be more obedient and reap the benefit of knowing that we are under the care of a loving Heavenly Father.

In Hebrews 11:8 we are told that it was by **faith** that Abraham obeyed God's direction.

In Proverbs 3:5-6 we are told not to rely on our own understanding but to trust (have faith) in God and acknowledge (obey) Him. Then He promises to provide the direction.

When you have the substance of faith, you are trusting in the Lord Jehovah (which means king of covenants). You know the outcome because your marriage covenant is placed in His hands and will be according to His will. This results in both peace and strength to face supernaturally ANY situation. This is very evident to others and brings God glory.

Additional Scriptures: Romans 10:11

Read Luke 8:48.

What made this woman well? _____

Faith for healing brings vitality and wholesomeness.

What else was promised this woman? "Daughter, be of good _____; thy faith hath made thee whole; go in _____."

Faith and obedience bring purpose and poise from knowing God's direction.

Read Proverbs 3:5-6.

What are we promised as a result of faith and obedience?

Faith results in peace and strength in the midst of any circumstance.

Read Isaiah 26:3-4.

What are we promised in this scripture as a result of placing our faith in the Lord?

NOTES: _____

Summary

Faith is necessary for healing a marriage just as a title is necessary to prove ownership of a car. Faith is our inner proof of what cannot be seen.

Without faith we will not be able to maintain the commitment to keeping our covenant nor will we be able to endure the growth needed to bring healing and to restore wholeness to our relationship once we are reunited with our mates.

Faith must exhibit growth for it is a living entity. For faith to remain alive it must be in an environment of obedience to God's Word. Through being obedient to the Word of God our faith is nourished. Through being obedient to the Holy Spirit in both our walk and our talk, faith is exercised and kept strong.

Just as in a pregnancy there is conception and then growth, so substance for our stand must first be conceived and then grow. To conceive faith we must first have hope, then we must receive God's Word and express our agreement with it.

God's Word has given us the legal right to stand for the restoration of our homes. Faith is necessary to accomplish this. However, this is a decision that must be made individually between each person and God. We must not attribute a "lack of faith" to those who do not choose to keep their covenant or are already divorced or remarried. Although God holds us accountable for the truth He reveals to us, His mercy and grace are available. While His promises are conditional, the love of God is unconditional!

Pregnancies will miscarry if they are not nourished and protected, allowing proper development to occur. Substance also requires nourishment through the Word and prayer, protection and exercise.

Just as changes occur in a mother as the result of a pregnancy, so changes occur in a covenant keeper as a result of the growing substance within them. Others will see the Godly qualities of vitality, assurance, peace and strength as the Author of our faith finishes and perfects it in our lives.

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How To Put On The Armor Of God



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How To Put On The Armor Of God

Introduction

All of us understand the need for safety and protection in physical areas of our lives. Many employers provide special safety training. A major function of laws and of government is to provide for the safety and protection of our society.

In order to function in the protection that society has provided, we must comply with the rules. For example, when we are on the job or driving the freeway our safety depends on whether we follow the principles that are provided for our protection.

Eye guards and earplugs do not protect factory workers if they are not used. A seatbelt provides no protection unless it is buckled.

While the civil authorities in our lives are concerned about safety, our Heavenly Father is far more concerned for us. He has provided a means of protecting us. However, just as we must follow traffic rules to drive the freeway safely, we must follow God's rules to implement the protection He has provided.

Physical protection should not be taken lightly, but God's protection extends past the physical into areas that are even more important.

In this lesson we will examine the "Armor of God Protection" that our heavenly Father has provided for our benefit. We will not only learn what it is, but also how to wear it.

When you have completed this lesson you should be able to:

- 1) Identify the true enemy who must be defeated.
- 2) State two benefits of wearing the whole Armor of God.
- 3) List the Armor of God.

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God Wants His Children To Be Protected!

The Word of God indicates in many passages that the desire of our heavenly Father is that we be protected. The scripture that this lesson is built on (Ephesians 6:10-18) is one of these passages:

10 *Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*

11 *Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.*

12 *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high <places>.*

13 *Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.*

14 *Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness;*

15 *And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace;*

16 *Above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.*

17 *And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God:*

18 *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints; Ephesians 6:10-18 (KJV)*

Additional Scriptures: Exodus 4:12, Psalm 91:10-11, Zech. 2:5&8, Mark 4:22, Luke 8:17, Luke 1:37

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Read Luke 12:2.
What things does God's word say will remain hidden?

Read Isaiah 54:17.
Will any ungodly action taken against you have lasting effects?

Read Luke 12:4,11-12.
What attitude should we have when facing our spouse, lawyers, courts, or creditors?

Read Luke 12:22-32.
What does God give to us that gives Him pleasure?

Who Is Our Real Enemy?

This time of keeping your marriage covenant during a separation or divorce process is probably the hardest time of your life. This is a time when confusion and strife seem very prevalent. Anxiety and worry seem to "come with the territory." Jesus tells us not to worry about the situations we are facing but instead to cast all our anxieties upon him.

While it is God who works the reconciliation, the spiritual dynamic He uses involves our faith.

The true enemy we face wants us to be in fear because faith cannot co-exist with fear. It is through faith in Jesus and His Word that we are overcomers.

It is hard to defeat an enemy that you don't recognize. We need to know who our true enemy is and how to withstand the true enemy and not waste time and effort fighting those who are not the enemy.

Our mates or any person they might be involved with are not our enemies.

Additional Scriptures: Luke 10:19, John 14:27, Romans 8:15, 2 Corinthians 10:3-4, 2 Timothy 1:7, James 4:6-7

Read 1 Peter 5:7-9.

What does God's word say we are to do with our fears, worries, and anxieties?

According to verse 8, who is our adversary or enemy?

According to verse 9, should our action, with regard to the enemy, be passive? (explain)

Read Ephesians 6:10-13.

According to verse 12, does your spouse qualify as your opponent? (explain)

NOTES: _____

Reasons To Wear The Armor

God's Word has a purpose for every instruction that it provides for us. In telling us to continually put on the whole Armor of God, we are also told why we are to wear it.

In the Greek, the word for *wiles* or *schemes* found in Ephesians 6:11 is *methodeia* (methods). It indicates a scheming and deceitful type of action. Satan is cunning and accomplishes much of what he does through deception. The Armor of God serves as a protection against falling into this deception.

The word for *withstand* found in verse 13 is *anthistemi* in Greek. From it we get the medical term for medicines used to control cold symptoms and allergies (antihistamine). In our bodies there exists an essential amino acid known as histidine. When this is attacked and broken down, the result causes symptoms found in colds and hay fever (stuffy head, etc.). The antihistamine comes against these effects. In the same way Satan would want to break down our faith which is as essential for our spiritual being as histidine is for our physical being. He would want to make us spiritually "stuffed-up" and render us ineffective. The Armor of God acts as an antihistamine to help us resist this work of the enemy.

Additional Scriptures: Psalm 55:18, 68:1-6, 71:1-7, 2 Corinthians 10:5

Read Ephesians 6:11.

What is the purpose of wearing the Armor of God?

Read Ephesians 6:13.

What does the Armor of God enable us to do?

List the action verbs found in **Ephesians 6:10 & 11.**

The _____ acts as an antihistamine to help us resist the work of the enemy.

NOTES: _____

The Belt Of Truth

The loins are that part of the body between the ribs and the hipbones. Organs that process what we take in and what we eliminate from our systems are found in this area. For example, the stomach and intestines process nutrients. The liver and kidneys help eliminate wastes. God has provided truth as a means of processing, using and eliminating what we encounter in our lives.

It is important that we be surrounded by the truth of God's Word so that what we take in is wholesome and we eliminate all wastes. God's Word provides the base that allows us to discern and filter what we receive from the world. We must also be filled with the Spirit of Truth. The Holy Spirit is the teacher and reveals to us what is in the Word of God. By having the Holy Spirit as the teacher and the Word as the curriculum, we are able to abide in God, hear Him, and distinguish between what is good and what is error (1 John 4:6).

Additional Scriptures: Proverbs 3:1-2, John 1:17

NOTES: _____

Read Ephesians 6:14.
With what are we to gird our loins?

Read Psalm 51:6.
Where does God desire truth?

Read Jeremiah 31:33, Psalm 119:151, and John 17:17-19.
How do these verses relate to where we are to find truth?

Read John 14:16-17, 15:26, 16:13, and 1 John 5:6-7.
Who is referred to as "truth" in these verses?

Read John 8:32.
What does truth do for us?

Read 2 Timothy 2:15.
What will studying God's Word produce?

The Breastplate Of Righteousness

The breastplate is a piece of armor worn over the chest. Organs vital to life are protected by the breastplate, in particular the lungs and the heart.

When our heart or lungs are restricted, we lack zest, energy, and vigor in our lives. We receive protection spiritually through the righteousness provided through Jesus. When we don't "wear His righteousness," we find that our spiritual vitality is drained.

We stand righteous before God through the blood that Jesus shed at Calvary when He bled and died for our sins. Our righteousness is not because we do good works, but is a gift. (Romans 4:3-5 KJV)

1 Thessalonians 5:8 says that we can wear this breastplate through faith in Him and by walking in forgiveness and love.

The character and nature of God are revealed through His names. Jehovah-Tsidkenu means "Jehovah our righteousness." (2 Corinthians 5:21)

We can die to sin and live to righteousness because Jesus Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross (1 Peter 2:24).

Additional Scriptures: Job 29:14, Proverbs 11:5-6, Isaiah 11:5, 32:17, 59:17a, Hosea 10:12, Matthew 6:33, Romans 14:17, Romans 3:22

Look up the following references and match each with the corresponding statement below:

- A. **Proverbs 15:29**
- B. **Jeremiah 33:16**
- C. **Psalm 23:3**
- D. **Isaiah 61:10**
- E. **Psalm 51:10**
- F. **1 Peter 3:12**

- ___ We can walk in paths of righteousness for His Name's sake.
- ___ Because the Lord is our righteousness we can have the benefit of salvation and of safety.
- ___ Because of the Breastplate of righteousness (through Jesus) God will hear our prayers.
- ___ We should REJOICE because we are clothed with righteousness!
- ___ Because we are the righteousness of God in Christ, the eyes of the Lord are upon us and He hears our prayers.
- ___ Righteousness can change the attitudes of our hearts.

