



MARRIAGE: A SPIRITUAL COVENANT

*God's plan for a sacred commitment
centered upon unconditional love*

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MARRIAGE: A SPIRITUAL COVENANT

*God's plan for a sacred commitment
centered upon unconditional love*



Presented to our Guests by the Kirkland Church of Christ
Where Families Build Eternal Homes

KirklandChurchofChrist.com

By Brent Hunter, Evangelist and Bible teacher

Brent Hunter has been active in holding marriage and parenting workshops for churches all over the US, and has been a successful marriage counselor for the last twenty-five years. Brent worked for 26 years as both a professor and administrator at Florida College (a four year Christian college in Temple Terrace, FL), where he taught Bible, Speech, and Marriage and Family. During his years on the faculty he was selected by his students as the top rated lecturing professor on multiple occasions. Brent is a certified seminar facilitator for the *Family Dynamics Institute* and licensed to administer the *Prepare and Enrich* diagnostic tool for premarital and marital counseling. He has been happily married to his wife Gail for 36 years, and they have two married daughters, and three grandchildren.

Brent has also done evangelistic work with churches since he was 20 years old. He has worked with congregations in Florida, Kentucky, California, and now he has moved to the great Northwest. Brent's focus is primarily on marriage and family enrichment with a focus towards *preventing problems*. We are pleased to have him as our featured speaker for these practical lessons on marriage and family here at the Kirkland church of Christ - ***Where families build eternal homes!***

In addition to being available for Bible studies for anyone who is interested, on a limited basis, Brent provides couples with Bible based marriage counseling. Brent can be reached on his cell phone: 1-502-445-5421 or at cbhunter53@gmail.com. Please feel free to contact him if he can assist you with any of your spiritual needs or questions.

Friday, March 6 and Sunday mornings March 8 & 15

***Please visit our website (KirklandChurchofChrist.com) for many more lessons
on marriage and family and other Bible lessons by Brent Hunter.***

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Kirkland Church of Christ

Where Families Build Eternal Homes

10421 NE 140th St. Kirkland, WA 98034

www.kirklandchurchofChrist.com

2015 Special Events

March 6th & 8th

Friday 7:30 pm - Marriage: A Spiritual Covenant

**Sunday 10:30 am - Understanding Marriage Vows and Reinstilling Commitment*

April 10th

Friday 7:00 pm - Annual Area Wide Spring Singing: "How Deep is the Father's Love"

Sept 18th & 20th

Friday 7:30 pm - Maintaining Peace & Tranquility in the Home: Principles for Resolving Conflict Successfully!

**Sunday 10:30 am - Principles for Resolving Conflict Successfully, Part 2*

Nov 20th & 22nd

Friday 7:30 pm - Parenting Through the Proverbs

**Sunday 10:30 am - Honor Father and Mother*

** A potluck will be held for all attendees following the Sunday morning lesson.
All are welcome!*

Directions to the potluck location will be provided at the morning services.

MARRIAGE: A SPIRITUAL COVENANT

Brent Hunter,
10058 NE 142nd Place, Kirkland, WA 98034

Revised and adapted from Dr. Clark Warren's "The Triumphant Marriage" and
Bill Gothard's "The True Significance of the Wedding Covenant."

"Set me as a seal upon thy heart..." Song of Solomon 8:6

INTRODUCTION: (FRIDAY NIGHT, PART ONE)

