



BAPTISM

ALL YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT

HOLY SACRAMENTS

COMMUNION

MARRIAGE

**PREPARATION
for
Holy Communion
Water Baptism
Pre-Marital Counseling**

www.gospeladdictsglobal.wordpress.com



Holy Sacraments

Publication of
Gospel Addicts Global Church

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Holy Sacraments

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WATER BAPTISM

CLASS 1

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Is Water Baptism Important? Well, let me answer it like this: Whatever Jesus has done Himself shows us that it is important – *“Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him”* [Matthew 3:13]. We understand through the Bible that John [also called John the baptist] was called by God to baptize people in advance of the arrival of Jesus Christ. We see this in Matthew 3:11 – *“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear; He shall baptize you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire.”* The latter portion of this verse refers to when you give your life to the Lord [Salvation Prayer]. By Jesus coming unto John the baptist at the Jordan River to be baptized shows us it is important; and it bares a significant reality.

What Is The Significance of Baptism?

Jesus himself was baptised. He was not a sinner, yet he humbled himself to identify with us and give us an example to follow. Many churches teaches its members that water baptism is an act of obedience according to Matthew 28:19-20; *“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”* It is far more than that; it is literally an act of faith in Jesus Christ, the Lord and Savior of our souls.

Why Do a Public Declaration?

Baptism declares openly in public that you are a follower of Jesus Christ. It is a public confession of your faith in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ. It is the next step after salvation through repentance and faith; and is an important foundation for the Christian life. We see this on what Jesus said: *“Go into the world. Go everywhere and announce the Message of God’s good news to one and all. Whoever believes and is baptized is saved; whoever refuses to believe is damned.”* [Mark 16:16 / MSG].

We can note something of importance in the above verse: Water baptism doesn't give us a pass into Heaven, for the scripture says: '*...Whoever believes and is baptized is saved; whoever refuses to believe is damned.*' It doesn't say, whoever refuses to believe and be baptized is damned. However, for the true believer, there is a great importance in being baptized.

What Is The Meaning of Baptism?

First, it is a direct act of faith; a declaration showing that you are not ashamed of Jesus Christ. You openly and publicly profess your new status in life as a born again Christian. But there is a deeper significance spiritually in this. Baptism is a symbol of Christ's burial and resurrection. Our entrance into the water during baptism identifies us with Christ's death on the cross, His burial in the tomb, and His resurrection from the dead.

Why Should You Be Baptised?

A Move from Death to Life:

"Going under the water was a burial of your old life; coming up out of it was a resurrection, God raising you from the dead as He did Christ. When you were stuck in your old sin-dead life, you were incapable of responding to God. God brought you alive—right along with Christ! Think of it! All sins forgiven, the slate wiped clean, that old arrest warrant canceled and nailed to Christ's cross"

[Colossians 2:12-14 / MSG].

A Brand New Life:

It is a symbol of your new life as a Christian. We bury the '**old life**' and we rise to walk in a '**new life**'. 2 Corinthians 5:17 gives us a perfect illustration of this; saying: "*Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*" Baptism is like a wedding ring, it is the outward symbol of the commitment you made in your heart, a commitment that has to be followed through and lived out on a daily basis.

A Blessed Life:

In baptism, the believer has the triune name of the triune God placed upon them, '**Father**', '**Son**' & '**Holy Spirit**'. The Gospels tell us to baptise believers "...into the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit" [Matthew 28:19]. Baptism confirms our position '**in Christ**' and affirms the blessings of the Father on us as his children.

How Are We to be Baptised?

As per the example of Jesus – by being immersed in water. The word "**baptize**" comes from the Greek word "**baptizo**" which means "to be fully immersed or dipped under water". Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion under water. The book of Acts shows us that this was the norm for every believer. "...then both Philip and the eunuch went down into the water and Philip baptized him...." [Acts 8:38-39].

Who Should be Baptised?

Every person who has made the decision to believe in Christ. When Paul writes to the believers in Rome, he assumes that all of them have been baptized (Romans 6). The one requirement for baptism is belief in Christ! "*Those who accepted his message were baptised....*" [Acts 2:41]. "*But when they believed Philip as he preached the good news of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptised, both men and women.*" [Acts 8:12]. We believe in baptising children when they are old enough to understand what it means and make a personal declaration of belief. (Usually, the age of 12 years old is sometimes a good benchmark).

Who Will Baptize You?

Any appointed senior leader will have the authority to baptize you. These leaders have undergone the necessary training and also understand both the physical and spiritual significance of baptism; and have witnessed by illustration the process of baptism

accordingly to the Bible; equipping them as able bodies to perform water baptism.

When Do We Do Water Baptism?

We aim to have special water baptism services every year quarter [announcements will be made in church, informing all members who wants to be baptized the date and time of the service]. Special water baptisms services might be set prior to the usual dates, depending on the number of participants requiring baptism.

Below is more verses relating to baptism:

Matthew 3:6; 11; 13; 14; 16 / Mark 1:4; 5; 8; 9 / Mark 16:16 / Luke 3:7; 12; 16; 21 / Luke 7:29 / John 1:25; 26; 33 / John 3:22; 3:23; 26 / Acts 2:38; 41 / Acts 8:12; 13; 16; 36; 38 / Acts 10:47; 48 / Acts 16:15; 33 / Acts 18:8 / Acts 19:3; 4; 5 / Romans 6:3 / Galatians 3:27



WATER BAPTISM

CLASS 2

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In class 1 we looked at: **'Is Water Baptism Important?'** In this **2nd** class we will look a bit deeper at the history and background differences of denominational organisations.

- Most baptism views are rich with church history which varies from, the sprinkling of water, pouring over of water, and immersion of water.
- The New Testament and the Early Church gives us an accurate witness on baptism
- New Converts and their Children [households] are mentioned in the New Testament, who were baptised

Acts 2:38-39; Peter replied, *“Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*

It is important to know here; at this time, it was only the 120 who were in the upper room on the day of Pentecost who had received the Holy Spirit at this time; and so it was a new thing which was happening; even though there was the baptism of John and also of Jesus. As Peter makes mention in the verse above; *‘...And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit...’* The people that he was preaching to at this time were not believers, but that day they believed; hence Peter called for baptism immediately. It is also important to notice the difference in eras. Almost 2'000 years ago ministry was somewhat different from now. The more modern world of today and our now era of society, it might not be as easy to just preach salvation and baptise those who believe the same time. However, in the more rural areas and some third-world countries, it might be easier to baptise people as they come into Christ. Also important to notice is that water baptism doesn't guarantee eternal life, but it is receiving the Holy Spirit according to Romans 10:9 that does. Water Baptism carries a significant symbolical importance of witness as a believer.

Baptism in the Trinity

“I baptize you in the Name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.”

According to some churches; baptism can be done in either one of the following ways:

- Sprinkling of water***
- Pouring of water***

These first two are sometimes done and justified during times of drought or even in places situated in desert lands [where water is rare]; and in some cases, this is done according to individual church histories.

- Immersion of water***

According to biblical truth, we believe that the full immersion into water is the right way in doing water baptism according to what the Bible teaches us.

Baptism Signifies and Seals

- a. Baptism means ***participation*** in Christ's death and resurrection. [Romans 6:3–11]
- b. Baptism involves ***conversion, pardoning, and cleansing*** from sin. [Romans 5:12; 18]
- c. Baptism signifies ***anointing by*** and ***life with*** the Spirit into Salvation. [Romans 5:9–10]
- d. Baptism is a symbol of ***incorporation into*** the body of Christ. ***Adoption*** as sons and daughters of God. [Galatians 4:4-5]
- e. Baptism is a sign of the ***covenant*** and ***kingdom*** of God. [Mark 10:14]

Public Ceremony [History of Baptism]

The history of baptism in the Christian church exhibits a rich array of biblical images, a variety of liturgical forms and practices, and some consistently evident features or elements that characterize this Christian sacrament.