NOTES: _____

Shoes Of Preparation Of The Gospel Of Peace

Feet are an essential asset to a soldier. It is no coincidence that the basic unit of an army is the infantry, which means "foot soldier." Without proper shoes, a soldier is "crippled" and unable to effectively stand, sidestep, walk or run.

Notice the word preparation in this part of the armor. You must be prepared to walk in peace. **This involves a conscious decision to forgive and to do good.** Galatians 6:7-10 provides the direction for the walk that results in the promise that is found in verse 16 of peace and mercy (look it up).

In Romans 16:19-20 Paul writes to obedient believers that they should focus on what is good and avoid what is evil. This really is having your feet "shod with the gospel of peace." The resulting promise is found in verse 20.

"And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly." (NKJV)

Read Isaiah 52:7.

No terrain is as hard on feet as mountains. God's Word shows that when we walk in peace our feet will be _____. Walking in peace will not only affect the appearance of our feet but also our lives. How can it have an effect on our marriage reconciliation?

Read Nahum 1:7 & 15.

In order for the Lord to be a strong hold in the day of trouble what must He know about us?

In verse 15 there is a direction and promise linked to having our feet shod with peace. Write down that promise below:

Read Luke 1:68-79.

This is a prophecy regarding John the Baptist who prepared the way for Christ. We also need to prepare the way for our Lord. In verse 79, how are we to guide our feet?

Additional Scriptures: Matthew 6:14-15, Mark 11:25-26

NOTES: _____

Shield Of Faith

The shield is a piece of armor carried on the arm to protect the entire body. In battle, enemy soldiers would fire hollow arrows that were filled with a burning substance (naphtha) that could not easily be put out with water. The heavy leather shields provided protection from the effects of the fiery darts by "extinguishing" these arrows.

During the process of keeping our marriage covenant, we have many occasions when we need to have a shield to protect us from circumstances and from damaging criticism that can come through our mates, friends or others. In James 3:5-6 we see that the tongue can act like a flaming arrow and spread destruction. Faith serves as a shield to stop the effects of rumors, circumstances, criticism, or other flaming darts that the enemy (Satan) would use to injure us spiritually, emotionally or physically.

Our faith must actually be specific to be effective. Quoting a verse about physical healing will not build much faith against a dart of financial need. We need to know what God's Word says about the area of attack we are currently facing. If the attack is against your physical body, your shield will be strengthened by a passage like Matthew 15:29-31. If you need help with your emotions, try Isaiah 61:1-3. Financial needs? Look up Philippians 4:16. Doubting that reconciliation with your mate can happen? See Matthew 5:23-25, Malachi 2:14-16, and the first three chapters of Hosea. Ask God to show you, in His Word, that He is your shield and protector. Then hold that truth up to the enemy when he starts shooting at you!

NOTES: _____

Read Ephesians 6:16.

What limits do you find on the number or types of fiery darts that the shield of faith will extinguish?

Read Proverbs 30:5.

What must we do to have God be our shield?

To effectively have the shield of faith we must have the Word (which produces faith) active within us. Read and think on each of the passages in the checklist below:

- ___ 2 Samuel 22:3,36
- ___ Psalm 3:3
- ___ Psalm 5:12
- ___ Psalm 18:35
- ___ Psalm 28:7
- ___ Psalm 33:20
- ___ Psalm 59:11
- ___ Psalm 84:9,11
- ___ Psalm 91:4
- ___ Psalm 115:9-11
- ___ Psalm 119:114
- ___ Psalm 144:2

Helmet Of Salvation

The mind and our thought life are a focus of major attacks from Satan and it is in this area that God has provided for us the helmet of salvation. While it is easy to visualize the helmet as protection for our minds, it is good to focus on why it is called the helmet of salvation.

The purpose of a name is to signify the character and the nature of something. The name of Jesus literally means *the God of our covenant is salvation*. Jesus is actually referred to as *Salvation* in Luke 19:9.

The word salvation refers to both the present and to the future. It has several meanings (see Vine's expository dictionary) that can be put into seven groups:

- 1) Safety and deliverance from danger.
- 2) Deliverance from apprehension and mental distress.
- 3) Spiritual deliverance both eternally and from God's wrath at the end of the age.
- 4) Freedom from bondage to sin in our lives.
- 5) Provision of God's blessings including maintenance of peace and harmony.
- 6) Healing and health in our bodies.
- 7) Provision of wisdom and direction.

When we wear the helmet of salvation and implement its protection in our lives, we have protection from Satan in the battlefield of our minds and we can experience the salvation of Jesus in all of these areas.

Additional Scriptures: Psalm 107:20, Proverbs 13:12, Joel 2:32

Hope is a container for faith. Hope helps us resist bad effects of our present situation because we look forward with faith to what is to come.

Read 1Thessalonians 5:8.

What is the helmet called in this verse? Why is this important to keeping your marriage covenant?

Read Isaiah 59:16-21.

In verse 17, what is described as protecting the head?

NOTES: _____

Sword Of The Spirit

In our base passage of Ephesians 6:10-18, the sword of the Spirit is the first of only two weapons used for attack. Scripture declares that our enemies will fall by the sword. While this is applied to physical weapons during Biblical times, God's Word is timeless and it applies to our situations today (Leviticus 26:7-8).

The Word of God is this weapon and it is our power and authority. Jesus used Scripture against Satan in the past, and God's Word will be used against Satan in the future (Isaiah 27:1). It is God's will that we use His Word against Satan even now. In Psalm 149:6 we read, *"Let the high praises of God be in their mouth, and a two edged sword in their hand."* As we speak God's Word in praise, the enemy can be driven back and spiritual bonds can be cut. There are three steps to effective use of the Sword of the Spirit:

- 1) Identify the problem.
- 2) Find an appropriate passage of Scripture.
- 3) Speak forth that scripture whenever you encounter the problem.

By memorizing the appropriate scripture, you can be prepared no matter when the enemy strikes. Speaking forth God's Word is how we cast down imaginations. This is the weapon described in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5.

Additional Scriptures: Psalm 149:1, 2 Corinthians 10:4, 1 Peter 1:23, Revelation 19:13

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The Word of God is compared to a powerful sword that can separate between what our mind says, and what our spirit says. It is so powerful that it can be used to distinguish between thoughts and our real motives. Look up and write down **Hebrews 4:12** in the space provided below:

Four reasons for the Sword of the Spirit are listed below. Match the appropriate verse with the reason:
Psalm 119:9-11, Matthew 4:1-11, Ephesians 6:11, 1 Thessalonians 2:13

Jesus used it against Satan. _____

It protects us from sin. _____

It helps us stand firm. _____

It's a tool that works within us. _____

Praying In The Spirit

The second weapon in our arsenal for attack is prayer. Praying in the Spirit is more than an external weapon, it provides an inner sustenance to keep us strong.

When we don't know how to pray and when we are so oppressed that we can not even seem to function in prayer, the Holy Spirit will function through our spirit and provide the intercession that is needed (Romans 8:26-27).

"Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God." (Romans 10:17) "Building up your most Holy Faith by praying in the Holy Spirit." (Jude 1:20) Isn't it interesting that two weapons that we use against the enemy have the effect of building up our faith?

Faith: the dynamic that God uses to accomplish the miracles we need in our lives.

Faith: a key ingredient to receiving our reconciliation both to God and to our mates.

On the next page is a prayer that we suggest you use in your daily prayer time. You start off the day by dressing your body. Begin the day by also putting on the Armor of God. Pray on each piece of armor, and use your hands to help you visualize placing each piece on its proper place.

Read Jude 1:20.

Who is built up when we pray in the Spirit? How is this important to maintaining our marriage covenant?

Read Romans 8:26-28.

1) According to verse 26, what does the Holy Spirit do on our behalf?

2) According to verse 27, when we pray in the spirit, what we are communicating is according to whose will?

3) According to verse 28, when we love God and are obedient to His call, what will be the result?

NOTES: _____

God's Whole Armor Prayer

Belt of Truth

I put on the Belt of Truth. I thank You that Your Word is Truth. Sanctify me by Your Word today (John 17:17). I will study Your Word today to show myself approved unto You as a workman that has no need to be ashamed because I can rightly divide the Word of Truth (2 Timothy 2:15).

Breastplate of Righteousness

Now I put on the Breastplate of Righteousness. I thank You that Jesus became sin that I am now Your righteousness according to 2 Corinthians 5:21. I thank you that the devil cannot hit me with guilt or condemnation today.

Gospel of Peace

I put on my feet the preparation of the Gospel of Peace. I thank You, Father, I am prepared to share the good news of peace with anyone You bring across my path today. Thank you that Jesus, the Prince of Peace, leads and guides me in paths of peace. I will flee from temptation and avoid strife today. (Isaiah 9:6 & 2 Timothy 2:22)

Shield of Faith

Lord, I thank you for the shield of faith and I surround myself with it today. I thank you that the shield quenches and stops any plans that Satan has for me today in Jesus' name. Thank you that my faith is authored and finished by Jesus, Himself (Hebrews 12:2).

Helmet of Salvation

As I place the Helmet of Salvation on my head, I thank you Father that Jesus provided salvation for every area of my life. Because I have the Son, I have eternal life, I have health, and I have the mind of Christ. I will think on what is pure and lovely and of good report today and refuse negative and unproductive thoughts. (Philippians 4:8)

Sword of the Spirit

I lift up the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God. I will speak the Word in season and out of season, whether it's convenient or inconvenient (2 Timothy 4:2). I will use the Word of God to come against and cast down imaginations that the enemy would put against me, in Jesus' name.

Pray in the Spirit at all times for all the Saints

I will be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving I will let my requests be made known to God (Philippians 4:6). I will make entreaties and prayers, petitions and thanksgivings on behalf of all men for kings and all who are in authority (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Freewill And Your Marriage



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Freewill and Your Marriage

Introduction

Many Christians who are trusting God to heal their marriages have been told, "Don't bother to pray - you know they have a free will." In this lesson we are going to look at an area that so many consider to be an obstacle to marriage healing, the freewill of our mate.

It is true that God has given to man both a will and also the ability to make choices. But, to understand the concept of freewill we need to examine the function of our will as one part of our total being. By seeing the role that God created for the will and how it relates to the three major parts of man's being, we can get a better picture of the significance of will and how it relates to the reconciliation we are trusting God for.