- A. We have not entered into a "marriage contract" but a "marriage covenant!"**
(Mal 2:14, Prov 2:16f)
- B. What exactly is a covenant?**
 - 1. A Hebrew word: "In the sense of cutting; a compact made by passing between pieces of flesh"
 - 2. Examples are found in Gen 15:9-10, 17-18 and Jer 34:13, 18
- C. Our forefathers began many wedding traditions and understood this well. Over time, the original meanings have been lost.**
 - 1. "The True Significance of the Wedding Covenant" booklet opened my eyes.
 - 2. One covenant symbol: the different sides for seating the guests of the bride or groom represents the covenant relationship and the guests as "living sacrifices."
- D. A marriage is sacred. It is spiritual...heavenly. (Matt 19:6)**
 - 1. A "holy triune not a human duet!!"
 - 2. If you break your vow to your mate, you may still have to keep your vow to God ("until death do you part" not "until divorce do you part").
 - 3. "It is a snare to a man to say rashly, 'It is holy' and then to later make inquiry."
Prov 20:25 (½ of all divorces in 1997 occurred within the first two years!)
 - 4. The difference between a **covenant** and a **contract**:
 - a) A covenant is based on **trust**---a contract on **distrust**!
 - b) A covenant is based on unlimited responsibility --a contract on limited liability.
Illustration: God's promise to Abraham and all He went through to keep His Word demonstrate unlimited responsibility. Just as the traditional words "...for better or for worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness and in health."
 - c) A covenant is lifelong and not to be broken --a contract can be voided by mutual consent.
Illustration: The rainbow in the sky reminds everyone that God's promise has no statute of limitations.

I. COVENANT SYMBOLISM IN THE WEDDING CEREMONY

- A. The groom enters first—why? He is the initiator of the covenant.**
- B. The father walks the bride down the aisle—why?**
 - 1. The parents are an important part of the ceremony.
 - 2. The father's duty is to present his daughter as a pure gift. (Deut 22:13-21)
 - 3. The white dress symbolizes purity.
- C. The father gives the bride away to show the full blessing of the parents. This is the formal transfer of authority from the father to the groom after he has asked for the daughter's hand in marriage. (Num 30:4-8).**
- D. The ring is a “token of the covenant.”**
- E. The couple is introduced to establish the changing of names.**
 - 1. *Illustration:* Abram's name was changed to Abraham.
 - 2. Spiritually we wear the “new name” of Christian once we enter into a covenant relationship with God upon baptism.
- F. What is the significance of the guest book?**
 - 1. It should be signed after—not before. It indicates there are witnesses to the covenant who have a vested interest in supporting the marriage.
 - 2. The Armenians have a low divorce rate. When a couple gets in trouble, the godparents move in until they get it settled!
- G. What is the purpose of the receiving line? To give a blessing to the couple as in Ruth 4:11, 14f.**
- H. The food at the reception is for the covenant celebration. This is very similar to the Lord's supper.**
- I. The couple feeds each other cake and they become “one flesh” in the eating of the cake, just as we become one in the eating of the bread (I Cor 11:24f).**

Part Two: Sunday, March 8 - 10:30 a.m.

II. DO WE HAVE A PROBLEM WITH KEEPING VOWS & COMMITMENTS TODAY?

- A. A lax attitude in general makes the taking of our vows seriously difficult.**
 - 1. Ronald Reagan in 1981 fired the air traffic controllers because they broke a contractual agreement. Doubtful that would happen today.
 - 2. During the revolutionary war both sides respected vows so much that they avoided taking prisoners. Instead they simply made them promise they would not return to fight again. If they violated their honor and did so, then they were executed.
- B. Examine these scriptures that apply to the taking of vows:**
 - 1. Ecc 5:2-7
 - 2. Ps 15:4b (Zion dweller - swears to his own hurt and changes not!!!)
 - 3. Num 30:2
 - 4. I Sam 1:11-21 (Hannah's vow)
 - 5. Josh 9:16-20

C. Commitment: the cornerstone of a triumphant marriage!

1. Consider the following quote about the nature of commitment:

“COMMITMENT ... is what transforms a promise into reality. It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions. It is the actions that speak louder than words. It is making the time when there is none, coming through time after time, year after year. Commitment is the stuff character is made of, the power to change the face of things. It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism.”

2. *“Marriage demands toughness, and toughness proceeds out of commitment. No marriage will ever be stronger than the commitments that serve as its infrastructure.”*

D. We ask couples to say some hard-hitting, heavy-duty vows before they get married. So where do we go wrong?

1. Are vows **treated superficially** with the preacher left to “perform the ceremony? The couple is so nervous they hardly think about or realize the significance.
 - a) I encourage couples to **write their own vows** and wedding ceremony.
 - b) Suggestion: Save the ceremony and go over it ...at least once a year on your wedding anniversary.
2. It is important that what you have vowed to each other be kept current and fresh! It is so easy to forget.