The Service of Baptism

- a. The proclamation of biblical text(s) referring to baptism.
- b. An invocation of the Holy Spirit.
- c. A renunciation of evil and profession of faith in Christ.
- d. The use of water (immersion / dipping into water).
- e. A statement about new identity in Christ and about church membership

The Common Agreements of True Christians on Baptism

- All true Christians believe the Bible as the Word of God.
- All true Christians believe in God the Father as Creator of the universe and Father of his people.
- All true Christians believe in Jesus as the Son of God and the Savior of all who trust in Him.
- All true Christians believe in the Holy Spirit as the third Person of the Trinity, who connects us with Christ, produces faith, and gives eternal life.
- All true Christians believe that each person added to the Lord's church should be baptized in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- All true Christians see baptism as a sign of sins being washed away and of being united with Christ's death and resurrection.
- All true Christians see baptism as a seal of God's grace for sinners, not of our own goodness.
- All true Christians see baptism as a mark by which God claims a person and requires faith, love, and obedience.
- All true Christians believe that an unbaptized person who has grown up outside a Christian setting, without faith in Christ, must turn to Jesus in repentance and personal faith before being baptized.

The Common Disagreements of True Christians on Baptism

- Not all Christians agree on whether babies born to believing parents should be baptized, but Christians do agree that it's a huge privilege and responsibility when a child is born into a

Christian family. Even many who don't support infant baptism still have ceremonies of dedication in which they celebrate God's goodness and promise to lead their little one in God's ways.

- Not all Christians agree on whether a personal, public commitment to Christ is necessary before a child from a Christian family is baptized, but Christians do agree that such a personal, public commitment is necessary at some point. Even those who support infant baptism still insist that those who are baptized as babies must later respond with a public profession of personal faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, and must live for him.

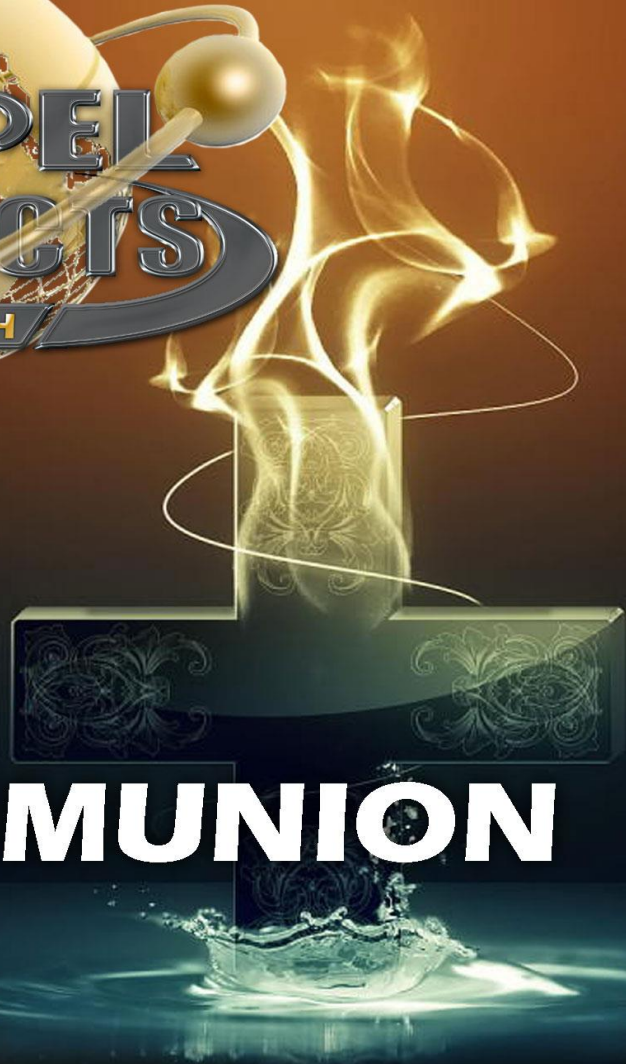
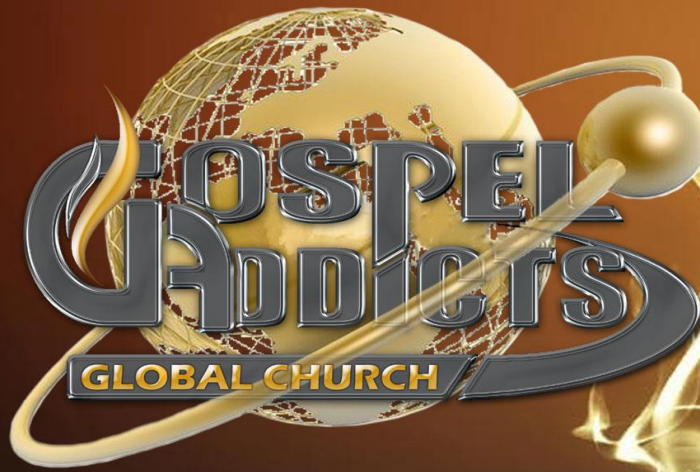
Certain excerpts taken from Bishop Henry Reyenga, CLI

At Gospel Addicts Global Church, we give the believer the option to baptize or dedicate their babies / small children. However, it is recommended for those who choose to dedicate babies and small children rather than baptizing them, should at a later stage get their children baptized when they feel the child/children is of understanding.



You will receive a certificate once you have been baptized

We pray that the above helps shed some light on your decision to follow in the footsteps of Jesus.



HOLY COMMUNION



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Matthew 26:26-28; *“While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.”*”

The Holy Communion –or- The Lord's Supper/Table as a sacrament was commanded and thus instituted by Christ himself, as Paul reports in 1 Corinthians 11:23-25; *“For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.’*”

In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.’”

In Christian History; we see a theme formed around the Lord’s Supper:

- The Lord's Supper is a thanksgiving to God
The Christian ceremony commemorating the Last Supper, in which bread and wine are consecrated and consumed.
- The Lord's Supper is a memorial of Christ
Recollection, in particular, the remembering of things or a person and the meaning of its significance.
- The Lord's Supper is a participation in the body and the blood of Christ. *As Jesus instructed us through His illustration that the wine is symbolic to His blood, and the bread symbolic to His flesh / body [which was spilled and broken for our sake]*
- The Lord's Supper signifies the work of the Spirit.
In the remission of sin and the cleansing of sin

- The Lord's Supper symbolizes the unity of the church in all times and places.

Corporately of at home, we participate in this sacrament as one body, the church

- The Lord's Supper seals the present and coming kingdom of God.

*“I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father’s kingdom.”
[Matthew 26:29].*

The Lord's Supper includes four actions:

1. taking bread and wine [grape juice]
2. giving thanks over these items
3. breaking the bread/pouring the wine [grape juice]
4. sharing among God's people

We do this in memorial of Jesus Christ [*1 Corinthians 11:23-25 / remembrance*]

What does memorial mean?

The memorial of Christ refers to His entire life and ministry, His death, resurrection, ascension, the coming and abiding of the Holy Spirit, and Jesus’ return.

Philippians 2:8-11; *“And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!*

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Leading the Lord’s Supper

The Lord’s Supper –or- Holy Communion has been commanded by

Jesus Christ Himself, to be done in remembrance of Him as often as possible. In the norm of service, an ordained leader should lead in this service in church and church environment meetings; however, this does not restrict Christians in the taking or participation of the Holy Communion. At home or during family altar, the head of the household can lead during Holy Communion Sacraments, as the head of a household is set as the priest of that household.

However; we will be dealing here with the corporate church environment [which can also serve as an example of home communions].

The Ordained Leader's Role:

1 Corinthians 11:27; *“Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.”* In an unworthy manner here refers to a number of things:

Unforgiveness

In the case of holding a grudge or not forgiving another person's trespasses

Unrepentance

Not repenting of your own sins

Unsaved Person

Someone who has not given and surrendered their life to Christ Jesus

Merely a Formality

Just doing it for the sake of others, following examples of others without the understanding of why they do what they do.

