

**BUILDING THE BELIEVER**  
**V**

**THE MARRIAGE COVENANT**

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By  
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## INTRODUCTION

The Building the Believer series is by design a series of short, easy to read teachings specifically written for Christians living in today's busy world. Each of these short lessons contain information that can release life changing revelations to the reader but only if the reader has made a choice to receive the revelation understanding. Nothing will come from God unless you ask for it therefore; ask for Him to work with the booklet to open new insights and understandings to you.

An abbreviated version of each of the booklets is available as a part of a larger work. This particular booklet is included as a part of the book **OUT OF THE FLESH**. The booklets included are **Building the Believer I (The Economy of Spirit)**, **Building the Believer II (The Christian Identity)**, **Building the Believer III (The Apostolic and Prophetic Assignments)**, **Building the Believer IV (The Right Perspective)** and **Building the Believer V (The Marriage Covenant)**. Isa. 55:11 *"So shall my word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* (KJV)<sup>1</sup>

**I commit this Word to accomplish the work God has sent it to do. It shall not return void (empty).**

## THE MARRIAGE COVENANT

The following definitions of the kinds of marriages that are part of the general culture of America in the Twenty First Century demonstrate the reason for this booklet. I am a baby boomer. I was born in 1946 and the moral fiber of the United States was considerably different when I was growing up than it is today. Marriage was the foundation on which the country was built. Today there appears to be no firm and dependable agreements for people to stand on. This shift from permanence to temporary has crept into every area of life. Until recently, marriage was generally considered

irrevocable but now more than half of the marriages in the United States end in divorce. These definitions were extracted from the Merriam Webster Collegiate Dictionary:

*Marriage:*

*1 a: the state of being married*

*b : the mutual relation of husband and wife : WEDLOCK*

*c : the institution whereby men and women are joined in a special kind of social and legal dependence for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family*

*2: an act of marrying or the rite by which the married status is affected; especially: the wedding ceremony and attendant festivities or formalities*

*3: an intimate or close union*

*Celestial marriage: a special order of Mormon marriage solemnized in a Mormon temple and held to be binding for a future life as well as the present one*

*civil marriage: a marriage performed by a magistrate*

*Common law marriage:*

*1: a marriage recognized in some jurisdictions and based on the parties' agreement to consider themselves married and sometimes also on their cohabitation*

*2: the cohabitation of a couple even when it does not constitute a legal marriage*

*Marriage of convenience: a marriage contracted for social, political, or economic advantage rather than for mutual affection; broadly: a union or cooperation formed solely for pragmatic reasons*

*Open marriage: a marriage in which the partners agree to let each other have sexual partners outside the marriage.*

*Proxy marriage: a marriage celebrated in the absence of one of the contracting parties who is represented at the ceremony by a proxy*

*Shotgun marriage:*

*1: a marriage forced or required because of pregnancy called also shotgun wedding*

*2: a forced union*

*These references define the methods by which the ceremony is initiated, unique reasons for entering into the marriage agreement and conduct allowed within the agreement after it is initiated.*

With the exception of the definition of the word marriage in 1 c: **the institution whereby men and women are joined in a special kind of social and legal dependence for the purpose of founding and maintaining a family** and 3: **an intimate or close union**. These defining statements are referring to unusual conditions or circumstances. Each of the atypical methods of conduct defined above caters to some specific self-interest.

As it is with almost anything we, as Christians, are confronted with the practices, conducts and behaviors surrounding the marriage agreement on one hand and the spiritual implications of the marriage covenant, as seen by God, on the other. It is up to us to make a choice regarding exactly what we are going to embrace as correct. It is also up to us to define in our own minds and hearts how we are going to act toward both the people who act in agreement with our choice and how we are going to act toward those who behave in a disagreeable way. In the end the only conduct or attitude we have any rightful control over is our own and a responsibility to teach God's values to our children. Moreover, the children become responsible for governing themselves at the point when they become accountable to God and we no longer have the right to control them. If we attempt to continue then it is we who have gone astray by entering into witchcraft.