E. What matters is your current level of commitment

1. Often, the vows seem less vital and are less passionately held as time passes.
2. Sadly, many only vaguely remember what they said.
3. The commitment should be *active* not passive!!
Illustration: One may stay in a marriage by being passive. S/he doesn't leave, but doesn't *do anything* to make the marriage better either. Don't forget the *positive*, radical part of **active commitment**.

III. WE NEED THOROUGH, INSIGHTFUL UNDERSTANDING OF MARITAL PROMISES

A. We need a “promise orientation” that is highly enlightened.

B. The traditional vows have 6 separate parts:

1. I will **love you** as long as we both live (kindness, sacrifice)
2. I will **cherish and honor** you as long as we both live (thoughtfulness, attentiveness)
3. I will be to you what a husband or wife owes to a spouse (dedication to doing my part and meeting the other's needs)
4. I will **take you as you are** (acceptance)
5. I will **forsake all others** (faithfulness!!)
6. I will do all these things **for better or worse, in sickness and in health** (unconditionally serve and stay with you for as long we live)

C. WOW! What does that mean, practically speaking??

1. If we disagree, frustrate, disappoint, or hurt each other....?
2. If I think I don't get what I deserve...?
3. If I express how I feel, regardless of hardship...? I will keep my vows!

D. Now, REHEARSE THE PROMISES until they are BURNED INTO OUR BRAINS.

1. Marriage vows are usually spoken a single time, thus they have very little value in a marital crisis.
2. Dr. Clark Warren, author of "The Triumphant Marriage", suggests a change in frequency of the marriage vows.
 - a) Instead of "once-in-a-lifetime", 2 or 3 times a week for the first 10 years, and at least once a week for the rest of the marriage.
 - b) Verbalized regularly over a long period of time for tremendous power!!
 - c) HOW? Find a way that is natural, meaningful, and even fun! BE CREATIVE!!
3. What about you?
 - a) The more you can find **new and creative ways** to affirm the commitment the better.
 - b) **Recite it over and over** so that when troubles come the brain will trigger new ideas on how to fulfill these vows!!

CONCLUSION:

- A. Do your homework! Write your own concise summary of your vows.**
- B. Your marriage will benefit dramatically from a simple exercise designed to help both partners clarify and articulate promises.**

Here is a sample of what Gail and I came up with after looking over our original ceremony and thinking about the basic, most important needs that we each share.

I PROMISE...

(A renewal of our vows from Brent to Gail)

I promise I will do everything in my power to help you get to heaven,
to **accept you**, and to **remain loyal** to you **always**.

I promise to put **you and our marriage second only to God** and to be **open**
and honest with you always as we strive for **oneness**.

I promise I will **cherish, honor, and support you in good times and bad**
and strive to love you **selflessly, like Christ loves the church**, as I
meet your **deepest needs**.

I promise to **pilot, provide, and protect** you and our family and to do these things **unconditionally until**
death do us part...so help me God!!

I PROMISE...

(A renewal of vows from Gail to Brent)

I promise I will do everything in my power to help you get to heaven,
to **accept you**, and to **remain loyal** to you **always**.

I promise to put **you and our marriage second only to God** and to be **open**
and honest with you always as we strive for **oneness**.

I promise to **admire, honor, and obey you in good times and bad**
and strive to be an excellent **keeper at home** and be **sensitive to your deepest needs**.

I promise to **love you** and to do all these things
unconditionally until death do us part...so help me God!!

(Based on the fact that God has provided us with role-based relationships, I suggest you have different vows which focus in on each role. For help look at the handout of scriptures I have provided for you entitled "The Most Important Words about Husband and Wife.")

Refreshing and Re-instilling Marital Commitment

(Commitment and Vows in Marriage)

WORKSHOP WORKSHEET: STEPS TO RECONSTRUCT AND REFRESH YOUR VOWS

(Your marriage will benefit dramatically from this simple exercise designed to help both of you clarify and articulate the promises you have made to each other.)