Serious Side of Communion

1 Corinthians 11:28-29; *“A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself.”*

Below is an example of hosting Communion Services:

- Prayer and Worship Song
- 5 to 10 Minutes Biblical Encouragement [*some might have a short sermon*]
- Altar Call [*opportunity for any unbeliever in your midst to surrender their life to Christ through the salvation prayer*]
- A Time of Self-Examination [*personal prayer*]
- Passing Out and Partaking of Elements [*the wine/grape juice & bread*]
- Closing Prayer or Meditative Worship Song
- Taking up of offering

During the time of partaking in the elements; the ordained leader should stress the following [these are examples]: Take, drink, remember, and believe that the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ was given for the complete forgiveness of all our sins.

or

Take, eat! Remember and believe that the body of Christ is the bread of heaven for us. Take, drink! Remember and believe that the blood of Christ is the cup of our salvation.

or

The body of Christ, given for you. The blood of Christ, shed for you.

or

“Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink” (John 6:54-55).

It is of vital importance, as it is stressed to us through scripture, that partaking in the Lord’s Supper –or- Holy Communion is meant for the born again Christian. While inviting members to join and partake in this sacrament, it is of high importance to also make an altar call for those who might be in your midst who are not born again yet.

You don’t want anyone to partake of the Holy Communion in an

unworthy manner as you are responsible for this sacred sacrament.

Below is a Salvation Prayer you can use during such an altar call, ensuring that those who will participate with you in the Holy Communion has sincerely surrendered their life to the Lord; and that they are indeed born again:

Salvation Prayer:

“O Lord God, I believe with all my heart in Jesus Christ, Son of the living God. I believe He died for me and God raised Him from the dead. I believe He’s alive today. I confess with my mouth that Jesus Christ is the Lord of my life from this day. Through Him and in His Name, I have eternal life; I’m born again. Thank you Lord, for saving my soul! I’m now a child of God.

Hallelujah!”

Since many congregants may benefit from learning more about the Lord’s Supper, people may find it helpful if the minister uses various brief additional words of invitation that accent different aspects of the meaning of the sacrament. The following are suggestions.

1. We come to the table not just as individuals but as a community. By sharing the bread and the cup, Christ makes us one with him and with each other.
2. Just as we are nourished by the food we eat, Christ nourishes us spiritually at this table with the bread of heaven and the cup of salvation.
3. This is the joyful feast of the Lord, for the elements we receive symbolize not just the flesh and blood of the crucified Lord but the life-giving flesh and blood of the risen and ascended Lord.
4. At the Lord’s Supper we look back, remembering the whole story of our salvation; we look around, seeing that we are together members of the body of Christ; we look forward to the great

banquet in God's coming kingdom; and we look up to our ascended Lord, who promises to feed us with his body and blood by the Holy Spirit.

5. Congregation of Jesus Christ, the Lord has prepared his table for all who love him and trust in him alone for their salvation. All who are truly repented for their sins, who sincerely believe in the Lord Jesus as their Savior, and who desire to live in obedience to him as Lord, are now invited to come with gladness to the table of the Lord.

Certain excerpts taken from Bishop Henry Reyenga, CLI

The Holy Communion / Lord's Table/Super can be done every week, or once a month. Depending on church programs and size of congregation, some churches holds these services only once a month due to the cost involve. Our Lord Jesus Christ commanded us to do so often, therefore it is important as a church to collect an offering during communion services. The offerings collected during such services should be sufficient to host the next communion service; and this will also allow the church to host the sacrament more often.



PRE-MARITAL COUNSELING



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Introduction:

Marriage is a sacred Christian ceremony; and is to be taken seriously by both parties. It is also vital that couples receive pre-marriage counseling before getting married, where both parties receive Biblical guidance on its importance. In this handbook you will receive just that; and as we believe that every born again Christian is a 'Called Christian Leader', we will be dealing with some fundamental truths of the impact that marriage can have on your walk as a Christian.

Here are some of the topics we will be looking at in these segments:

Content:

- Are you ready to settle down?
- Feedback on questionnaire
- Sweet Sacrifice
- Dealing with Your Past
- Combined Video
- Identifying yourself and your spouse
[to be] in Christ
- Short term and Long term plans
- Marriage and Ministry
- Assessment
- Wedding Service and Vows
- Blessing of rings
- Love in the marriage

[Segment 1](#)

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Segment 1

Are You Ready To Settle Down?

Marriage is singled out to be the most important decision a person can make; that is after receiving Christ Jesus as your Lord and Savior.



- Marriage is to unite a couple
- It's a relationship between
 - o You and your spouse
 - o You and God
 - o Your spouse and God
 - o You with your spouse and God

The Word of God must remain at the centre of this love triangle; and should be used to build your personal

relationships with God, Your personal relationship with your spouse, and also your relationships with other people as individuals and as a couple in Christ.

Your marriage will become a testimony of love; and also a witness of love to others. Marriage is to be taken very seriously! Planning your life together should be done prayerfully, patiently, and honestly. In the day and age we live in, it is somewhat common even for Christians to have had relationships before marriage, even sexual relationships [in some cases, even being married before]. Although this is not right in the eyes of God, we all come from diverse backgrounds, upbringings, and have experienced life at different levels. Not all our choices were right, but now, more than ever, there is time to make your path straight. You don't want to bring baggage into your new covenant from previous relationship; so at a later stage we will be dealing with some of these issues.

There are several things that must be discussed in pre-marital counseling sessions; which include:

- o Spiritual belief
- o Christian values
- o Commitment and expectations
- o How to handle conflict and solving problems
- o Priorities on career, finances, future, children, friends, hobbies, etc...
- o A Christian wedding been sacred

For a better understanding on each person and to effectively counsel you both, you are asked to fill out the questionnaire at the back of this manual. This will be used throughout the course of counseling sessions; and will not be shown to your partner. We ask you to be honest in your answers [sensitive issues will be dealt with in confidentiality]. Please find the Pre-Marital Counsel

Questionnaire attached at the back of this manual to be filled out.

Segment 2

Feedback on Questionnaire

Counselor's feedback on questionnaire: Each man and woman will be taken individually and separately to discuss feedback on the questionnaire you both have filled out. At the end of this session we might have a combined session to discuss any issues further, if needed.

Although the following article was ministered at a women's conference, it gives profound teachings and insights of the roles and effects ministry can have on marriages and marriages on ministry. We urge you therefore to study the contents of this message, which at some point in your marriage, will benefit your marriage as well as your ministry. We believe both men and women can learn plenty from this segment...

Sweet Sacrifices: The Challenges of a Woman in Ministry

[Editor's Note: This essay was a message originally delivered September 30, 2008, at an event sponsored by the Pendergraph Women's Ministry of The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary.]

It is not easy to be a woman in ministry today, but when has it been? From Old Testament times when Abram communicated to Sarai God's command to leave their home and family, to the New Testament efforts of Timothy's grandmother and mother to train up in the Holy Scriptures this young pastor in the making, to whatever God has uniquely designed and called you to do in his kingdom advancement program, women have wondered out loud, "This is hard—much harder than I figured on. I wonder if I have what it takes."

Some of you may be married to seminary students. Some of you may be wives of men in ministry. Or you may be a student yourself. But we all have one thing in common—our femininity. I want to encourage you in your unique role as a woman. God made you a woman, and he delights in the varied and mysterious ways that your femininity reveals the image of God displayed for the world to see.

Think with me of all that God has done to bring you to this very moment in your life. God, in eternity past, chose you to be an

active soldier in his mighty rescue operation for this needy world.

The Bible says that long ago, before the very foundation of the world, God thought you up and chose you for his very own (**Eph 1:4**). Long ago, before you were even born, God formed and numbered the days of your life (**Ps 139:16**). Long ago God planned the path for your very own personal race in life (**Heb 12:1**). Long ago God decided and prepared good works that you would walk in (**Eph.2:10**).

And then He stepped into time and made you in secret, knitting you together in your mother's womb (**Ps 139:13,15**) and brought you forth into his world and introduced himself to you with irresistible beauty and set you on this pilgrimage toward heaven, which we know as life. **Learn to see the big picture of God's eternal purposes.** Your calling as a woman deeply involved in ministry is a vital part of God's eternal plan.