In this lesson we will first learn the three parts of our being. We will then study the meaning of will, its function and its relationship to our being. Next, we will look at how Satan deals with the will and then how God deals with the will. Then we will study how our marriage covenant relates to the will and finally how God would have us respond to our mate's freewill.

After you read the material on each page, complete the activity box on the page before proceeding to the next concept. Before you begin, purpose in your heart to allow the Holy Spirit to be your teacher and determine to be obedient to the truth in God's Word that He reveals to you. As you study expect to receive concepts on freewill that will enlighten you and enable you to more effectively pray for the reconciliation of your marriage.

When you have completed this lesson you should be able to:

- 1) Describe the three parts of man.
- 2) Define what is meant by freewill.
- 3) Explain how Satan deals with the will.
- 4) Explain how God deals with the will.
- 5) Describe the relationship of will to your marriage covenant.
- 6) Explain how God would have us respond to our mate's freewill.

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Man Is Created In God's Image

God is a trinity. So, in Genesis 1:26-27, when God created man in His image, man was created as a three part being. God created man with a spirit, a soul and a body.

When God created man He breathed life into him. The breath of God symbolizes the Holy Spirit. It is through our spirit that we commune with God. Man's spirit died in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve sinned. Because of this all of mankind is born in sin without a living spirit. That is why we must be born-again. Our spirit is our "God-consciousness." Our spirit is reborn and comes to life when we accept Jesus as our Savior.

The second part is the soul. The soul of man is composed of the mind, the will, and the emotions. The soul functions as our "self-consciousness." This is the area of our being that dictates both our personality as well as our actions. When we are born-again God desires to lead us through our spirit, but too often our soul does not want to give up control.

The third area of our being is the body. The body deals with the senses of the world around us. It is our "world-consciousness." Through it we taste, see, hear, feel and interact with nature.

All three realms (spirit, soul, and body) are essential. When in proper balance they allow us to experience the abundant life God desires for us.

Read 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24.

List the three areas that God can preserve blameless until Jesus returns:

What is the promise in verse 24?

Read Ezekiel 36:26-27 and John 3:6.

Besides creating a new spirit within us God goes on to say He will put what within us?

Read 1 Corinthians 3:16.

According to this verse we are God's temple. Who dwells in that temple?

NOTES: _____

The Function Of Man's Will

In our minds we know what we should do, but often we find that we don't do it even though that is our desire. Our desire is not the same as our will. Paul expressed this in Romans 7:19, *"For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do."*

The will is deeper than the mind (our thought center). The will is deeper than our center of emotions (our feelings). Our will is the center for our decision-making and therefore determines the choices we make. Its decisions involve our understanding, our feelings, our likes, and our appetites. These choices are determined by our basic character and reflect the condition of our hearts. Proverbs 16:2

There is much misunderstanding about man's will and especially freewill as it relates to the spiritual realm. Freewill means that man can choose what he wants. He is responsible for all his actions. God would have us choose to obey. Obedience means to follow God's will. When we pray, "thy Kingdom come, thy will be done," we are making a confession of our determination to be obedient to God. Disobedience is the result of choosing to follow our will instead of God's will.

Obedience to God does require willingness on our part, because God does not force our will. Our creator never works against our freedom to choose, **however Satan does!**

Read Romans 7:20-23.

According to this passage what affects our wills?

Read Luke 12:22-31, Romans 14:17, and Matthew 6:10.

According to Luke 12:31, what will be the outcome of first seeking God's Kingdom?

Read Romans 14:17.

What is the Kingdom of God?

Read Matthew 6:9-13.

According to the Lord's Prayer, what is associated with having God's kingdom manifested in our lives?

NOTES: _____

How Satan Deals With Man's Will

While God does not violate our will, Satan practices no such restraint. Because of the difference in the sin-nature between believers and unbelievers, he does use different tactics to direct our wills. If we are not born-again, the sin nature born in man is active within us and our will is affected by sin. A will that is affected by sin does not have freedom. Because it is under the influence of sin, it is under Satan's direction.

Born-again Christians are given a new spirit, a new heart, and a new life. Because of this, their will has a new master and Satan must gain cooperation in order to direct the will. Most Christians won't knowingly cooperate with Satan; therefore, he resorts to deception.

Deception is closely associated with sin. When we sin, deception comes in to rationalize or cause compromise and our heart becomes more insensitive to God. Through deception, Satan will gain a hold on our wills until the sin is discovered, confessed, and cleansed by the blood of Jesus. Deception unlatches the gate for evil spirits to come in; passivity provides a place for them to stay. **The result is bondage.** Everything in God's universe operates according to laws created by God. We are familiar with laws in the natural realm such as the laws of electricity or the law of gravity. These laws can work for or against us. There are also laws that must be followed in the spiritual realm. Even evil spirits must follow these laws. They will attack all who give them ground. One will not escape simply because he is a child of God.

Read Romans 1:21-22 and Ephesians 2:2.

What is the condition of those who have not surrendered their will to Jesus Christ?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:4.

What does Satan do to an unbeliever's mind or will?

Read Ephesians 4:27.

How can we keep the enemy from invading?

Read Hosea 4:6 and Romans 6:16.

Many Christians are deceived through a lack of knowledge. What is the result?

NOTES: _____

How God Deals With Man's Will

Scripture is full of examples of God dealing with stubborn people. Proverbs 21:1 says, *"The King's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes."*

Paul was an apostle with an extremely strong will. Initially he was one of the strongest persecutors of Christians. Christians whom Paul intended to kill interceded in prayer and God dealt with Paul on the way to Damascus through a blinding light (Acts 9:1-3). As a result, Paul willingly chose a different direction (Acts 9:4-9).

God again dealt with Paul's will when he became angry with the actions of John Mark (Acts 15:36-41). His reaction was so strong that over five years later, Paul wanted nothing to do with Mark. God worked in the lives of both Paul and Mark in His time so that years after the event that destroyed their friendship and fellowship, Paul now regarded Mark as a close friend & asked that Mark be brought to him (2 Timothy 4:11).

As illustrated in the lives of Paul, Jonah, Nebuchadnezzar and others, God can soften the hardest of hearts and turn the strongest of wills in His time. According to Acts 10:34, God is not a respecter of persons. **It is no secret what God can do, what He's done for others... He'll do for you!**

Jeremiah was known as the weeping prophet. He ministered to the Jewish nation prior to and during their captivity by Babylon. During this time the people of Judah hardened their hearts, disregarded their covenant with Jehovah, and chose to follow the ways of the world.

Read Jeremiah 23:29.

Name two descriptions of how God's Word deals with stubborn hearts:

Read Jeremiah 24:7.

According to the Hebrew dictionary in Strong's concordance, the word for heart in this verse also refers to the will. God gives a heart (or will) to _____ unto Him.

Read Jeremiah 29:11-14.

People make choices with their will that they hope will give them a positive future. What two things do God's plans intend for us?

Read Jeremiah 20:7-9, 23:17-20.

In these passages the conflict of a person's freewill is described as it opposes God's will. Who prevailed?

NOTES: _____

The Function Of The Marriage Covenant In Man's Will

A covenant is a special type of agreement. Just as a constitution is considered superior to individual laws, so the covenant commitment takes precedent over individual rights and freedoms.

A covenant agreement requires at least two to establish and a single party cannot break it. It is just this type of "super agreement" bought with the blood of Jesus that puts us in covenant with God and provides us assurance of eternal life. When we enter into covenant with Christ we yield our will to the Lord and in return we are reborn and receive salvation. When we are saved we receive special privileges because of our covenant with the Lord. Because of this covenant Jesus also has rights over our lives. For example, he has the right and does intercede in heaven for us (Hebrews 7:25).

Marriage is a covenant and a picture of the relationship that Christ has with the Church (Ephesians 5:22-33). In marriage an exchange of wills occurs. We no longer have exclusive control but we yield control to our mates. This is seen in 1 Corinthians 7:4, *"For a girl who marries no longer has full right to her own body, for her husband then has his rights to it, too; and in the same way the husband no longer has full right to his own body, for it belongs also to his wife."* (TLB) These rights are to be exercised in love, not in selfishness. The model is to *"love your wife as Christ loves the Church"* (Ephesians 5:25). See pages 1-13 in *"An Alternative to Divorce"* by Marilyn Conrad for a fuller explanation of the marriage covenant relationship.

Read Roman's 8:38-39.

When we are in covenant with Christ, what can separate us from His love?

Read Ephesians 5:31.

What is the result of entering into a marriage covenant?

Read Romans 7:2-3 (Use The Living Bible if available).

At what point does a marriage covenant end?

Read Mark 10:11-12.

In a covenant we yield our rights to another. What does scripture say about remarriage while our covenant partner is alive?

NOTES: _____

How God Wants Us To Respond To Our Mate's Freewill Part I

In Hosea 2:19-20 the Lord lists five areas where we have covenant rights. *"I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the LORD."* (New International Version) Also see this verse in The Living Bible.

God allows us to exercise our covenant in the following ways:

- 1) Righteousness
- 2) Justice
- 3) Love
- 4) Compassion
- 5) Faithfulness

Righteousness is doing what God does. According to Romans 8:34 and Hebrews 7:25 Jesus is an intercessor for those He is in covenant with. We also can be in intercession for our covenant mates.

Zechariah 8:16 indicates that justice and truth are related. We need to be careful in our conversation to not give false reports (Exodus 23:1-2) and to be just in all our dealings with our mates about money, family and other issues.

Even if we speak correctly and our actions are right, if not done in love, the effort is fruitless (1 Corinthians 13:1-7). Love is best known through our motivations (1 Timothy 1:5). The motivations of our heart determine if our words and actions are done in love. It's important that we check our motivations and allow God to be in TOTAL control. Our mates can quickly sense motives that are not pure. Remember that love never fails (1 Corinthians 13:8).

NOTES: _____

Righteousness
Read Job 21:30 (Use The Amplified Bible if available.) Write verse 30 below:

Justice
Read Deuteronomy 16:20 .
Land is often used as a symbol for marriage or the fulfillment of covenant promise. How does this passage say we are to inherit the land?

Love
Read Galatians 5:6, Ephesians 6:23 and 1 Thessalonians 1:3 .
How does faith work?

How God Wants Us To Respond To Our Mate's Freewill Part II

Grace can be defined as getting what we don't deserve while mercy can be described as not getting what we do deserve. The same word used for compassion or mercy is related to forgiveness in 1 Kings 8:50 and Daniel 9:9. We are to show forgiveness, loving kindness, and God's mercy to our covenant mates.