Most of the attitudes toward marriage are extensions of the social structure we live in. For a Christian that should not be the case since we have the scriptures to guide us and are not dependant on the ever changing acceptability of human behavior.

As we look at marriage currently, we find there are two basic ways we might consider marriage to take place. First, there is the law. There are actually many laws we live by and do not necessarily recognize we are doing it. Most common among these laws are the laws of man. These are the laws recognized by the courts and enforced by the states, counties or cities. Under the law, there are requirements for marriage licenses, blood tests and legal ceremonies. Under

these laws, there is no marriage until the signature of a duly authorized person attests to it. With the signed document, the marriage license, being sent to a county recorder, to be entered in the public record.

Then, there are religious laws. These are the laws of behavior that make the union acceptable in the sight of a particular religious group, often having to do with the ceremonial rituals themselves. The Catholic Church recognizes marriage services conducted by Catholic Priests and The Mormon Church has its rites and rituals that are a requirement for the marriage to be sanctioned by the Church.

Then there are social customs and traditions. These vary according to location and the behavior the various ethnic groups or family influences related to the people being married. The circumstances governing the marriage rituals in the deep areas of the Congo or Amazon differ from those of New York or Los Angeles. Moreover, conditions in the back woods of Alaska or ice cap of Antarctica bring differing customs and traditions because the society has adjusted to its environment. In some parts of the world, the man must purchase his bride from her father. Failing to observe the custom is a signal to the community she is of no value and unworthy to the man. Disrespectful behavior of this kind has led to territorial disputes resulting in death and destruction. These social considerations are important. How would a bride feel about herself or the marriage union if she were put in a position of disrespect because the marriage rites she and her husband agreed to be in opposition to the accepted rituals of their culture? In the United States, this very thing became a major dividing factor when the era of drugs and free love produced a casual regard for marriage. Mom and dad had the basic values of their lives thrown in their faces when their sons and daughters started living together to satisfy their sexual desires. There was no permanence in the relationship; it was just a selfish lust the children were giving themselves to. The Bible is pretty clear about such behavior. It is sin and has a price. The price of sin is death. Man has redefined death to mean ceasing to exist but the definition is wrong. Spirits do not cease to exist but many spirits are dead. Dead spirits do not produce, grow, expand, increase, etc. Living spirits do these things. All life extends from God. Without Him, there is no life. Life is ever expanding, ever growing, ever increasing. Some might argue that many dead men gain great wealth. The truth

is nothing they might accumulate or earn has any lasting value. It is temporary and will decay before the systems of this world and have no value in the day of resurrection.

None of the above is concerned with order of God. When the order of God is understood; the entire concept of marriage changes.

The Spirit Himself will choose the mate if we are willing to allow Him to do it. The mate chosen by God is probably different from the one we would choose ourselves because His criteria are different. Were we are guided by the passions of the flesh He sees willing hearts and unity of the spirit in each partner. Frequently His choice will be for a deep abiding friendship over the lusts related to carnal passions. The definitions and character traits of love are seen in 1 Corinthians Chapter 13, not in Country and Western songs.

The true marriage covenant is one that includes God. The true marriage relationship is in faith and by the word of God. It is ordered of God and results in a bonding that makes the husband and wife one flesh. With common goals, common purposes and a common focus. That marriage being in Christ with the husband being submitted to the Lord as his guiding authority and charged with the protection and provision for his wife, just as she is charged with the responsibility of being a helpmate to her husband he is also charged with being a submitted helper to Christ.

It is very important to understand the love of God. Even though He created us all He also has given us dominion and authority over everything that creeps upon the earth, plus the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, instructing us to subdue them. He has also given us choice. In addition, He will not override our choices or do the subduing without us.

*Genesis 1:26, Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue*

*it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth."*<sup>1</sup>

*Duet. 30:19, "I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live;"*<sup>1</sup>

*2 Corth 3:6, who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.*<sup>1</sup>

Yes, we are instructed to obey the laws of the land. However, we must remember we are doing it because we are creatures of love and it is done in that spirit. The Spirit of God, who is Love, we obey them.