Sacrifices: I want to encourage you to ponder the sacrifices God is asking of you as a woman in ministry.

Let's look at three particular challenges:

- your reputation,
- your romance, and
- your redemption.

3. Risking your Reputation

The first challenge of a woman in ministry is to choose to risk her reputation. Leaders are talked about. By virtue of his position, your husband will be the subject of many conversations. And some of that talk will find its way back to you. As women in ministry and as daughters of the King, we need to know how to deal with the inevitable rumors, criticism, and gossip that permeate even the Christian world today.

We all know that truth stabilizes relationships. That's why God forbids every kind of falsehood (**Exod 20:16; Lev 19:11**). He wants us to make truth, dignity, and honor the foundation of all our relationships. But we find this so hard—we are all liars by nature and live in a culture of lies. Paul had to tell the Colossians, “Do not lie to one another, seeing you have put off the old self “ (**Col 3:9**).

We all could tell stories of rumors, lies, half-truths, or even times when the truth was just withheld either about us or by us. And these lies ultimately poison relationships in our lives.

Your Own Tongue

Let's consider our own tongues, and then look at how to respond when others use their tongues against us. **James 3** speaks of the tongue being such a small part of our body, yet revealing how well we control the rest. “*If a man does not stumble in what he says . . . He is able to bridle his whole body . . . but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison*” (**Jas 3:2, 8**). We need God's help here as leaders in his work. **Francis**

Schaeffer's wife, Edith, put it this way, “*If a report is unnecessary and unkind, and might just be a little exaggerated in the retelling of it the next time, we'd better be silent about it. It is my tongue and your tongue that is likened to a bucking horse that is running away with its rider. It is my tongue and yours that is likened to the ship tossing on the waves with the rudder not properly in the hands of the expert*” (Edith Schaeffer, *Lifelines* [Wheaton: Crossway, 1982], 189).

A **rumor**, any kind of **gossip**, indeed, any word we ever speak—once it is out of our mouths—**is it impossible to control or retrieve**.

Do you know the story of a young monk who went to his superior because he had sinned in how he spoke about someone? The

young man was told to go and put feathers on the doorsteps of all those he spoken to about this matter. When he finished he came back to ask this superior what he should do now. To the young man's surprise, his superior instructed him go and retrieve every feather. In dismay, the young monk exclaimed, "I can't! By now those feathers have spread all over town." His superior nodded and said, "So also your words are now impossible to retrieve."

As leaders we must pray as David prayed in **Psalm 141:3**: "*Set a guard over my mouth: keep watch over the door of my lips!*" We must do all we can to see that honesty, kindness, and love **govern the speech** in our spheres of influence—in our cars, bedrooms, breakfast tables, phone conversations, and emails. **Proverbs 16:24** says, "*Gracious words are sweetness to the soul and health to the body.*" Does your words bring gracious healing and health to those who hear them?

Someone Else's Tongue

You may be thinking, "Jani, I can deal with my own tongue. It's the rumors and criticism that others spread about me and my loved ones that hurt so deeply." **According to Prov 18:21, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue."**

In the first place, live so that when someone says something false about you, others will have no reason to believe it. "Let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven" (**Matt 5:16**) But even when you and your husband are living as best as you can in faithful integrity, others may find ways to slander you. In one of our pastorates, during a very difficult time, a staff member resigned of his own accord, but came back a few months later and asked Ray to forgive him because he had spread lies about him in the church and community. Of course, Ray did forgive him, but the damage was already done, and the young man made no effort to retrieve the slander he had sent out into our city. The winds of gossip had

blown the feathers of his slander all over and they were irretrievable.

What do you do when others slander you or those you love?

Go to others who have endured grievous criticism and evil slander. Saints like Susannah Wesley, Sarah Edwards, Amy Carmichael, and Charles Simeon are a few who have helped me. Instead of **wasting emotional energy defending** or protecting ourselves, we must turn to God. The Bible says that love covers over an offense (**Prov 17:9**). And everyone in ministry will, at sometime, be called to love those who have offended them.

As God fulfills his promise of grace in us, we will feel so humbled in his saving love for us that we won't allow slander and criticism to derail us emotionally or spiritually.

Humility—true humility—defuses rumors. To be truly humble means that I am shocked at nothing that someone might say about me, because if they knew me better, they would have even more to talk about.

Christ, that his love and care for us will overrule our need for acceptance and honor this side of heaven. We will be able to withstand evil reports, or relentless scrutiny, or unfair criticism because our souls will learn to find rest in God alone (**Psa 62:1**). We will be able to embrace and fulfill His call to us in **I Pet 3:9**: *“Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.”*

And what is God's blessing? When God's purposes are all fulfilled and all wrongs finally righted, God will bare a true witness about his servants. When friends or students or family or church members slander, or even abandon you, you remain in good company.

Think of **Jeremiah, Paul**, and other **heroic people**. Remember that **God will have the last word about you**—about your husband -

and he will bare a true witness about your godly heart and your true worth.

So we must learn to control our tongues and to bare up under false accusations. **“When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; when slandered, we entreat” (I Cor 4:12-13)**. Jesus did. In fact, it was false witnesses whose testimony sentenced him to death (**Matt 26:57-62**). Even during his agony on the cross, he did not lash out. The Bible says that Jesus entrusted himself to him who judges rightly (**I Pet 2:23**). You can, too.

2. Refining your Romance

Some of you married never dreamt that your husbands would end up in the ministry. Others knew you were headed into ministry, but were unaware of the sweet sacrifices that you would need to make.

You are one of the main vehicles that God uses to show your husband His favor. **Proverbs 18:22** says, *“He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor from the Lord.”* It’s as if God was thinking, “How can I help this man as I call him to serve Me? I know. I’ll make _____, introduce them, and ignite their hearts to yearn to be one.

Then I’ll use her as my main channel to show him my favor.” You have the unique privilege of knowing intimately a man seeking hard to gain knowledge of God and his Word, and then striving day after day, year after year to communicate all that God gives him to the people God brings into his life. Some would *not* think this is such a great privilege. I heard of one of the minister’s wife who said, “Clergy ought to be celibate because no decent rightminded man ought to have the effrontery to ask any woman to take on such a lousy job. It is thoroughly unchristian!”

It may be hard—but it is not lousy. It may be exhausting—but it is not indecent. It may even be painful-but it is not unchristian. Your

marriage is God's gift to you. And it is a good and perfect gift. Your man and your ministry is part of Almighty God's eternal plan to redeem this place we call earth.

Your *most important ministry* in all of life is to your husband.

God gave you to him as a *helper*. This is not a weak word. It is used of the Holy Spirit.

A **helper gives aid** from a position of

- strength or
- wisdom or
- gifts or
- experience.

You get to live up close with one of the leaders in God's kingdom advancing work. You have the honor of

- comforting him,
- counseling him, helping him in his weaknesses, and
- seeing him live out at home what he preaches up front.

You get to attend to the affairs of the kingdom with him-

- teaching,
 - giving,
 - showing hospitality,
 - being there in the greatest joys and deepest sorrows of life
-as you help him shepherd the sheep God has given him. What a blessed privilege!

Ministry marriages bear unique strains. Here are two ways you can be a helper to your husband.

3. *Respect Your Husband's Work* >>>

3. Respect Your Husband's Work

Show him *appreciation and loyalty*. Men in ministry are always under fire. Their sacred calling exposes them to unique temptations from which other men are exempt. For this reason, your husband needs to know you think he is really wonderful.

Speak well of him to friends and family. Praise him in front of your kids. **H. G. Hendricks** tells how his wife was instrumental in setting a positive tone in their home when ministry demands were very heavy. On the way to the airport to drop her husband off for yet another weekend of ministry, Mrs. Hendricks would say, "Isn't it great we get to share Daddy?"

Is your husband late for dinner again while he is caring for the needs of his flock? Your kids can see you have one of two responses. "Poor Daddy. He must be hungry and tired, but someone needs Jesus, and Daddy gets to bring Jesus to them. Let's pray for him right now." Or—"Poor us! We have to eat dinner without Daddy again. Why can't he make it home on time?" Be loyal to your man. Don't broadcast your frustrations and disappointments. Let him feel safe with you.

b. Accept him.