In Jeremiah 42:12 we see again that mercy is instrumental to receiving the covenant inheritance. No matter what actions are taken against us, we need to be merciful and full of compassion.

Faithfulness is listed as a fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5:22. We are told to feed on the faithfulness of God in Psalm 37:3. Faithfulness means stability. It means holding to our covenant with moral fidelity. Our faithfulness is only possible through the enabling of the Holy Spirit and is a witness to the world of God's power within our lives.

When our mates truly have a freewill - a will that is free from Satan - they will choose what's best for them: God's will for their lives. Because of our covenant with the Lord and our marriage covenant with our mate, we can intercede in righteousness, speak the truth, walk in love, show mercy and be faithful to our covenant. Therefore, we play an important role in our mate's freedom. Again, it is important to understand that when we intercede we are not controlling our mates' wills, but the spirits behind their wills. We are pulling down strongholds so that our mates can be released from bondage (Ephesians 6:12).

God's Word will accomplish what it says. The Lord will bring events to bear and restoration and reconciliation will happen. Freewill is not an obstacle, it's a goal to achieve in the lives of our covenant partners.

"Many plans are in a man's mind, but it is the Lord's purpose for him that will stand." (Proverbs 19:21 The Amplified Bible)

Additional Scripture: Micah 6:8

NOTES: _____

Compassion (or Mercy)
Read Zechariah 7:9.
What does this passage command us to do?

Faithfulness
Read Habakkuk 2:4 and Hebrews 10:38.
How do the just live?

How to Use Binding and Loosing



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How to Use Binding and Loosing

Introduction

In keeping our marriage covenant and trusting God to restore our marriages, we need every tool that God has made available for us. God has provided a way to deal with the unseen forces of the enemy. Those unseen forces carry assignments with the purpose of preventing us from experiencing God's best in our lives.

"And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:19

The tool of **Binding and Loosing** provides freedom and protection for us as well as for our mates and family. The freedom that results allows God's process of reconciliation to function more efficiently and effectively in our lives.

In this lesson we will learn what scripture says regarding Binding and Loosing and how to apply it in our lives. As you learn these truths it is important that you begin to use them. God does hold us accountable for the truth that He gives us. As we are faithful over little, He increases and entrusts more to us.

At times there may be more than one way to apply a principle. For example, scriptures and principles regarding healing apply to our physical bodies, our emotions, our relationships, etc. The particular need determines how the principles are prayed and applied. We will examine various ways we can use Binding and Loosing prayers in our lives and circumstances.

As you study, expect the concepts on Binding & Loosing to enlighten you and enable you to more effectively pray for the reconciliation of your marriage.

NOTES: _____

When you have completed this lesson you should be able to:

- 1) Describe the meanings for *Binding* and *Loosing* as found in the New Testament
- 2) Explain the purpose of Binding and Loosing.
- 3) State the basis of our authority to Bind and Loose.
- 4) Explain the difference between Binding and Loosing and the process of casting out unclean spirits.
- 5) List the steps for Binding and Loosing in Spiritual Warfare.
- 6) Describe the results of Binding and Loosing on our lives and the lives of others.

The Meaning of Binding

The Greek word used in the New Testament for **bind** is DEO [DEH'-O]. It is a verb that literally or figuratively means to be in bonds, bind, tie, to confine, forbid, restrain or restrict, wind, knit. One of the clearest ways to understand the meaning of a word in scripture is to compare how the same Greek word is used in other verses. All of the verses below use the same word as the Greek word for *bind*.

*"Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evildoer, <even> unto bonds, but the word of God is not **bound**."* 2 Timothy 2:9

*"Then straightway they departed from him which should have examined him: and the chief captain also was afraid, after he knew that he was a Roman, and because he had **bound** him."* Acts 22:29

*"Saying, go ye into the village over against you, in the which at your entering ye shall find a colt **tied**, whereon yet never man sat: loose him, and bring him <hither>."* Luke 19:30

We see in these passages that the term used for *binding* can mean *imprisoned* or *put in chains* or *tied*. Jesus gave us authority to bind the enemy (restricting or inhibiting his influence or activity). However, according to 2 Timothy 2:9, the Word of God has the power of God in it and cannot be bound!

The Pharisees of Jesus' day were very familiar with the concept of binding and loosing. In their minds, to bind something would be to declare it forbidden by law. We can use our legal authority to forbid the enemy to work in our lives or situations we pray about.

Binding can also unite, or knit together, things. Sometimes the Holy Spirit may lead us to pray binding in the sense of unifying something. For example, "I bind my will to the will, plan, and purposes of God." We can also bind, knit, and unite our marriage to God's will.

Read Matthew 12:28-29.

What does God's word say must be done to the "strong man" before effective action can be taken?

Read Mark 3:27.

What is the purpose of binding?

The principle of binding and loosing is a universal truth. Principles of truth are understood and used by Satan to bring destruction in our lives and need to be used by us to bring restoration. Satan binds so that he can bring destructive assignments against our covenant. We use the process of binding to block those assignments and the process of loosing to free ourselves and our mates from entanglements that have already occurred.

The word *house* in the above verses refers to family. While it is Satan's goal to spoil our family, we in turn are given by God the authority to bind satanic powers and spoil their plans.

The Meaning of Loosing

The meaning of the word **loose** is the opposite of bind. The Greek word is LUO [LOO'-O]. This verb means to loose or loosen, break (up), destroy, dissolve, (un-) melt, put off, untie, to free from restraint, set free, or allow. In John 11:44 we see it used as *unbind*. "*And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.*"

Notice that it was the power of Jesus that was used to raise Lazarus from the dead. But it was others who were in agreement with Jesus, who followed His command and loosed Lazarus from the bonds that restrained him. This process of loosing sets us in agreement with Jesus to bring freedom to our mates.

Other verses that illustrate the meaning of loose include Matthew 21:2-3 where the word *loose* means to *untie* and Revelation 9:15, where it means *released*. In Matthew 21:3 it's interesting that in meeting resistance to *loosing*, the disciples were to use the Lord's name (this is mentioned in all the Gospel accounts). The principle applies to us in that the power of binding and

loosing is accomplished through the power of the name of Jesus. We can only do what is in agreement with God's will and His purposes and principles.

In a legal sense, loosing declares that something is allowable or permissible. Loosing gives us authority to free (invite) the Holy Spirit to work in a situation or life. It can also work by breaking or destroying a spiritual assignment of darkness, just as Jesus' disciples literally "loosed" the grave cloths from Lazarus.

Read 1 John 3:8.

What was the purpose of Jesus?

Read Acts 2:24.

What did Christ do to the pains of death?

Read Revelation 1:18.

What did Jesus obtain (that represents authority) from Hades and death?

Read Romans 8:14-17.

What is our position with Christ?

The word *destroy* in **1 John 3:8**, and the word *liberating* (Amp) in **Acts 2:24** is the identical word (in Greek) as the word "loosed" in binding and loosing. Jesus has already defeated Satan. He has taken away the authority over hell (keys in **Revelation 1:18**). Because we are joint-heirs with Christ (**Romans 8:14-17**) we can use and function in this authority!

Our Authority for Binding and Loosing

Automobiles provide basic transportation for many of us. Yet owning an automobile is not enough. For a car to be effective you need three things:

- 1) You need to know how to operate the car.
- 2) You need the authority (license) to drive the car.
- 3) You need to "drive in agreement" by following the roadways and rules.

For the process of binding and loosing to be effective, the same three requirements apply. You need to know how to use the process. You need the authority to use it. And you must operate in agreement with God.

While we have been given the authority by God to use binding and loosing, to be effective we must operate in accordance with His Word. Our authority in binding and loosing involves our being in agreement with what God has already bound and what God has already loosed in heaven.

"...whatever you bind on earth must be already bound in heaven; and whatever you loose on earth must be what is already loosed in heaven." Matthew 16:19 (The Amplified Bible)

Binding and loosing is a way to release God's power on earth. Jesus prayed, *"Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."* (Matthew 6:10) God, the sovereign creator of earth, gave Adam the authority to rule the earth (Genesis 1). Adam and Eve surrendered their authority to Satan when they fell, but Jesus reclaimed and restored it to those who call Him Lord. When we bind and loose in accordance with God's will, by our authority we invite God to use His power to manifest His Kingdom in lives and situations on earth so they line up with heaven.

Read Matthew 16:18-19.

1) What promise of protection is given to the church?

2) Who is the church made up of?

3) What was given to the church (not Peter)? [This represents authority.]

Read Luke 9:1.

What did Jesus give his disciples authority over?

Read Luke 10:17-19.

In this passage God promises us both power and authority. In the Amplified bible it says that we have both physical and mental strength and ability over *all the power* that the enemy possesses. Write down the promise of protection in verse 19.

Binding and Loosing is Not Deliverance

When Satan develops a stronghold in a life, demonic spirits can actually become attached to the person. We see this in the Gospels as well as the book of Acts where unclean spirits were cast out of people. This is not a situation of demonic assignments where only ideas and suggestions are implanted. Instead, the demonic spirit exercises actual control over areas of personality. For people to be freed, deliverance must take place. Since there will be some legal access point for possession to take place, the afflicted person must often exercise their will and chose to be set free. *“Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.”* James 4:7

The process of binding and loosing does not cast out or deliver a person from Satanic possession. However, clarity and vision is the first step to being released from bondage. Binding and loosing will help the person recognize their condition and yield to the gentle work of the Holy Spirit, and can be done without their presence or participation.

While Binding and Loosing as well as deliverance allows a person to have freedom to choose and respond to Christ, there are some important differences. Binding and Loosing restrains and restricts Satan's influence or releases the Holy Spirit to bring revelation of truth while deliverance actually removes unclean spirits. Binding and Loosing is usually done through prayer privately while deliverance is done with the participation of the person being delivered.

Read Matthew 12:43-45 and Luke 11:24-26.

Unclean spirits, as *spirit beings* in this world desire a physical body to work through. Satan worked through the physical body of a serpent to disrupt the original covenant relationship of God with man. God restored the relationship through the physical body of Jesus. Unless a person who has experienced deliverance desires to be free from the work of the enemy, the spirit will come back along with seven even more evil. What will be the final condition of the person?

If a person doesn't recognize that they have a problem, which should you do?