The only reason for a legal ceremony revolves around the spirit of love that desires no opportunity for accusation against either our spouse or our Lord. It is not for the sake of conforming to the laws of society, religion of the state. It is a deeper law "The Law of Love" we are in obedience to.

The Jewish traditions are important but only when discerned by the spirit. The tradition is that the mate is chosen, (often by arrangement or agreement of the father). The man offers the covenant to his prospective bride. Tradition dictates the offering of the covenant. The man brings a glass of wine or new wine to her and after reciting the promises of Duet 28: 1-14. to her and then him drinking the first half of the wine in the glass has propose marriage. If the prospective bride drinks the remaining wine, she has accepted the proposed marriage covenant. They are betrothed in fact they are married. He then leaves her returning home. Once home he begins preparing a place for his bride. This was usually by building an addition on to his father's house. When his father sees the place adequately prepared the father tells his son to go and get his bride. Throughout the entire time, she must remain ready for his arrival. She wears a vial covering her face. The vial denotes her having been set aside (sanctified) and therefore unavailable to any other young men. On returning with his bride there is a wedding feast. The groom takes his bride to their chambers and the marriage is consummated. The sheets from the marriage bed are given to the matron of honor and she declares the covenant of marriage ratified.

Lets look at the entire Jewish custom step by step:

1. 1. The marriage is by blood covenant. Acceptance into the family of God is by blood covenant. (There are only two covenants with provision for the blood of a human be shed A. the covenant of salvation- the blood of Jesus was shed for all men. B. The marriage covenant by design is intended for virgins and the blood shed by her hymen breaking covers his parts at the time the marriage is consummated.
2. 2. The Father arranges for the covenant. God has called all men by the Spirit.
3. 3. The young man goes to the young woman-offering covenant (that is what the wine is about). The Word of God (Jesus) offers covenant to us. Desiring us to be His bride.
  - a. a. The choice is hers (ours) and her decision is declared by her drinking into the covenant agreement (entering into a submitted heart condition). By seizing the promise and declaring Jesus, as our Lord is how we enter into the Lords covenant.
4. 4. He then returns to the Father to prepare a place for his bride. Going just as Jesus has gone to prepare our place in the Fathers house. John 14:2, *In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.* (KJV)<sup>1</sup>
5. 5. Only when the Father tells him does he go to get his bride. Mark 13:32 *But of that day and that hour knows no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.* (KJV)<sup>1</sup>
6. 6. She must be prepared for his return. Matt 25:6-12, *"At midnight the cry rang out: 'Here's the bridegroom! Come out to meet him!' "Then all the virgins woke up and trimmed their lamps. The foolish ones said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil; our lamps are going out.' "No,' they replied, 'there may not be enough for both us and you. Instead, go to those who sell oil and buy some for yourselves.' "But while they were on their way to buy the oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the*

wedding banquet. And the door was shut. "Later the others also came. 'Sir! Sir!' they said. 'Open the door for us!' "But he replied, 'I tell you the truth, I don't know you.' (NIV)<sup>1</sup>

7. 7. A great feast is given in honor of the marriage. Rev 19:9, *Then the angel said to me, "Write: 'Blessed are those who are invited to the wedding supper of the Lamb!'" And he added, "These are the true words of God."* (NIV)<sup>1</sup>

The whole of the marriage customs were a type or shadow of these days and the union between Jesus and His Bride. Man has managed to corrupt the relationship to satisfy a base nature, (the nature or destiny given of darkness); but the nature or destiny given him by God is not selfish or carnal. It is the nature of life. The characteristics of life are giving, multiplying, increasing, supplying, healing, restoring, etc. The bridegroom gives himself and everything he is, has or will have to his bride. In this covenant, the bride and bridegroom become one flesh. In the sixth day of creation Genesis 2: 21, |5307| And caused to fall |3068| Yahweh |0430| God |8639| a deep sleep |5921| on |0120| the man, |3462| and he slept. |3947| And He took |0259| one **|6763| from his ribs** |5462| and closed up |1320| the flesh |8478| underneath.