Men interpret advice as lack of approval. And he'll get plenty of advice from others—coworkers, congregants, family. He needs to know you are on his side—that he's not alone.

Let others try to improve him. In your eyes he needs to be OK. He is most likely all too aware of his own shortcomings, anyway. I am a fixer by nature. And besides that, people have tried to get to Ray through me, especially women. "Please tell Ray how much I . . ." And somehow, I would try— whether it was what side of his jacket he should put his name tag on, or how to pronounce a missionary's name, I tried to correct him. Finally, he came to me, took me in his arms, and said, "I need to know there is one person

in this world who isn't trying to change me—who really likes me. Would you be willing to be that person for me?" Boy was !! I didn't want anyone else stepping up to apply for that position!

c. Teach Him How to Love You Emotionally

We all face struggles this side of heaven. And when we're going through a hard time, our tendency is to withdraw. How often has this conversation gone on in your house?:

"IS SOMETHING BOTHERING YOU?"

"NO!"

"REALLY?"

"YES, I'M *JUST FINE!*"

The reason we tend to withdraw *is not because* we don't want comfort. We just don't want the kind of comfort we've been offered in the past. Generally, men comfort with words. If they can reason out *why* something happened, then it's OK. If he can solve it logically, it won't happen again.

Women often need gestures—hugs, flowers, help with the kids. You need to teach your husband how to comfort you. Think of the old romantic movies—she always has the right thing to say, he always knows what to do. Well, she has a script—and he has a director, telling him how to hold her. Be your husband's director!

Have you ever been angry at your husband and couldn't figure out how to tell him but just kept getting more and more angry as it became more apparent that he couldn't see what was bothering you? You must take the time and effort to communicate with your husband. He is not a mind reader!

If you don't, you'll be stuck with at least two negatives:

(1) He will probably never learn, and then you'll turn to other sources for comfort—your mom, friends, food, escapist novels,

films, etc.

(2) Your sons will never see up close how a man can comfort his wife, and your daughters will never learn how to communicate their needs in palatable ways to the man of their dreams.

Help your man learn to meet your emotional needs—for your own benefit and for that of the next generation.

d. Physically

I believe your husband's strongest safeguard against adultery is a fun and satisfying relationship with his wife. We as Christian leaders should have the happiest, most romantic and deeply satisfying marriages in all of society.

God's Word is unashamedly pro-romance. Think of all the love stories in it: Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, Ruth and Boaz, and others. Think of the biblical passages that are erotic (e.g., Song of Solomon, Prov 5:15-19). He made us male and female as part of his "very good" creation.

God celebrates love and sex in marriage. He values our sexuality and calls for us to enjoy this beautiful gift within the security of marital commitment. We must love our mates with all we have. Happily married women know that having a husband does not make a marriage any more than having a piano makes a musician! It is not just having a husband, but loving him that makes you live in unity with him. What will your husband become because he married *you*? Are you helping him to be a one-woman man? There are many forces out there that would want to divide you and your husband. A strong, romantic, happy marriage is a sure defense against most of the evil forces that want to see your man defeated (**1 Cor 7:5**).

The Bible talks much about sexual intimacy. God wants you to refine your romance. You are the only legal and God-blessed

source of sexual fulfillment that your husband will ever have, if he follows the Lord carefully. Give him the joy and pleasure that he can only experience within the security of a godly marriage.

Proverbs 5 tells your husband to be intoxicated or captivated by your love. Are you doing all you can to be as captivating as possible?

If the physical side of your marriage doesn't become all it can be, your marriage can still survive. Sex isn't everything. But your marriage will have a soft spot, a vulnerable side where Satan can attack. To have a great marriage will cost you something—anything of value is valuable because it costs something! Cultivate a deep intimacy with your husband that binds his heart to yours. This will take time, creativity, and initiative. But I promise you, it will be worth it!

Think of the blessings of marriage. You have been chosen by someone, and you have had the chance to choose someone for yourself. You enter into a relationship of trust and comfort and joy. You belong somewhere and with someone. You live out your own shared history. Marriage makes two people what they could never be alone. Refine your romance. It will be worth every effort.

Yet in the midst of these blessings we will face real disappointments: financial restraints, personal and even slanderous attacks, spiritual malaise, conflicts with extended family, less than thrilling times of intimacy, his inability to anticipate or even understand your needs.

Your marriage has to be an unconditional commitment to an imperfect person. That leads me into my final point—the third challenge for women in ministry.

3. Relishing your Redemption

All behavior is rooted in what we believe. Either I believe that *Jesus*

is enough, or I believe that *Jesus is not enough* and that I must somehow fill the void.

There is more to being a Christian than asking Jesus into my heart. Believe in His goodness and watch-care and love for me will have its full effect when I feel loved and cared for.

For instance, if I say I believe that God cares about me and is sovereign over my whole life in mercy and love, yet I am held captive by various fears, I don't really believe that God is good! My belief in his sovereign control is only an intellectual concept, not a heart-felt belief. When I stop trusting God, I start forging my own way, and then I become very dangerous. After all, the **devils believe in God (Jas 2:19)**. But they don't *love* God—and that's the difference. Our hearts need to be thrilled with God's redeeming love. It is this love that redeems our lives from the pit.

So when we're stung, or set back, or even disabled, because of gossip and rumor, we come to the God who redeems all of our lives—not just at the point of conversion—but all along the way, as we stumble toward heaven in our weaknesses. And we find in Jesus a sympathetic high priest who was brutally tortured and murdered because men brought false reports about him to the religious officials. At the cross Jesus absorbed those lies and every lie or rumor concerning you—and in turn he was gentle and meek and gave back love as he entrusted himself to His Father. And he says, "Follow me—take up your cross and entrust yourself to my Father. It's going to be all right. You serve the God who remembers (**Heb 6:10**). Your labor for Him is never in vain (**1 Cor 15:58**)."

And when your heart is tempted to be soured with the inevitable disappointments of living as one flesh with another human being, look ahead to your heavenly Husband, the lover of your soul, who loves you completely even as you are. He is your redeemer—he

paid the greatest bride-price imaginable to capture your heart and bring you to himself.

Your femininity is most beautiful, most nurturing, graceful, other-centered, when you know you are loved. Let God make you, through His tender and personal love, the beautiful woman He intends you to be.

***The most helpful way we can support and help the men God brings into our lives—our husbands, sons, grandsons, pastors, teachers, and employers—is to find our happy fulfillment in Christ. If God's redeeming love is truly filling your heart, then God himself will be the ultimate human experience, not a perfect ministry, reputation, or marriage.

Psalm 62:1 says, "My soul finds rest in God alone."

How does God's redeeming love fill our hearts in such a way that we can live outside our own needs, dying to self, and giving ourselves totally to His eternal purposes? One way—I believe the most important way—is to spend time daily with our Redeemer. If we are not feeding our souls with eternal food (cf. **Ps 36:7-9**), our souls will shrivel for lack of nourishment.

Think of all we feed our bodies and souls with. Think of all the times you spent last week on the preparation of meals, eating, reading the newspaper, surfing the Internet, exercising, watching TV. Compare that to the time you spent in nearness to God. It's not easy, is it? There is so much to do in life. **But in order to support our husbands well, we need to be supported ourselves**, with an internal and eternal support. We need daily refreshment and encouragement. We need to fix our eyes on Jesus in all of life's circumstances. We need to go deep into his Word in meditation and study and prayer. We need to feast and drink from Him.

God's Precious Love

HOW PRECIOUS IS YOUR STEADFAST LOVE, O GOD! THE CHILDREN OF MANKIND TAKE REFUGE IN THE SHADOW OF YOUR WINGS. THEY FEAST ON THE ABUNDANCE OF YOUR HOUSE AND YOU GIVE THEM DRINK FROM THE RIVER OF YOUR DELIGHTS. FOR WITH YOU IS THE FOUNTAIN OF LIFE; IN YOUR LIGHT DO WE SEE LIGHT (PS 36:7-9).