- A. Binding & Loosing.
- B. Deliverance.

When a person is unwilling to be set free from an unclean spirit, which should you do?

- A. Binding & Loosing.
- B. Deliverance.

Both answers above should be A. As a ministry Covenant Keepers does not engage in the area of deliverance of spirits. God has gifted others in the Body of Christ in this area. However, learning and applying the truth of God's Word will bring healing and even deliverance from ungodly spiritual influences.

Step 1 - Identify The Spirit To Be Bound

Engineers and scientists employ a very specific process in solving problems. The first step in this *troubleshooting process* is to identify the problem. Unless they can define the problem they cannot determine how to solve it.

The process of binding and loosing is very much a troubleshooting process. It is not possible to find a solution until we identify the problem. For example, binding a spirit of independence alone will not provide the freedom we need when it is a spirit of rebellion that is the root cause. Both need to be bound.

If the Holy Spirit reveals to us the name of the spirit to be bound, then we can use that name. The purpose of a name is to describe its nature and character. If we do not know the name of the spirit to be bound, we can address it by the action that it causes. For example, if you were having a problem with George not telling you the truth, you might say, "*You evil spirit that causes*

George to lie to me, I bind you in the name of Jesus and render you ineffective and inoperative. I loose George from your power and influence."

We can also bind (unite) the Holy Spirit (spirit of truth, love, life, light, etc) to a person or situation. (A great personal prayer is; *I bind my will, mind, attitudes, actions, steps, and life to the Spirit of God.*) The Holy Spirit is the spirit of revelation who will reveal ungodly spirits, attitudes, strongholds, etc not only to ourselves as we pray, but often to the individual for whom we are praying.

NOTES: _____

Look up John 16:13.

While in ourselves, we may not be able to discern the spirit that is at work, we do have the Holy Spirit. What does verse 13 say the Holy Spirit will lead us into?

Read 2 Timothy 3:16-17.

According to verse 16, what four things will Scripture provide for us?

According to verse 17, to what extent will scripture equip us?

The Holy Spirit will often use scripture to help identify evil spirits. Many of these spirits have "proper names" that can be found through a study of scripture. While a study of proper name spirits is beyond the scope of this lesson, this subject is covered in the "*Spiritual Warfare*" CD series by Louis & Carol Gordon, available through Covenant Keepers Inc in Tulsa, Oklahoma, USA.

Step 2 - Speak God's Power into Effect

Jesus provides a model for us in how we are to live. We are to do the works that He did and even more.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater <works> than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do <it>. John 14:12-14

In many accounts of Jesus working against Satan's power He used first His *authority* and then His *power* to order an action. We follow the example of Jesus by using the authority of His name and then His power will bring about the result.

Four things must be done:

- 1) Use your authority in the name of Jesus.
- 2) Address the spirit.
- 3) Bind the spirit.
- 4) Loose yourself or the person from any (residual) effects of the spirit.
- 5) Speak the Word by quoting an appropriate Scripture.

NOTES: _____

Read Matthew 28:18, Romans 14:11, and Philippians 2:9-10.

What do these tell us about the authority of Jesus?

In the four areas where Jesus fought against the enemy listed below, list the scripture that illustrates each area. References to be used are: **Matthew 8:26, Matthew 17:18, Luke 7:14, and Luke 13:12.**

- 1) Directly removing demonic spirits.
- 2) Removing the effects or works of demons in people's lives.
- 3) Undoing the effects or works of demons in nature or circumstances.
- 4) Reversing the interruption of life caused by Satan's strategy.

Read Mark 1:25 and Mark 4:39.

In these actions, the word *quiet* in Mark 1:25 is the same word (in Greek) as *still* in Mark 4:39 (NAS). It means to muzzle, gag, or restrain (similar to *bind*). Note that in both these events, Jesus rebuked (used His authority) and then used His power to restrain the enemy or the enemy's effects.

Step 3 - Trust the Results to God

Binding and Loosing based on God's Word needs to be followed by maintaining our faith that God will do what He says. Satan will try to get our faith to waver so we become double-minded. We must operate not by what we see, but what we know is true according to God's Word. When the thought, "It didn't work," enters our mind, we must have faith and trust God.

A method that helps to maintain faith is to keep a record of the spirits that have been bound as well as the date you bound them. This record helps you remind Satan what has been bound when something continues to manifest. Changes in the physical realm often lag behind what takes place in the spirit. Records also help determine if a similar or associated spirit has not been bound. For example, deception, lying, falsehood, and half-truths can all be related spirits that make up a stronghold. A sample form you can use is included at the end of this lesson.

NOTES: _____

Read Matthew 11:12.
From the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth *violence* and the

Read Mark 3:27.
We are taking part in this spiritual warfare. According to this verse, what are we to do before we plunder Satan and his demons?

Read Matthew 22:13.
What took place before "casting into outer darkness?"

Read John 5:14 and Luke 11:24-26.
How are these scriptures related?

Read 2 Corinthians 4:13.
How do we exercise our spirit of faith?

Read Hebrews 10:23.
What are we to do with our faith?

Read James 1:6-8.
Why does Satan want us to waver in our faith?

Examples of Binding and Loosing Part I

Three examples of binding and loosing are listed. They are provided to help you practice the concepts that have been taught in this lesson. *The answers that are given are only to provide some general guidance and should not be considered the only correct responses.*

A husband says that he has made a mistake in marrying his wife of 27 years, and that he should not have to live with a mistake. Therefore, he wants a divorce.

A. What spirits can you identify? _____

B. Write out a statement of what you would bind and loose. Also give a scripture to pray.

A. Some spirits you may identify include: lying spirit, deceiving spirit, spirit of divorce or covenant breaking spirit.

B. One possible statement is:

In the name of Jesus, I address you lying and deceiving spirits, you spirits of divorce, you covenant breaking spirits, and any spirit that would cause my husband to think he made a mistake and should divorce me. I bind you and render you inoperative and ineffective. My husband is loosed from you and from your effects and the eyes of his heart are flooded with light according to Ephesians 1:17-18. I also bind my husband and our marriage to the will, plan, and purposes of God and invite God's will be done in our marriage and lives as it is in Heaven according to Matthew 6:10. I loose, free, invite, and welcome the Holy Spirit of comfort and, truth (John 15:26), revelation, light and power to work in our hearts, lives and marriage. Father, you say in Malachi chapter 2 that you hate divorce and marital separation and that you were a witness to the covenant made by my marriage vows. I stand upon my covenant and by your grace I will maintain it. In Jesus' mighty name. Amen

Examples of Binding and Loosing Part II

A husband tells his wife that he is contemplating divorce. The wife is shocked and deeply hurt. They spend most of the night talking. Early the next morning, he serves his wife coffee in bed. He is tender and gentle and wants to make up. The wife gives him an ultimatum saying that he must stop doing certain things if he expects her to respond to him. Serving coffee is not good enough.

A. What did the wife do wrong? _____

B. Write out an example of binding and loosing the wife could use in private.

A. The wife should not give an ultimatum but accept the husband's gesture of reconciliation. The strength of the tool you use to get something is the strength of your ability to keep it. Ultimatums are the wrong tools. The Word of God and His love are the only tools strong enough to get and keep what is God's best for us. According to Romans 12:21, we don't overcome evil with evil.

B. When alone the wife should bind the spirits that tell her husband that he wants a divorce. Our fighting needs to be restricted to the prayer closet! When we try to change someone, fix them, or convince them of something (even a truth of God), we usually enter into manipulation and controlling behavior. An example of prayer could be:

In the name of Jesus I address covenant breaking spirits, spirits of divorce and separation that would influence my husband to want a divorce. I bind you in the name of Jesus and render you helpless and ineffective. I loose and free my husband from you and from any effect that you have had on him. I declare that my husband knows the truth and the truth is setting him free according to John 8:32. I bind my mind and my husband's mind to the mind of Christ, that His thoughts would be our thoughts, that His love would be our love, that we would experience and extend His forgiveness, mercy and compassion. Amen

Examples of Binding and Loosing Part III

Judi tells Frank that she wants a divorce and that she has been having an affair with his best friend. Angry words are spoken by both. Frank immediately goes to his prayer partner and together they cast out the spirits of lust, adultery and divorce. Feeling a release, Frank looks for immediate results. However, the situation only gets worse.

A. What mistakes did Frank make? _____

B. What actions should Frank have taken? _____

C. Write out a prayer of binding and loosing that Frank could have used.

A. Frank got into strife. He and his prayer partner should not have attempted to cast spirits out of Judi since she was not present, nor willing, to have the spirits removed.

B. Frank should have avoided strife. He and his prayer partner should have used binding and loosing. Frank needs to put his faith in God instead of circumstances and allow God to work changes in himself. He needs to repent for anger and the angry words that contributed to strife as well as for judging his wife. Only when his heart is cleansed (1 John 1:9) can he effectively bind and loose (James 5:16).

C. Frank and his prayer partner could pray in agreement:

I (Frank) repent for my anger towards Judi and my part in creating strife. Forgive me for not being a peacemaker in that situation. Forgive me for condemning (judging) Judi for her actions, for only you know her heart. I bind myself to the mind of Christ, and ask you to make me the kind of forgiving husband that Jesus is to His bride the church. Loose your spirit of mercy and compassion so that I can lovingly serve Judi and wash her with the water of Your Word (Ephesians 5:25-27). I bind any spirits of lust, adultery, unfaithfulness or divorce that may be influencing Judi, and as her covenant mate I invite the Holy Spirit of comfort and revelation to open her eyes to God's plan for her life and our marriage. I loose God's love and mercy on us both at this time, and I bind our lives and marriage to God's will and Kingdom. Amen

Frequently Asked Questions About Keeping Covenant



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Frequently Asked Questions About Keeping Covenant

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Introduction & Directions

As we trust God to bring reconciliation and healing to our relationship with our mate, there are questions or situations we all face. The purpose of this study is to address these questions and provide the perspective that others have received from the Lord through His Word. As you do this study, read the material on the left and then look up the corresponding scripture references in the side bar and write down your responses to each item.

Why do some stands take so long? It appears the leaders stand a very long time!

When we begin to trust God to heal our marriage our focus is on the relationship. Often God has a much bigger plan for the restoration than we realize.

Joseph was sent to Egypt as a slave and then put into prison. (Gen 37 - 40) God did not rescue him from this injustice immediately. Joseph went through a period of training and development. Eventually, God used the situation to save **all** of Joseph's family.