22. |1127| And formed |3068| Yahweh |0430| God |0853| - |6763| the rib |0834| which |3947| He had taken |4480| from |0120| the man |0802| into a woman |0935| and brought her |0413| to |0120| the man.

23. |0559| And said |0120| the man, |7063| This (is) |6470| now finally |6106| bone |6106| from my bones, |1320| and flesh |1320| from my flesh. |2063| For this |7121| will be called, |0802| "woman" |3588| because |0376| out of man |3947| has been taken |2063| this.

24. |5921| There- |3651| fore, |5800| will leave |0376| a man |0853| - |0001| his father |0853| and |0517| his mother |1692| and will cling |6106| to his wife. |1961| **And they will become |1320| into flesh |0259| one.**

25. |1961| And were they |8147| both |6172| naked, |0120| the man |0802| and his wife, |3808| but not |0954| they were ashamed. Strong's Ref. # 6763 Romanized *tsela` Pronounced tsay-law'*

*or (feminine) tsal`ah {tsal-aw}; from HSN6760; a rib (as curved), literally (of the body) or figuratively (of a door, i.e. leaf); **hence, a side, literally (of a person)** or figuratively (of an object or the sky, i.e. quarter); architecturally, a (especially floor or ceiling) timber or plank (single or collective, i.e. a flooring):*

*KJV--beam, board, chamber, corner, leaf, plank, rib, **side** (chamber).<sup>2</sup>*

That which was removed from Adam, the man, was more than a bone it was literally a side chamber or part of his makeup. Adam, the man, named the woman, (the female Adam), woman (meaning man with a womb).

That same man and woman became one flesh just as they started as out one flesh. This was the first marriage. When they disobeyed God they were effectively making a choice for darkness and although God loved them and He had given them authority over the fish of the sea, the fowl of the air and everything that moves on the earth. This includes them. What God has given He will not take back. The curse God spoke to the serpent, woman, and man in Gen 3:14-19, *So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."* (NIV)<sup>1</sup> Because God said these things, they could not fail in happening because His words are creative but, Adam, both male and female, had already set them in motion by their choices. Look at this curse from a different view. There is a revealing aspect to it. What God said, was revealing to them the consequence of the choice they made. God had already told them they would die if they eat of the fruit of knowledge of good and evil. Now they had already eaten and died. Their connection with God (the source of live) was severed. This is the result of death. In their death, the light covering surrounding them was extinguished and they were naked and exposed.

After this Adam (the man) named Adam (the woman) Eve (meaning the mother of all living). That was an act of treachery. In doing this, he was distancing himself from her. He was in fact distancing himself from himself. That act is probably the foundation of all the lack of understanding between husbands and wives and its resulting friction. The issue is man against himself, the man with the womb, not man against the species woman. The choice of names is important to us because it opened the door for the Savior to come through the woman. The man along with the woman made a choice for rebellion but they were still in dominion over the fish, fowl and moving things on the earth and the man had headship in that authority. Authority always is accompanied by responsibility. Right in the midst of this act of treachery was also the way of recovery through a woman.

The only rightful authority in the earth comes through the womb of a woman. Anyone who comes through another gate is a thief and he has no authority. John 10:1 *"I tell you the truth, the man who does not enter the sheep pen by the gate, but climbs in by some other way, is a thief and a robber."* (NIV)<sup>1</sup>

Both men and women are obsessed with a need to find him or her a mate and satisfy the sexual drives within them. Until this issue is dealt with, they will be distracted and consumed by its pull on them. Understand there is no word of God without power. Luke 1:37 *For nothing is impossible with God.*" (NIV)<sup>1</sup> Now consider Gen 1:28 *God blessed them and said to them, **"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth** and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground."* (NIV)<sup>1</sup> and Gen 2:22-23 *Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man. The man said, "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman,' for she was taken out of man."* (NIV)<sup>1</sup> Where do you think these drives come from?