What things are *precious* to you these days? Is *God's love* precious to you? Maybe you feel far from God's love these days. I wonder what David was thinking when he chose that adjective—***precious***—to describe God's love? Why did David use that particular adjective? Well, think of how it is used throughout Scripture. What else is described as precious in the Bible? How can we understand the value of God's love through this little word?

God's love is *precious* like the cherished reunion between the Lord and His saints when one of them crosses that bridge between life here on earth and eternity: ***"Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints"*** (Ps 116:15). His love is *precious* like the value of an exceptional wife, the crowning jewel of a life-long romance: ***"An excellent wife, who can find? She is far more precious than jewels"*** (Prov 31:10). His love is *precious* like the costly ransom paid for your shortcomings before a holy God through the death of his only Son: ***" . . . knowing that you were ransomed . . . not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot"*** (1 Pet 1:19).

God's Steadfast Love

God's love is steadfast. What does that mean? It means that God's precious love is **constant and steady**—it can be depended upon. It is unfailing. His love never falters. He sets his love upon us with clear, unchangeable intent.

We can count on God's love. Human love is very fragile—many of us know that from personal experience. Some of us have been deeply hurt by people we thought we could love and trust, but who in the end proved unfaithful. But *God's love* will never falter or waver.

“THE STEADFAST LOVE OF THE LORD ENDURES FOREVER” (PS 100:5).

“THE STEADFAST LOVE OF THE LORD NEVER CEASES; HIS MERCIES NEVER COME TO AN END; THEY ARE NEW EVERY MORNING; GREAT IS YOUR FAITHFULNESS” (LAM 3:22; THIS IS FROM JEREMIAH, “THE WEEPING PROPHET”).

And God stands ready to bestow this generous love on us as we turn to him: “Return to the Lord, your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and *abounding in steadfast love*” (Joel 2:13).

What do you abound in? Complaints? Fatigue? Fears? Homework? Laundry? “The Lord takes pleasure in those who fear Him, in those who hope in his steadfast love” (Ps 147:11). Hoping in this strong steadfast love pleases God.

God's Safe Love

“The children of mankind take refuge in the shadow of your wings” (Ps 36:7). Life can be scary. We have all seen how quickly thousands of lives can be changed forever in the wake of a violent storm, a school shooting, or a seven billion dollar financial bailout. But there is a place where those who know God, through Christ, can find shelter and relief from anything that this world assaults them with, a place where God's precious, steadfast love is abundant.

Where is that place? David describes it as **“in the shadow of God's wings.”** To be under the shadow of someone's wings

means **nearness**. To be under a wing means you are near the heart. There is a sanctuary that God opens up to anyone who dares to draw near to him. There God offers you and me a love that will not let us go. He offers your soul eternal love, and *nothing* can ever wrench you out of his loving embrace.

In the New Testament, Paul puts it this way: “Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? . . . For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom 8:35-39).

It’s as if Paul is saying, “Imagine the worst scenario possible. Do you think God’s love can remain credible even there?” What God wants us to see through his holy Word is that our lives are a love story. ***Our sufferings do not define us; the precious, steadfast love of God defines us.*** *Your redemption is the most beautiful love story ever told. Relish it.*

We are engaged to Christ now. Our earthly death will be our wedding day. He is courting us now, winning our hearts through His precious steadfast love. God has never promised us a life free from suffering. My husband, Ray, puts it this way: “Look for His love where He himself has promised it. Nothing can ever separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. And what is His love? To make us more like Christ, and to prepare us to live forever with Christ. That is the love of God, from which nothing can ever separate us.”

Conclusion

We have been looking at some of the challenges that we face as women in ministry. We have been talking about heart issues—our reputations, our romances, our redemption. God wants us to look

even more deeply into our hearts. God made the human heart. He **created your heart for worship**. Worship is more than going to church or singing hymns or praying. To **worship means to give your heart away to something**.

He is calling you and me in love to give our hearts away to Him. His love is something He delights to bestow upon us through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross. You see, we often come to God thinking we're making a covenant with Him. No, your salvation is much larger than that. Within the Triune Godhead, God made a decision with Christ about you, about me. Christ effected it on the cross, and the Holy Spirit sealed it with His indwelling Presence.

Choose to keep your heart open to Christ. Feast on the abundance of His house and drink from the river of His delights. He knows you best and loves you most. A woman is most beautiful when she knows she is loved. Let the precious, steadfast, safe love of God flood your life with a deep beauty and a new spiritual radiance.

If you have any questions on this segment, now is the time to ask

Dealing with Your Past

This segment will be held individually for man and woman due to the nature and sensitivity of this segment.

We stress to you that this segment will be dealt with in a high level of confidentiality

What to expect in this segment:

We will look at –

- Your past***
 - o Upbringing and childhood
 - o Past relationship
 - o Trauma
 - o Belief
- Your present***
 - o Career
 - o Standing in Christ
 - o Other relationships [parents, friends, colleges, etc...]
 - o Sexual Desires
 - o Challenges
 - o Belief
- Your future***
 - o Career
 - o Children
 - o Family responsibilities
 - o As a couple
 - o Ministry
 - o Your expectations

After your individual counseling session, you will be joining each other in an extended session to discuss areas of concern [if there is any]; and as counselors, we will be sharing some common marriage challenges with both of you.

We will also look at the following:

- Responsibilities in Church
 - o Is your responsibilities in church going to affect your marriage?
 - o Alternative Solutions
- Setting up a Family Altar
 - o Importance of
- Family Prayer
- Family Worship
- Family Bible Study
- Family Topical Discussions
- Family Communion
- Respecting each other's Personal Time
 - o Salvation is Personal
 - o Personal Connection
- Prayer
- Worship
- Studies

Making time for one another, future of having kids, prioritizing your social and church life with a career, and other factors is important. In all that we do, we must keep the Word of God at the center of all; not only in our personal life, but also in our marriage and family. We must cultivate a healthy and balanced life which will glorify God, and in term edify ourselves as individuals and as a unit.

Combined Video

After the Dealing with Your Past segment which was held separately for both groom to be and bride to be, you will be required to watch these two videos together:

- Behind the Veil
- No More Sheets

Please use the links provided to download / watch – you will be questioned on these videos in your next segment

Segment 6

Identifying Yourself & Your Spouse [to be] in Christ

In this segment, you will experience some challenging exercises to determine how well you identify yourself and your spouse to be in Christ. Your honesty will be greatly rewarded within the future of your marriage. Being dishonest in this segment is not only being dishonest to yourself, but also to your spouse to be.

The following questions will be asked first to the man, then to the woman; both of you are to answer the question to the best of your abilities with the other confirming the answer:

General Knowledge:

- 1] What is your fiancé birth date?
- 2] What is your fiancé favorite color?
- 3] What is your fiancé most favorite food?
- 4] What is your fiancé favorite flower [man] / sport [woman]?
- 5] What is your fiancé favorite TV show?
- 6] What type of movies does your fiancé most enjoy?
- 7] What does your fiancé like to do in their free time?
- 8] What is your fiancé's cell number?
- 9] Who does your fiancé bank with?
- 10] What's the name of the company your fiancé?
- 11] What is your fiancé's employer's name?

Christian Life:

- 12] What is your fiancé's favorite book in the Bible?
- 13] What is your fiancé's favorite character in the Bible? [other than Jesus]
- 14] What is your fiancé's most favorite biblical quote? [it can be a verse, a biblical related saying, or a pastor's quote]
- 15] What do you think your fiancé enjoys the most during a church service? [Worship / praying / sermon / giving / ect...]

- 16] What do you think is the one thing your fiancé desires the most to do in ministry? [In the sense of activity]
- 17] What do you think is your fiancé's most noticeable spiritual gift?
- 18] What do you think is your fiancé's calling in ministry?
- 19] What do you think your fiancé most dislike in church?
- 20] What do you think is your fiancé's biggest fear?
- 21] What do you think is your fiancé's biggest strength?
- 22] Where do you think your fiancé sees him/herself in 10 years from now?