A walk of faith and the relationship with Christ that is developed during a lengthy stand will develop patience, endurance, and other qualities that God will use throughout our lifetime as well as when our mate returns.

Leaders are like pioneers that blaze a new trail. Covering new ground means that new areas must be explored and obstacles must be removed to clear a path. Because of this effort, those who follow the path that leaders have cleared will normally cover the same ground in far less time. We find that those who do not have a teachable spirit and blaze their own trail, most often quit standing.

Jesus taught about the length of time that one labors for a reward in Matthew 20:1-16. When the time for payment came, those who labored for only a short time received the same as those who worked for a long time and they were even paid first. Some who had labored the longest felt this was not fair. Jesus used this parable to illustrate the importance of the attitude of those who labor in the Kingdom of God. When you are standing for God's best, you are laboring in the Kingdom of God. We need to not focus on how long we stand, but instead focus on what we are called to do and be grateful that God is faithful to do what He has promised.

God's plans and perspectives are often different than our own.

1) **Read Isaiah 55:9.** How do our ideas compare with God's?

2) **Read Jer 29:11-14.** What are God's plans toward us regarding restoration?

3) What does God say regarding His promises toward us in **2 Pet 3:9**?

4) God's salvation applies to every aspect of our lives. According to **Isa 46:13** how close is our salvation?

5) Write out **Hab 2:3**: _____

6) **Read Luke 18:7-8.** How does this give you assurance about your stand?

7). **Read Heb 10:36-11:6.** List two reasons why we need to persevere.

I have been divorced several times. Will God heal only the first marriage?

God's perfect will is that the first marriage endures. However, because of lack of knowledge (Hosea 4:6) many 1st and 2nd marriages end in divorce. The blood of Jesus is sufficient to cover the sin of divorce when a covenant is broken by both parties and they have married again. When true repentance takes place, God's forgiveness and mercy is available. God is able to establish a new covenant. The real question is, "Which relationship is the covenant relationship?" The answer to this question is what you need to hear from God.

Sin in any area of our life deadens our sensitivity to God in that area. Sin makes it hard to listen to God and hear His voice. The good news is that through Jesus we can have forgiveness from sin and have our fellowship restored with the Father. (1 John 1:9)

The Bible calls divorce a sin and remarriage an act of entering into adultery. (See Matt 5:32, 19:9, Luke 16:18, and Rom 7:3.) If you have not repented for your divorce and remarriage, or if you have not repented for marrying a divorced person, then you will not hear clearly from God on this issue.

If this applies to you, please go before the Lord to clear up this matter. You will find a prayer of repentance in the sidebar on the right.

Another important area to consider in seeking God's direction is whether a mate from a previous marriage is remaining unmarried because they do not want to violate God's Word. They may be in fact standing for restoration of their covenant with you.

If there is not a former mate standing and you have repented and asked their forgiveness, God is able to bless a second marriage. However, the suffering and hurt that resulted to marriage partners and children from a previous marriage will still need God's healing touch.

When we honestly confront, confess, and repent of the sins in our lives and seek the Lord, He will give us the wisdom, guidance and grace to walk in His will. His Word and the Holy Spirit will lead us in his perfect path and we can know with certainty His best for reconciling and healing our marriage.

<p>PRAYER OF REPENTANCE</p> <p>"Heavenly Father, I confess to you as sin the act of divorce and also the act of remarriage as adultery. 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 establishing and keeping my marriage covenant. Grant me the wisdom to know your will and the grace to follow it. Confirm to me your will regarding my marriage covenant and I will rely on your grace and strength to hold my covenant firm. I ask this in Jesus' name, Amen."</p> <p>Read Ps 9:10. What does God's Word promise to those who seek Him?</p> <hr/> <p>Read James 1:5. What is promised to those who in faith ask for wisdom?</p> <hr/> <p>In Matt 7:7-11, God tells us to ask and we will receive. How does that apply to Prov 2:3-6?</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

My husband is a non-believer and is in adultery. Doesn't scripture tell me to let him go? Does this free me from my marriage vows?

The scripture that some Christians use in this situation is found in 1 Cor 7:12-16. This passage directs us to allow the mate to leave the home so we can operate in peace. This means we do not try to manipulate them emotionally or try to keep them physically or legally from leaving. This is quite different than breaking a covenant through divorce. "The Message" translates this passage as: *"If a wife should leave her husband, she must either remain single or else come back and make things right with him. And a husband has no right to get rid of his wife. On the other hand, if the unbelieving spouse walks out, you've got to let him or her go. You don't have to hold on desperately. God has called us to make the best of it, as peacefully as we can. You never know, wife: The way you handle this might bring your husband not only back to you but to God. You never know, husband: The way you handle this might bring your wife not only back to you but to God. And don't be wishing you were someplace else or with someone else. Where you are right now is God's place for you. Live and obey and love and believe right there. God, not your marital status, defines your life. Don't think I'm being harder on you than on others. I give this counsel in all the churches."* 1 Cor 7:10,11,15-17 "The Message", The New Testament in Contemporary English by Eugene H. Peterson.

Our goal is not just to keep a marriage together. Instead, it is to bring healing to the relationship so it can operate as God planned.

According to most Bible scholars, the marital unfaithfulness "exception clause" found in Matthew 5:32 and Matt 19:9 refers to the unfaithfulness during the engagement period prior to consummating a marriage. In Jewish society, a formal divorce needed to be issued even though the marriage was not completed. The situation of Matt 1:18-25, between Mary & Joseph would have been a valid "exception clause" reason for Joseph to divorce Mary and was why he was considering it before the angel spoke to him. Other scholars feel the exception clause refers to a divorce granted after the marriage night, if the bride was discovered to not be a virgin.

We find many Christians use the exception clause as an excuse or justification when they have a hardened heart. Jesus referred to this condition in Mark 10:2-9. Christ would not tell us not to put asunder marriage without making provision to carry out this command. **Behind every broken marriage is a heart hardened against God, then hardened against their mate.**

Hosea was a prophet of God and obedient to the Lord. Despite his wife's (Gomer's) adultery before and during their marriage, Hosea maintained a sensitive heart and followed God's best by keeping covenant despite Gomer's continued infidelity. Eventually their marriage was restored and healed.

In Romans 7:4-6 we find that despite our fallen nature, we are "married to Christ" so that we can experience forgiveness and a new life. This is a developmental process and one that we in turn can extend to our covenant mates so they too can bear fruit for the Kingdom of God.

Read Jer 3:14 and Jer 31:31-33. What is God's heart to those who backslide but are in covenant with Him?

Read Hosea 1:2 and Hosea 2:19-20. There are five covenant qualities in Hosea's stand in verses 19-20 that result in Gomer's finding the Lord. List them.

Read Eph 5:25-33 and Rev 19:7-9. The marriage covenant is attacked by Satan because it is an earthly representation of the spiritual relationship between Christ and the _____.

My husband and I were not born-again when we married. Did we ever have a covenant?

Scripture is clear that marriage is God's system and a covenant relationship. Marriage is God's first holy institution. According to Malachi 2:14 God is always present as a witness at a marriage whether the participants are believers or not. In verse 15 of the same chapter, scripture tells us that God puts into each marriage a bit of Himself, a "remnant (or breath) of His Spirit."

When a believer marries an unbeliever, according to 2 Cor 6:14 they are unequally yoked. But with repentance comes forgiveness, and we serve a God of mercy who heals and restores. If as a believer you married a non-believer, ask and receive God's forgiveness and be assured He will work on your behalf.

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 covenant.

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,*" applies not only to those that He has chosen as marriage partners for each other but to any couple. 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 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 9:3-20 a covenant was entered into: 1) with deceit and 2) 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 their mate concealed homosexual behavior, that does not give reason to nullify the covenant even though deceit was involved.

With God a covenant is an unchangeable commitment, not a contract that can be broken. It is God that is our source of strength enabling us to keep covenant. Marriage without God is only a covenant between men. 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.**

According to Strong's definition, "sanctify" means to be made holy and morally blameless. **Read 1 Cor 7:14.** How is the unbelieving mate sanctified?

How do this affect the children?

Read Gen 2:24. Is there a qualification limiting this relationship only to believers?

My spouse has remarried. Does scripture tell me that to take him back would be wrong?

The Bible gives several examples of taking back the covenant wife or husband after they have been involved in another relationship or marriage. King David was a covenant keeper and his wife Michal was restored to him despite an interim marriage (See 2 Sam 3:13-16). The Bible gives another example of reconciliation even where there were children born into the interim marriage. We read this in the last two chapters of Ezra. At least 113 non-covenant marriages were ended so that the mates could return to prior marriages where covenants existed.

It is important to remember that the individuals and children resulting from a non-covenant relationship are important and precious in the eyes of the Lord. Hagar and Ishmael were sent out from Abraham because they were not part of his covenant family (See Gen 21:9-21). Yet God's angel was with them and God blessed Ishmael and made him the father of a large nation. Following this example, we need to pray for God's provision and blessing to be on those who were involved in a non-covenant relationship with our mate.

Christians who oppose reconciliation after an interim marriage, usually refer to Deut. 24:1-4. In Deuteronomy, it appears that neither party was a covenant keeper. One forced the divorce and the other remarried.

The Deuteronomy passage is quite well explained in context in the cross reference of Jer 3:1 through Jer 4:4. It is God's heart and plan to stand for the adulterous nations of Israel and Judah, calling and wooing them back to Himself. He is our example of the ultimate Covenant Keeper.

Read Deut 24:1-4.

In this situation both parties acted to end the covenant. Neither party maintained a heart or stand toward reconciliation. We see how God makes this distinction in Jer 3. Even though He quotes from Deut 24:4, it is quite different. **Use Jeremiah, chapter three** in answering the items below:

What does God say to the departed mate in **verses 1, 12, 14, and 22?**

In **verse 15**, how will God facilitate the healing?

Read Jeremiah 3:12b

What quality of God's character is shown when we obey Him?

"I will not cause mine anger to fall upon you: for I am _____ saith the Lord, and I will not keep anger forever."

Read Matthew 5:7

Jesus says we will be _____ if we are merciful.

If we extend mercy to our adulterous mates what will be the result?

The Bible refers to adulterous persons as "aliens" in Proverbs 5 (NAS). My husband is in adultery with another woman. Why shouldn't I refer to this person as an "alien"?