Godly order is key in all areas of life and that is certainly true here. Man must be joined to woman to be complete but if that joining is by ordinance of law rather than by the Spirit there is lack of Godly order. It is the Fathers place to select the mate. The marriage is intended to be by blood covenant founded on God. This covenant offers no escape. That is not to say the covenant cannot

be broken because we have choice any covenant can be broken. If one of the covenant partners breaks this three-way, covenant continual forgiveness is required of the others until such time the master of the covenant (God) releases them from the covenant. God is the only one who knows the thoughts and intents of the heart and only He knows when true and complete severing of the relationship has occurred. Consider, Heb 4:12-13 *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.* (NIV)<sup>1</sup>

You can see this covenant of marriage is not to be taken lightly or dismissed easily. It is serious and each partner has an obligation to the Lord and their marriage partner.

This covenant of love, the marriage covenant, requires a man to place himself between his mate and any danger, even unto death if necessary. Love not only requires him to be responsible for her physical safety but also her mental or safety or soul and her spiritual nourishment and prayer covering while allowing her liberty of choice and freedom from oppression.

This covenant of love, the marriage covenant, requires her to be a helpmate to him as a full partner in Christ. Love requires her to recognize he is the one that will answer to God for their choices, responding accordingly. Love requires her to help him in maintaining a right walk before the Lord. That walk must be the walk of LOVE.

***“The Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.”***

- 1. 1. God is Love**
- 2. 2. Faith operates by Love**
- 3. 3. In Love there is liberty**

Love has given His peace to us

- 4. 4. All mates must trust God (Love) for one another. Anything less is sin.**

To think ill of your mate is an unfaithful activity that is entered into by choice. We are told how to think in Phil 4:8 *Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is*

*admirable-- if anything is excellent or praiseworthy-- think about such things.* (NIV)<sup>1</sup> If your thoughts are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, admirable, excellent or praiseworthy toward your partner then you will have no difficulty-walking upright before God.

There is a young couple that was preparing to marry. They started as friends. He was driving truck over the road and she called him for help after experiencing some problems with her family. He got a load of freight to where she was and picked her up, taking her with him on the road. After a short while, he requested information on marriage in God's eyes. The information on these pages was given to him with admonition to be candid in explaining the earnest regard God has for the marriage covenant. Shortly afterward, they announced their intent to marry and set a wedding date. There was much criticism toward them because they were and had been living together on the road. Much of the criticism was coming from their families, friends and acquaintances. On being questioned about whether they had understood and acted on the marriage covenant process he indicated clearly they had followed the Jewish custom explicitly and had made covenant with one another before God. The invitations were sent out to people across several states and they began shopping for dresses and doing the other things relevant to the affair. In the last month, before the event was scheduled to take place he dropped her at his parent's house to prepare. She still had a strained relationship with her family but in the final two weeks her mother called asking her to come to her parent's home to visit, re establishing their relationship and enabling her parents to be a part of the preparation. She agreed and went home that day with his parent's blessings. It appeared relationships were being restored and peace would be established before the marriage. That is not the course taken however. She broke all communication with him once she was in her parent's home, announcing her decision not to marry him. He turned to several people for council to hear most of them say he should break with her completely severing the relationship. Few people regarded their covenant before God advising him to stand firmly on the covenant and its promises. A time came when a decision regarding the scheduled wedding was necessary. There were people coming from far away and the ceremony was on again, off again as they talked by phone. The decision was made to cancel the ceremony. However, even at the time it was cancelled he had decided he was already married in the eyes of God

and would have to weather this storm regardless of how long it took. Her parents arranged for her to visit a sister several states away. She went but re established the contact with the young man. A short time later, she told him she would like to move to the city they had purposed to live in after being married. A city he had lived in for a few years before starting to drive over the road. He sent her money to make the trip promising to help her in whatever choice she made even if it meant not seeing her any more. She made the trip not expecting to be well received by the people who had become their mutual friends before the wedding cancellation. These people are children of God and received her with open arms not being angry over the things of the past or desiring to interfere in their lives. Within days, she agreed to get back on the truck with him and he arranged to stop and pick her up. About two months later they rented an apartment and ended the over the road lifestyle. She got a job in a department store and he making local deliveries.