Challenge:

- 23] Everyone has something they don't like about the next person. Mention at least 2 things you don't like about your fiancé?
- 24] Everyone has something they don't like about themselves. Mention at least one thing you thing your fiancé don't like about him/herself?
- 25] What was your very first impression you had when you saw your fiancé for the very first time?

Short Term & Long Term Plans

In this segment we will be discussing the following:

□ ***Short Term Plans***

- Living arrangements
- Further Studies
- Career or Career Changes
- Place of Fellowship / Church
- Social Life

□ ***Long Term Plans***

- Fulfilling Your Calling
- Higher Education in Ministry
- Your Vision
- Children
- Investments

Marriage & Ministry

In this segment we will do topical verse studies. It is vital to cultivate a healthy marriage in ministry; and knowing that every Christian is called at some stage of their lives as a leader in ministry, this should be something to discuss before hand. Ministry can require a lot of time, especially when the general congregation is enjoying family time [as ministry hours can call the minister after hours]. At some point in your life and marriage, you are going to need to make sacrifices. Some of the topics we have already looked at in segment 3; but there is more you ought to know.

Avoiding the call into ministry can have a devastating toll on your marriage and household, but going into ministry with resistance from your spouse can also be devastating both on your marriage and your ministry. In this segment we will take a look at both aspects through bible verse studies relating to godly marriages, husbands, wives and couples in general.

First, answer these questions:

- o Have you received your calling?
- o What is your vision in ministry?
- o How are you planning to balance out ministry, marriage, and other responsibilities such as work, children, social living, etc...
- o What steps are you taking in fulfilling your calling from God?

To the husband: Your wife is said to be your helper []; in what light can you describe this statement?

To the wife: Your husband is said to be the head of the house, as Christ is the head of the church []; in what light can you describe this statement?

Let us study the verses below and receive counsel from scripture on marriage.

Scriptural Marriage Verses:

Genesis 2: 22-24; *“And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man. (23) And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. (24) Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”*

Proverbs 5: 18-19; *“Let thy fountain be blessed: and rejoice with the wife of thy youth. (19) Let her be as the loving hind and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times; and be thou ravished always with her love.”*

Proverbs 12: 4; *“A virtuous woman is a crown to her husband: but she that maketh ashamed is as rottenness in his bones.”*

Proverbs 18: 22; *“Whoso findeth a wife findeth a good thing, and obtaineth favour of the LORD.”*

Proverbs 19: 14; *“House and riches are the inheritance of fathers: and a prudent wife is from the LORD.”*

Proverbs 20: 6-7; *“Most men will proclaim every one his own goodness [many claim to have unfailing love]: but a faithful man who can find? (7)The just man walketh in his integrity [The righteous live a blemless live]: his children are blessed after him.”*

Proverbs 31: 10; *“Who can find a virtuous woman? for her price is far above rubies.”* Woman, do you think your finance has found such a woman in you? Man, do you think your finance is such a woman? Carefully study the following portion and discuss:

Ephessians 5: 22-33; *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. (23) For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. (24) Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. (25) Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; (26) That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, (27) That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish. (28) So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself. (29) For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church: (30) For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. (31) For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be one flesh. (32) This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. (33) Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.”*

1 Corinthians 7: 3-5; *“Let the husband render unto the wife due benevolence: and likewise also the wife unto the husband. (4) wife hath not power of her own body, but the husband: and likewise also the husband hath not power of his own body, but the wife. (5) Defraud ye not one the other, except it be with consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer; and come together again, that Satan tempt you not for your incontinency.”*

Colossians 3: 18:19; *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. (19) Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.”*

Hebrews 13: 4-7; *“Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge. (5) Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee. (6) that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me. (7) Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.”*

Colossians 3:19 – *“Husbands, love [your] wives, and be not bitter against them.”*

Ephesians 5:22-33 – *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.”*

Ephesians 5:25 – *“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”*

1 Peter 3:7 – *“Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with [them] according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.”*

Ephesians 5:28 – *“So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself.”*

Matthew 5:28 – *“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”*

Proverbs 21:19 – *“[It is] better to dwell in the wilderness, than with a contentious and an angry woman.”*

1 Corinthians 6:18 – *“Flee fornication. Every sin that a man*

doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.”

Ephesians 5:33 – *“Nevertheless let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself; and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband.”*

Proverbs 14:1 – *“Every wise woman buildeth her house: but the foolish plucketh it down with her hands.”*

Song of Solomon 8:6-7: *“Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the LORD. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it. If a man offered for love all the wealth of his house, he would be utterly despised.”*

Ephesians 4:2-3: *“With all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*

Colossians 3:14: *“And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.”*

Ecclesiastes 4:9: *“Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone?”*

Ecclesiastes 4:12: *“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.”*

You have an assignment: Before or next segment, you are asked

to write an essay of between 800 to 1'000 words. Your assignment must relate why you think you should get married, and how do you see your marriage will assist one another in ministry – include some personal trades you see in one another. This assignment is to be done as individuals.

Assessment

The necessary and relevant documents will be made available once assessments has been made to date; and will accompany this segment. We remind you that *performance of marriage ceremonies is an accommodation to the body, NOT an obligation. It is understood that entering into pre-marital counseling is NOT an agreement of approval to be married by the church pastor or anyone else at the church. We do not claim to be 'Professional' Counselors. Our counsel is based solely on God's Word.*

Furthermore; we reserve the rights to marry or not marry a couple on the findings of biblical truths discovered within both parties of the premarital counseling segments to date. We belief that the best counsel was provided for marriage, and based on our findings, we become responsible parties of the consent of this man and woman to be married.

It will therefore be unlawful to give consent and blessings where we see it not fit.

In this segment you will be assessed on your pre-marital counseling classes to date.

We will give you feedback on and discuss the following:

- o Both man and woman's readiness for marriage
- o How well have you identified your spouse in Christ?
- o Advise on short and long term plans
- o Your walk with Christ
- o Edifying one another
- o Facing challenges in life as a couple
- o Building your marriage on honesty

Wedding Service & Vows

Wedding vows are one of the most important items of the wedding itself. We encourage the groom and bride to write [or memorize] special vows for the wedding ceremony.

The reason for this is that it should reflect your heart felt and deepest feelings for one another. This should be your outward expression of your most inner feelings for one another in a public ceremony [before witnesses and before God].

Below are some examples which you may follow, but do try and personalize your vows to suit one another:

Example 1

GROOM

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded wife. With deepest joy I receive you into my life that together we may be one. As is Christ to His body, the church, so I will be to you a loving and faithful husband. Always will I perform my headship over you even as Christ does over me, knowing that His Lordship is one of the holiest desires for my life. I promise you my deepest love, my fullest devotion, my tenderest care. I promise I will live first unto God rather than others or even you. I promise that I will lead our lives into a life of faith and hope in Christ Jesus. Ever honoring God's guidance by His spirit through the Word, And so throughout life, no matter what may lie ahead of us, I pledge to you my life as a loving and faithful husband.

BRIDE

I, _____, take you, _____, to be my wedded husband. With deepest joy I come into my new life with you. As you have pledged to me your life and love, so I too happily give you my life, and in

confidence submit myself to your headship as to the Lord. As is the church in her relationship to Christ, so I will be to you. _____, I will live first unto our God and then unto you, loving you, obeying you, caring for you and ever seeking to please you. God has prepared me for you and so I will ever strengthen, help, comfort, and encourage you. Therefore, throughout life, no matter what may be ahead of us, I pledge to you my life as an obedient and faithful wife.

Example 2

GROOM

I love you, _____, and I know that God has ordained this love. Because of this I desire to be your husband. Together we will be vessels for His service in accordance with His plan, so that in all areas of our life Christ will have the pre-eminence. I promise to be faithful to you. I promise to love, guide, and protect you as Christ does His Church, and for all the days of our lives on earth. According to Ephesians 5 and with His enabling power, I promise to endeavor to show to you the same kind of love as Christ showed the Church when He died for her, and to love you as a part of myself, because in His sight we shall be one.