Your question is a good example of having a scripture to back something we are doing or saying, but the intent of our heart may not be right. Remember, God looks upon our hearts and He is more concerned with our motive for doing or saying something than whether or not we are scripturally correct.

When Covenant Keepers first began, we used the term "alien" to describe the man or woman with whom our mates were in adultery. However, the Lord dealt with Marilyn Conrad about using that word when referring to them. He asked her to look at her heart. Was there unforgiveness and bitterness toward that person? If so, it could be heard in our voices and perceived by others.

The term "alien" carries a negative connotation. One covenant keeper found that his child was upset when he overheard him mention the "alien home." To the child, it meant something awful from outer space.

Marilyn recently listened to the testimony of a couple with a healed marriage. In talking about the non-covenant person, they did use the word "alien." They did not condemn or judge and there was no bitterness or unforgiveness in their voices. However, Marilyn wondered about those who listen to their tapes, those who are not healed and still walking in unforgiveness, anger and hatred. Perhaps they would feel justified in using the term "alien" and the intent of their hearts would not be right. Therefore, it is best to avoid such terms. Another reason is that others may misunderstand us and walls go up so it is difficult for them to really hear what we have to say. A final reason for not using the term, "alien" is that cults use such terminology and we certainly want to avoid something of this nature. Bottom line? What would Jesus do and say? Would He use such terminology? Our ministry uses the term "non-covenant" to describe this person.

Read Luke 6:35-36. What should be our attitude and action to those involved in a relationship with our mate?

James 3 cautions us about the power of the tongue. **Read Prov 13:3 and Matt 12:36-37.** How are these cautions related to keeping our marriage covenant in a way that will promote healing and reconciliation?

Our words are a reflection of our heart. According to **Mark 7:15** it is what comes out of us that defiles us. **Read 1 Cor 13:1-7** and write down a list of love in action. Then next to each item on your list, ask God for one way to help you implement that quality of love in your stand.

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My prayer partner says God released her from her stand and she married someone else. How should I respond to her?

When people faint (Gal. 6:9) and release their stand for the healing of their marriage, it is difficult for us to understand. However, we need to forgive them and to walk in love toward them. It is only by God's grace that we are not giving up and therefore, we are not to judge them.

This, however, does not mean that we come into agreement with what they are doing. How we treat the situation will also affect our own stands. They often say that God released them from the stand and brought someone else to them. In such cases we are to pray and love those involved, not criticize, judge or talk about them. The principle of sowing and reaping is in effect. John 13:34-35 says, "*A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.*" Be sure to sow love.

Naturally we are saddened. However, our stand for our marriage is based on God's Word, not on what others do. God does not state in His Word that He is in agreement with divorce or that the healing of the marriage is impossible. He also states that He hates marital separation and divorce; so why would He sanction divorce to bring in another mate? We are to love our mates and be there for them if they want to return. Our attitude should be one of forgiveness and love toward someone who faints. This includes not gossiping about them or running them down.

The healing of ourselves, our spouses, marriages and families is one of the greatest things we will ever see. These healings have such profound value that we cannot afford to consider letting the enemy steal them from us.

The biggest danger we face from those who have given up on keeping covenant is that we judge and as a result fall victim to giving up ourselves (**Matt 7:1-2**). **Read Ps 18:25-26, Luke 6:38 and James 2:13**. Why should we be merciful to those who give up?

Read Isa 40:30-31 and Luke 18:1. How do we renew our strength?

Read 2 Cor 4:16-18. How often do we need to go to the Lord for renewal so we don't lose heart? How do we respond to what we see in the natural?

Read Heb 10:35-39. What does it say we should avoid doing with our confidence?

Read Mal 3:6, Heb 13:8 and James 1:17. According to these verses would God change his mind about having you stand?

If a friend gives up their stand and remarries, we must walk in love. We need to be careful not to use this as justification to find someone else. According to **1 Cor 7:10-11** what option is left if we decide not to reconcile with our mate?

I want to date while standing for my marriage. There's nothing wrong with going out with a friend, is there? After all, I am divorced and God doesn't want me to just sit around.

The healthy thing to do, both spiritually and emotionally, is to spend this time of being apart from your mate getting healed of rejection, unforgiveness, bitterness and letting God heal your broken heart. Use this time to allow God to heal you in all areas: emotionally, spiritually, financially, socially and physically. We need to be strong and healthy people when our mates return. **In most cases, they will return to strength but not to weakness.**

In addition, dating while saying you want your marriage healed is double mindedness. The Word says a double minded man is unstable in all his ways and will receive nothing from the Lord (James 1:5-8). Also, if we date someone else we are opening ourselves for an intimate relationship and deception to develop. The Bible says, "make no provision for the flesh" (Romans 13:14). Because of our hurts and emotional needs we are vulnerable to an involvement with someone else.

When we trust God to heal our marriage and yet develop a relationship with someone else, we are trying to serve both God's system and the world's system. **Read Matt 6:24.** What does this verse say about doing both?

Read James 4:8. What is God's prescription for those who are double-minded?

Read 1 Thess 5:22, 1 Cor 6:18 and 2 Tim 2:22. Write the reference that corresponds to each statement below:

Flee sexual immorality. _____

Avoid the appearance of evil _____

Seek what is from a pure heart. _____

An Old Testament equivalent for avoiding ungodly situations is in **Isa 33:15-16.** Write down the four benefits listed in verse 16.

Furthermore, if we are holding our marriage covenant we must be true to that commitment. Someone has compared our situations to wartime. We are in a battle for our marriages and our mates have been captured and we are fighting the enemy for their release (Eph 6:12). In a physical war, if our mates have been captured, we would remain true to our marriage vows. We would not think of dating because we are lonely or because we miss them. The same is true in the spiritual battles for our mates. A question to ask yourself when discerning whether to participate in any event or friendship is, "If my mate were living at home with me in a healthy marriage, would I do this?" We are to conduct our lives as a faithful mate.

Bottom line? Do you really want your marriage healed? Then let your actions line up with your goal. James 2:26 says, "faith without corresponding actions is dead."

Since my mate and I are in covenant, is it wrong for us to continue to sleep together even when we are divorced?

God's Word tells us that we are to obey the laws of the land and legally you are divorced. The divorce decree doesn't break your covenant, but it does prohibit certain privileges. Having sex is one of those privileges. If a person is deceived in this area, it opens the door for more deception in other areas.

Some would say, "We confess those scriptures about our mates desiring us... so why deny them?" One reason is that there is no commitment involved. Renewal of the marriage vows is a statement of commitment to each other and to the covenant. Some covenant keepers have used sex as a tool in an attempt to keep their mate in the relationship. It is important to understand that the marriage and relationship will only be as strong as the tool(s) that are used. As covenant keepers, we need to use tools that are mighty for the pulling down of strongholds (2 Cor 10:3-5) and restoring through the power of Christ. (See Eph 4:17-24 and Eph 6:10-13)

Sex outside of the provision of marriage is lust. What does **Rom 13:12-14** tell us we should do regarding lust in our life?

According to **1 Cor 6:9-10** and **Gal 5:19-21**, when we do not operate according to God's plan sexually we will not inherit the Kingdom of God. **Read Romans 14:17** and list the three things that will be missing from our life as a result.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Sex is a fleshly tool and so is too weak to build and maintain a lasting relationship. List the powerful tools identified in the references below:

Zech 4:6 _____

1 Cor 2:5 _____

2 Cor 6:7 _____

Eph 6:11 _____

1 Thess 5:8 _____

Jer 23:29 _____

Heb 4:12 _____

If you have been separated for any length of time but not divorced, you need to pray and ask God about continuing the sexual relationship.

One covenant keeper who was separated from her mate continued to sleep with him when he visited. After 2 years of this her pastor & elders visited her with a word from the Lord concerning this area of her life. At first she didn't receive it, but did agree to seek the Lord. God did speak to her and she ended the sexual relationship with her mate. As a result, she experienced healing and a release from bondage that she didn't realize existed. Today her marriage is well on the way to reconciliation as God is bringing healing to both her and her husband.

Friends make comments like, "Put your mate on the altar and go on with your life. Your mate has a free will. God never takes anything away without providing something even better." How should I respond to comments like these?

Many friends act out of compassion when they encourage you to "go on with your life." While the encouragement to find someone else is misguided, there is truth about releasing our mate to God and continuing to strengthen our walk with Him rather than remaining mired in misery.

It was when Abraham stopped trying to fulfill the covenant he had with God and released it by being obedient and placing Isaac on the altar that he began to walk in the blessing and provision of the Lord. (Gen 22)

We need to let go of our mates and put them on the altar so God can work His will and purpose in their lives. In no way does this mean we stop praying, confessing the Word or doing spiritual warfare on their behalf. It simply means we are letting God move while we allow Him to work in our own life. The result will be peace. However, we must not mistake this peace as God releasing us from our stand. We have simply entered into the believer's rest that comes from taking our hands off the situation and releasing it to God.

It is true that God does respect freedom of choice. It is also true that Satan does not. As a result, we should intercede for our mates so that the Lord will bring provision and people across their path that will lead them to choose God's best.

The best response to these comments is one that does not reject what they say, but rather acknowledges with gratitude their care and concern for you. The daily demonstration of God's grace as you walk this out in your life will do more to teach your friends about God's covenant love and His will toward marriage healing than any verses you could use to "prove" your position.

As we trust God to heal our marriage, it is natural for the desire for reconciliation to become a burden. It is not until we relinquish our mates and our situations that God can move on our behalf, which He desires to do. What does **1 Peter 5:7** tell us to do?

According to **Ps 55:22**, what is the result?

Read Matt 7:3-5. When we release our mate to God, we do not judge or condemn. That means we do not try to use scripture or logic to convince them they are wrong and should come home. We also "go on with our life" by focusing on what God wants to remove and change in our life. **Read Luke 6:37-38.** What should be our actions toward our mate?

According to **James 4:11**, we become not a "doer" but a judge if we speak evil about our mate. **Read Rom 2:13 and James 1:22-25.** What results from being a "doer?"

A friend who attends another church told me that Covenant Keepers is practicing witchcraft because we use the Bible to manipulate mates to return. I know that we do pray scriptures, but how should I respond?