During the time surrounding the scheduled wedding ceremony, she had been under terrific pressure much of which is difficult for a man to understand. She was preparing to be married and her mother was not included in the preparations. She had an estranged relationship with her family generally. She had someone arranging her life for her since childhood without her desires being central to their decisions. She was under a barrage of words expressing contempt for her young man. By her own words she revealed a life long feeling of being regarded as a second-class child. Her being adopted compounded this feeling. She talked to the Pastor who was scheduled to perform the ceremony and family members all of whom disagreed with the covenant marriage described in this book. Confusion overcame her and she didn't know what to do other than to apply the brakes until her understanding was clear and she had peace. Col 3:15 *Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.* (NIV)<sup>1</sup>

When God made covenant with Abraham the covenant was built upon over many years. Never were there any reductions of the previous covenant promises but the promise increased with each encounter. Until the covenant was complete. Then Abraham was asked to sacrifice Isaac, the child of promise. Abraham took Isaac to the alter to sacrifice him but God stopped him in the final seconds, supplying another sacrifice. Abraham's covenant was

tested and he was found faithful. Every covenant keeper must face a test of his or her faithfulness to God. These young people each went through a test as confusion, conflict and injured feelings gained prominence but in the end they chose to stand on the covenant agreement they made before God.

They remained cohabiting without yet being properly married according to the law although expressing their intent to remedy that situation. Their emphasis is on the covenant before God not the demands of man. It would be difficult to convince either of them they are not married in the sight of God. Now this story is before you there are choices that are yours to make. Your choices will not affect their outcome but rather yours. These choices revolve around how you view marriage. Are these young people married or just living together in sin? How is marriage defined, by the law or according to covenant without law? On the other hand, are both covenants before God and law required? Are these young people living a life of rebellion or are they attempting to do right in the sight of the Lord? Did they start in disorder? Is their relationship the same as in the beginning or has it changed? Is there a disregard for parents that is out of order? What is required to get order established at this point? The thoughts of your heart extend beyond some one else's marriage. Or, even your own marriage. Ponder these questions they are indicators of the mind-sets that govern your life.

The marriage covenant is a picture of our relationship with God. On your day of judgment, your mind-sets may stand between you and glory. Do not let them be in error. Sin defined is to miss the mark. Judge yourself, that you not be judged. All of God's children are instructed to obey the laws of the land but whose laws are preeminent in your thinking?

The Merriam Webster Dictionary offers these definitions:

*1 a (1): a binding custom or practice of a community: a rule of conduct or action prescribed or formally recognized as binding or enforced by a controlling authority (2): the whole body of such customs, practices, or rules (3): COMMON LAW b (1): the control brought about by the existence or enforcement of such law (2) : the action of laws considered as a means of redressing wrongs; also : LITIGATION (3) : the agency of or an agent of established law c : a rule or*

*order that it is advisable or obligatory to observe d : something compatible with or enforceable by established law e : CONTROL, AUTHORITY*

*2 a often capitalized: the revelation of the will of God set forth in the Old Testament b capitalized: the first part of the Jewish scriptures: PENTATEUCH, TORAH see BIBLE table*

*3: a rule of construction or procedure \*the laws of poetry\**

*4: the whole body of laws relating to one subject*

*5 a: the legal profession b: law as a department of knowledge: JURISPRUDENCE c: legal knowledge*

*6 a: a statement of an order or relation of phenomena that so far as is known is invariable under the given conditions b: a general relation proved or assumed to hold between mathematical or logical expressions –at law: under or within the provisions of the law \*enforceable at law\**