BRIDE

I love you, _____ and I know that you love me. Because of this I desire to be your wife. For _ years I have prayed that God would lead me to His choice and I am confident that His will is being fulfilled today. I promise to be faithful to you. I will love, serve, and obey you for all the days of our lives on earth. Christ told us that the wife must submit herself unto her own husband as unto the Lord. For as Christ is Head of His Church so is the husband head of his wife. _____, I submit myself to you.

Your wedding vows to one another should be prophetic [and may be somewhat different from the examples above]. Below is what we

don't encourage:

Example 3

GROOM

I _____, take you _____, to be my wedded wife. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness or in health, to love and to cherish till death do us part. And hereto I pledge you my faithfulness.

BRIDE

I, _____, take you _____, to be my wedded husband. To have and to hold, from this day forward, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part. And hereto I pledge you my faithfulness.

This example typifies why many marriages ends on rocky roads. The '...for better, for worse, for riches, for poorer, in sickness or in health...' is wavering statements. By faith we give ourselves to one another in marriage. It is not to say that we wouldn't be there for one another in dire times, but the confession of our mouths are seeds sown into our lives. As to for the portion '...till death do us part...' As believers, born of the Word of God, we don't die; we simply pass on. Death is not an option, it's a choice; and no born again Christian should by choice die, but rather by choice live on in this live or eternal life. When one or another passes on into eternal life, it doesn't mean the one remaining in this life must stop loving the other; that love is eternal, it's been confirmed before God and should be cherished in such ways.

Let your vows be prophetic, speaking life into you marriage, into one another and your future together.

Blessing of Rings

A wedding ring, originally after the western fashion, has been adopted largely worldwide by many as part of the marriage culture. However, this is not originally part of the Christian traditions, but it is acceptable due to its symbolic meaning.

A circle has no beginning or end; and is therefore a symbol of infinity. It symbolizes the essence of love, which by its course is endless or eternal. Man had a revelation on which finger the wedding ring should be worn, as the vein in the forth finger of the left hand leads to the heart. The heart generally expresses love, but furthermore, according to biblical terms of use, the heart also refers to ones soul. The blessing of wedding rings [and even engagement rings] is done for the reason of what it symbolizes. The groom and bride are requested to bring the wedding rings prior to the wedding date for blessings. In the blessing of rings, we will simply pray over the rings, asking the anointing of God, together with the love of God to cover the rings. After this has been done, the rings must be kept out of the reach of touch in a save place until the wedding date. We will also request that those who are going to handle the rings on the wedding date must be prayed over before the service.

Wedding Sermon

The wedding sermon will be a short, yet sweet message to remind us all what love really is. Love stretches far beyond emotions as marriage brings about a spiritual bondage, uniting husband and wife together before God and with God. Marriage is also a legal biblical tying of souls together. Although we will not share the sermon notes here, we will ask each one of you to reflect on 1 Corinthians 13 which demonstrates the definition of love. We ask each of you to separately reflect and meditate on this chapter in 1 Corinthians 13; and thereafter jointly reflect your love for one another by studying it together.

Love in the Marriage

By now, both of you must understand what is expected of both of you; not just of one another, but also from family members and members in the family of Christ. In our last segment, we will be sharing a few deeper revelations on love in marriage.

This will help you in being the best for your spouse to be. The question is: What is love? Understand that marriage is not easy; and one's understanding on love can either add value to or take value out of a marriage. In our society, we see the very corruption of love, almost on a daily base. Love in this world is largely expressed on feelings; but that's not true love. True love, or how the Bible puts it, God's kind of love is unconditional. Jesus is a perfect example of this: who sacrificed everything and humbled himself by taking on the form of a man, coming down from heaven to earth to die for us. He chose to give up his life so that all who believe in him could have life. Jesus' sacrifice was out of his great love for us. There is no greater love than to lay down your life for another.

True love is more than a feeling; it is a choice – a choice you make in loving one another unconditionally. A choice you make in loving your spouse even if you don't feel loved from them, or irrespective of their wrongs.

Love is sacrificial: You had a life before you met your bride / groom. Even now that you are engaged and about to get married soon; you might not realize how much marriage will change your day to day living. As much as you want your spouse to be to accommodate your likes, your spouse would like the same from you. Marriage is a sacrifice; and you and your spouse must find a balance life. You might not always be happy about certain changes, but those changes will strengthen your marriage.

Marriage is hard work on both sides – responsibilities must be shared. Love is expressed in the small things as well as the big things in a relationship. No matter how hard a day you had, never bring your problems home. This is not to say you shouldn't discuss your day [even when it was bad], but leave the bad atmosphere behind. Always be cheerful to see each other, even after a long day at work, or family issues that may have occurred.

Love is about making choices together; never feel like you can make a choice by yourself. Now that you are married [or about to be], your choices will have a direct effect on your spouse. In the same manner as you ought to consult the Lord on everything, consult your spouse on everything too. If there is one thing to remember in marriage, it is what we read in Ecclesiastes 4:12 – *“Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three stands are not easily broken.”* You, your spouse, and God!

Furthermore, 2 Corinthians 5:17 says: *“If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature. The old life has passed away; behold, a new life has begun.”* Lay your old life down, see the new life which is about to begin. The day that the two of you meet at the altar of marriage will be the first day of your lives together. Be sure that you will be all that one another will need in this life; that's of course with God at the center.

Pre-Marital Counsel Questionnaire

This questionnaire is to be filled out and returned to your counselor/s before the end of this session.

Please Note: *We reserve the right to discontinue marriage counseling - and or – decide not to marry a couple at our discretions on biblical truths.*

Personal Information:

Your full names: _____

Surname: _____

Calling name: _____

Date of Birth: _____ Age: _____

Address:

Home phone: _____

Cell: _____ Whatsapp? _____

Finance name & surname:

Marital Status:

Have you been married before? _____ Divorced _____

Widow _____ Separated _____

Have you been engaged before? _____ If yes, please state what happened?

Do you have any children? _____ If yes, please state age/s

Current Engagement Period:

How long do you know your fiancé for? _____

How long have you'll been courting for? _____

How long have you'll been officially engaged for? _____

What brought you'll together?

Are you and your finance currently living together? ____ If yes, how long? _____

Have you and your finance engaged in an intimate relationship?

General Information:

Have you set a tentative date for your wedding? ____ If yes, what is the date _____

Your beliefs:

Are you a born again Christian? ____ If yes, briefly describe what it means to be born again:

Have you completed our ministry's foundation class? ____ If yes, state date: _____

*State the name of your church if you not a member here:

Do you attend church often? ____ If not, why?

Please answer the following questions complete yet briefly and honestly as possible

1] Write your definition of love:

2] Have you personally prepared for marriage? _____ State how:

3] Have your parents divorced? _____ Remarried? _____ If yes, how old were you? _____

If yes, do you know the reason?

4] What do expect from being married that you can't get from remaining single?

5] Give at least 3 reasons why you want to marry your finance?

a. _____

b. _____

c. _____

6] What do you see as your role in marriage?

7] What do you see your finance's role in marriage?

8] With so many marriages failing these days, what guarantee or assurance do you have that your marriage will remain successful?

9] How do other members of your family feel about your finance?

10] Do you feel you have been accepted by your finance's family?

11] How do you think you will handle common conflicts or disagreements?

12] Do you plan on having children? _____ How many? _____ At what age? _____

Does your finance agree on this? _____

13] Who will discipline your children? _____ State how you will discipline your children:

14] Who will handle your finances? _____ And if there is any differences, how will you handle them?

15] What plans can you think of keeping your marriage fresh and alive?

Please Note:

Performance of marriage ceremonies is an accommodation to the body, NOT an obligation. It is understood that entering into pre-marital counseling is NOT an agreement of approval to be married by the church pastor or anyone else at the church. We do not claim to be 'Professional' Counselors. Our counsel is based solely on God's Word. Be sure you understand our position before signing on the next page:

I acknowledge that I read and understand the above, and that all information filled herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Sign

Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Please hand this form back to your counselor when completed and signed

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