The cause of this misconception is that they misunderstand what Covenant Keepers is doing in relation to 1 Cor 7:15. This verse states, *"But if the unbelieving partner [actually] leaves, let him do so; in such [cases the remaining] brother or sister is not morally bound. But God has called us to peace."* (Amplified Bible)

Yes, we do let them go; however, that does not mean that we divorce them or turn our backs on them. In Matthew 18:22-25 Jesus told Peter that he was to forgive his brother up to seventy times seven. He then told of a servant who had been forgiven a huge debt, but refused to forgive a fellow servant a very insignificant debt.

We are told in Colossians 3:13 AMP, *"Be gentle and forbearing with one another and, if one has a difference (a grievance or complaint) against another, readily pardoning each other; even as the Lord has [freely] forgiven you, so must you also [forgive]."*

We have the right and privilege to pray for their salvation and to love them with the love of Christ. Romans 12:18 states that we are to live at peace as much as possible. We are living at peace with them as much as possible when we forgive them and pray for them. When we pray for them, we should pray the Word of God and Godly qualities for them.

We are told in Romans 14:19 to aim for and pursue harmony and mutual building up of one another. We need to earnestly seek God for guidance and wisdom on how to pray for and to interact with our spouses. You pray the Word for your unbelieving or believing mate *"so that He might sanctify her (him), having cleansed her (him) by the washing of the water with the Word."* (Ephesians 5:26) Therefore, by praying the Word and positive prayers, we are lifting up our spouses and desiring only good things for them.

We can get into witchcraft if we pray negative (bad and destructive) things for our mates, such as praying for accidents or death of one's spouse or another person involved with the spouse. **However, Covenant Keepers only stresses and encourages the praying of the Word and positive qualities for our spouses.**

God's Word is powerful and is a vital tool to guide and direct us as we trust the Lord. According to **2 Tim 3:16 & 17** for what type of work does it equip us?

Read Heb 4:12 and Eph 6:17. To what weapon do these verses compare God's word?

God's Word records many prayers. One such prayer is found in **Ps 141**. According to **verse 2** prayer can be like what substance used for atonement?

One reason we pray scripture is to pray in line with God's will. What does **Ps 141:3** caution?

I want my marriage healed, but my situation is overwhelming. I'm raising children alone. I'm not receiving enough finances. Christian friends and family oppose my stand. I have disputes with my mate and physical problems due to excess stress. How can I keep living like this?

Your situation is subject to change because of our hope and faith in Jesus according to 2 Corinthians 4:18. We do not have our faith in our mates or circumstances, but in a redeeming Christ who intercedes before God day and night for us and our requests.

Until the changes in your situation occur, God will give you sufficient grace (strength and ability to do His will) to overcome your weaknesses and to provide for your needs.

Allow God to use the circumstances to develop and strengthen your faith. Faith will grow just as muscles do through exercise. Your spiritual exercise will involve fasting, praying, and the necessary spiritual warfare.

Believe that God loves you, is present with you, and will deliver you (See Ps 41:1-3). Ask God for a prayer partner or a Covenant Keeper group to support you in your stand.

Expect God to be the special Father or parent that your children need (See Isaiah 54:13).

In the midst of disputes, claim Isaiah 54:17 (Amplified Bible). In the depths of your financial need, follow God's plan for your provision by planting seed into God's kingdom for a financial harvest through tithes and offerings.

One of Satan's schemes is to get you weary and scatter your focus. By fragmenting your attention with circumstances and activities, he will try to overload you. Cut back on non-essential involvements and spend time with the Lord. Limit activities to those that will encourage and strengthen your stand. Choose wisely the words you speak about your situation. Stand on God's promises no matter what the circumstances look like, and you will know the final outcome.

Read Eph 6:10-18.

According to **verse 12** our battle is not against our mate or our circumstances. Who are we fighting?

According to **verse 13**. What parts of the armor are necessary to stand?

Truth is to gird our waist. We know God's Word is a source of truth. **According to Phil 4:8**, what must we do with it?

Read Hab 3:19. Where do we get strength for our daily walk?

When we walk in peace, what do we proclaim in the midst of our circumstances? See **Isaiah 52:7 and Romans 10:15**

I want to have my marriage healed, so what should I do about legal proceedings?

It is comforting to know in the midst of legal decisions that we do have an "advocate" before the Father (1 John 2:1). It is also comforting to know that we have wisdom for the asking and the presence of the Comforter (the Holy Spirit) with us (John 14:16-17, 26).

There are two root causes of disputes. In the spirit realm Satan brings attacks (Eph 6:12). Satan loves to bring disputes and is involved in bringing assignments against us. Our mates cannot be a root cause because they are flesh and blood! In the natural, man's selfishness is also a root cause (2 Tim 3:2-4).

If abuse is present, ask God to show any area in your life that would trigger this abuse from your mates. Your attitude and motives are key in determining any legal action or legal response. If you or the children are facing danger from physical or verbal abuse, it may be necessary to obtain a restraining order or to separate for protection. This is a time to heal, to receive direction from God, and to do spiritual warfare.

Many Christians are uncomfortable in working with lawyers. They are unfamiliar with the court system and do not have any idea how to select a lawyer or even know if they need a lawyer.

Don't be pressured to hire an attorney until you have sought the Lord. There is sufficient time to determine if you need an attorney and to find the one that the Lord would have represent you. While it is wonderful to have an attorney who can pray with you, it is more important to have the one God wants to represent you than choosing one solely on the basis that he/she happens to be a Christian.

You are not obligated to follow the advice of your attorney. Remember, they work for you and their duty is to provide legal services that will best obtain your desires and wishes.

It is vital to do spiritual warfare before any court appearances or before any decisions are made. Remember that God is our source and our defender. (Col 2:10 TLB and Heb 13:5-6 AMP)

Read Prov 15:1 and Prov 28:25. List two things that can trigger anger.

According to Prov 17:14 what is the best time to avoid strife.

According to James 3:6 what can defile the whole body?

Don't anticipate problems. Leave your worries with the Lord (See **John 14:27 & 16:33**). What does **Matt 6:34** say about the future?

According to Luke 12:11-12, who will provide us the words that we need?

Do we allow our mates to return home before they are born again? Won't they just leave again?

The condition of our mates when they return home is up to God. Whether they are saved and serving Him or have repented for the pain caused to the family is up to God. Restoration and healing is a progressive process and depends on the individuals. Only God knows the environment that will best facilitate healing. If a mate decides to return home but is not open to getting help, sometimes they do leave again. It's very important to pray and hear from the Lord about the timing.

Read 2 Cor 1:10, 2 Cor 12:9-10, 2 Tim 4:18 and 2 Pet 2:9. What do these verses assure us about God's power to help us through difficult situations?

Read Luke 6:27-30, Rom 12:14, Eph 4:32 and 1 Pet 3:9. How would this apply to a mate who comes home but still needs lots of healing?

In talking with covenant keepers who have had a mate return but leave again, we have found a common theme. We find that the covenant keeper stopped praying, doing spiritual warfare, and walking in love.

If God allows a mate to return home in a broken, unsaved state, God knows you can handle it. He promises in 1 Cor 10:13 that you won't be tempted beyond what you are able. You may not feel you are able, but His grace is sufficient for you.

Loving the mate unconditionally, being supportive, and practicing 1 Cor 13:4-8 are most essential. Romans 12:21 says, "Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." 1 Peter 4:8 (AMP) reads, "Above all things, have intense and unfailing love for one another, for love covers a multitude of sins, forgives and disregards the offenses of others." 1 Peter 3:1 says the godly character of a wife may win her husband without a word. The love of Jesus is what your unsaved mate is hungering after and they will be drawn to Jesus by this kind of love.

When there has been a divorce, many times the commitment to the remarriage is stronger than if there has just been separation. Often pre-marital counseling is required by the minister performing the ceremony and salvation will be taken care of during the counseling.

When there has been a divorce there is more "leverage" because the mate cannot just move back home. There must be communication before a remarriage takes place.

One covenant keeper said her husband was saved five years after he returned home. However, he never asked forgiveness for the pain he had caused her and their children when he left them. Only after attending a Promise Keeper's meeting with the men from his church did he come into an understanding of the need to ask her forgiveness. If we will be patient and continue to walk in love, God will work on our mate's heart and not only save them, but bring them to true repentance.

I've been standing for five years and I feel like I hurt as much today as the day my mate left me. Why do you tell me to examine myself when he has obviously committed the greater wrong?

Continuing hurt most often stems from continuing unforgiveness. This unforgiveness may have developed into deep resentment or a root of bitterness. When we release our bitter root judgment against our mates, our hurts can heal. **When we release any unforgiveness or judgment, we will see that God's Spirit can reach them more easily with conviction of sin in their lives.**

We need to consciously forgive our mates frequently, even every five minutes, until we become quite skilled and prompt to do so. The way to develop an attitude of forgiveness is to study and meditate on scripture verses about forgiveness and gain an awareness of what it cost the Father to forgive us. We should ask the Holy Spirit to minister to us about forgiveness and to teach us each day as we study the Bible on this area. As we foster forgiveness within ourselves, we will be freed from assignments that torment our souls (mind, will and emotions), causing us to hurt.

As we intercede regularly for our mates and any person with whom they might be involved, we will begin to feel the same compassion that our Lord Jesus and Stephen, the first Christian martyr, felt while they were dying at the hands of others. They each prayed asking the Father to forgive the people and not hold this sin against those who killed them.

In addition to walking in love and overcoming evil with love, to stop hurting we need victory in our thoughts. Three things will help us accomplish this. First, we must refuse to let our minds dwell on negative imaginations. Second, we must provide refuge for our minds by communing with Jesus. And third, we need to restrict Satan's activity with the process of binding & loosing. To help us stabilize our minds, we need to find Godly friends who are in agreement with us for God to accomplish His will in bringing reconciliation and healing to our marriage.

An excellent tape set titled "Been There, Done That" can be ordered available through our tape and book catalog.

Read Ps 143:2, Prov 20:9, Eccl 7:20 and 1 John 1:8-9. Is the stander more righteous than the mate who left?

According to James 3:2, would we expect a returning mate to say "all the right things?"

Read Matt 18:21-35. What is God's limit on forgiving our mates? In the parable, why is a stander like the servant who dealt directly with the master? What is the warning in how we treat our fellow servant (our mate).

According to Mark 11:25-26 what will happen if we stop walking in forgiveness toward our mate?

Read Eph 4:32 & Col 3:13. Why should we forgive?