*Synonyms- LAW, RULE, REGULATION, PRECEPT, STATUTE, ORDINANCE, CANON mean a principle governing action or procedure. LAW implies imposition by a sovereign authority and the obligation of obedience on the part of all subject to that authority \*obey the law\*. RULE applies to more restricted or specific situations \*the rules of the game\*. REGULATION implies prescription by authority in order to control an organization or system \*regulations affecting nuclear power plants\*. PRECEPT commonly suggests something advisory and not obligatory communicated typically through teaching \*the precepts of effective writing\*. STATUTE implies a law enacted by a legislative body \*a statute requiring the use of seat belts\*. ORDINANCE applies to an order governing some detail of procedure or conduct enforced by a limited authority such as a municipality \*a city ordinance\*. CANON suggests in nonreligious use a principle or rule of behavior or procedure commonly accepted as a valid guide \*the canons of good taste\*. Synonym- see in addition HYPOTHESIS.*

As you can see by the lengthy definition, there are many ways this word can be used, each carrying a different precise meaning. The Bible is often referring to an instruction coming from God and intended as a permanent rule when the translation uses the word law or laws. It is not so easily understood is that it is the heart condition to which He is referring. If the heart is right, the conduct of the flesh will also be right also. The heart condition is a spiritual condition. Therein is lies the problem of trying to live by the letter of the law. The very fact that they seek a lawful conduct tells us their focus is on the flesh. In truth, their

behavior will inevitably conform to what is in their heart. While some people are very good at deceit and can hide behind the false images they create, in the long run they will always be found out because it is from the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks and from the treasures of a mans heart that things come forth. Matt 12:34-35, *You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.* (NIV)<sup>1</sup>

The typical marriage in the United States is built on the wrong foundation. That is often true even when the ceremony is conducted inside church walls. Where legal authorities will interview the couple the typical Pastor is more likely to require they attend some classes in an attempt to assure right motives and understandings concerning the precepts of marriage. The intent may be rightly motivated but the outcome is usually carnal minded. America has held the old country traditions regarding courtship and marriage in contempt vying for the popular attitudes of the day. Because of this courtship has all but disappeared from its current culture.

A hundred years ago, a courting couple was usually accompanied by a chaperone while they were on a date. It was under the eye of the chaperone they learned of one another's likes, dislikes, tastes, etc. Today the same couple has no one overseeing the date and it has become common for these people, usually young people, to learn nothing about the deep forces the drive one other. Instead, attention is turned toward the carnal desires of the moment. This has lead to reckless behavior patterns. Often the behaviors end in uncommitted sexual liaisons, pregnancy, abortions and the like. Other times they marry but have no firm foundation and the marriage ends in divorce.

Rushing into a marriage without spiritual guidance has caused many young women to wake one day realizing they are not in a covenant that unifies them to their husband but have become indentured to him instead. The landscape is littered with people who thought they were joining their lives together as one but ended up being regarded as a possession after the ceremony was completed and the documents registered.

This carnage is a direct result of America's withdrawal from Biblical rule. It is not and never was obeying the letter of Biblical law that was important. It has always been the law of God that is written on the individual's heart that held the society and the covenant integrity of marriage together. 2 Cor 3:6, *He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant-- not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.* (NIV)<sup>1</sup>

In the end, this is an unshakable truth; Obedience to the letter of the law kills but the spirit gives life. The marriage covenant is about life. It is through this covenant God makes provision for procreation but everything else that pertains to life is also included. In marriage, the two become one flesh and yet remain two. If any two agree as touching anything, it is given. Matt 18:19, *Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of my Father which is in heaven.* (KJV)<sup>1</sup>

The marriage covenant is the living example of Gods, Hessid, covenant of love. This example illustrates the intended union between man and God. It also illustrates that trust in God is the real foundation for life. Just as the union between a man and woman is built on faith in God and produces eternal blessings, faith in God and His love for us is the foundation on which the life of any Christian is built for eternal glory.

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<sup>1</sup> PC Study Bible Version 1.7A

<sup>2</sup> Bible Library 4.0, The Literal Bible

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