1. What do you remember most about your wedding vows from memory? Quickly brainstorm together on a separate sheet of paper and see what you can piece together.
2. What vows have you heard said by others that you liked? Reflect upon what you have come to understand as vitally important to you and your marriage since your wedding day that could be added to a new, updated set of vows that you decide to commit to each other. Brainstorm together. Ask your mate for ideas as to what is important to him or her.
3. Look over the 6 parts listed on the handout for the traditional marriage vows and use this as a guide to help you reconstruct your vows. Can you put them in your own words that will have special meaning to you?
4. Given the different roles that God gives the man and the woman in marriage, look over the handout "The Most Important Words about Husband and Wife". Select from the scriptures some key concepts that reflect your unique roles that God would have you to commit to each other.
5. Condense all this into a brief list that you can both memorize and say to each other on a regular basis!! Periodic rewrites of the commitment statement will make it stronger and more meaningful.

Congratulations--you have done it!

Now write it out on a card, commit it to memory, and say it to each other regularly. You will crave and enjoy hearing your mate talk about the special kind of love you both share as you repeat your promises to each other. And let the kids overhear you say it or say it in front of them--it will teach them valuable lessons about marriage!!

The Most Important Words About Husband & Wife

*"As therefore God's **picked representatives**, purified and beloved, put on that nature which is **merciful** in action, **kindly** in heart, **humble** in mind. Accept life, and be most **patient** and **tolerant** with one another, always ready to **forgive** if you have a difference with anyone. Forgive as freely as the Lord has forgiven **you**. And, above everything else, **be truly loving**, for love binds all the virtues together in perfection. **Let the peace of Christ guide all your decisions**, for you were called to live as one, united body; and always **be thankful**. **Let the full richness of Christ's teaching find a home among you...***

~ Colossians 3:12-16a (Phillips)

"Let all bitterness and indignation and wrath [passion, rage, bad temper] and resentment [anger, animosity] and quarreling [brawling, clamor, contention] and slander [evil speaking, abusive, and blasphemous language] be banished from you, with all malice [spite, ill-will, or baseness of any kind].

~ Ephesians 4:31 (Amplified)

*"Wherefore, **accept one another**, just as **Christ** also accepted **us** to the glory of God."*

~ Romans 15:7 (New American Standard)

*"**Be subject to one another** ["fit in with" each other] out of reverence for **Christ**...You **WIVES** must learn to adapt yourselves to your husbands, as you submit yourselves to the **Lord**, for the husband is the head of the wife in the **same way** that Christ is the head of the church and savior to the body. The willing subjection of the church to Christ should be reproduced in the submission of wives to their husbands in everything."*

~ Ephesians 5:21 (Amplified)

*"In a similar way you wives should be submissive to your own husbands, so that if any of them will **not** be persuaded by the **message**, they may without message be won over by the **conduct** of their wives, as they observe your **chaste** and **respectful** behavior."*

~ 1 Peter 3:1, 2 (New Berkeley)

* * * * *

*"...Let the wife see that she **respects** and **reverences** her husband, that she **notices** him, **regards** him, **honors** him, **prefers** him, **venerates** him and **esteems** him; and that she **defers to him**, **praises** him, and **loves** and **admires** him exceedingly.*

~ Ephesians 5:33 (Amplified)

*"For this cause a man shall **leave** his father and his mother, and shall **cleave** to his wife; and they shall become **one** flesh."*

~ Gen. 2:24 (New American Standard)

*"Consequently they are no longer **two**, but **one** flesh. What therefore **God** has joined together, **let no man separate**."*

~ Matthew 19:6 (New American Standard)

*"Take heed then, to your spirit, and **let no one deal treacherously against the wife of your youth**. For I **hate** divorce, says the Lord..."*

~ Malachi 2:15b, 16a (New American Standard)

*"The **HUSBAND** must give his wife the **same sort of love** that **Christ** gave to the church, when **He sacrificed Himself for her**...So men ought to give their wives the love they naturally have for their **own bodies**. The love a man gives his wife is the extending of his love for **himself** to enfold **her**. Nobody ever hated his own body; he **feeds** it and **looks after** it."*

~ Ephesians 5:25,28-29a (Phillips)

*"...Let each man of you [without exception] **love** his wife [as being in a sense] his **very own** self."*

~ Ephesians 5:33a (Amplified)

*"Husbands, **love** your wives - be **affectionate** and **sympathetic** with them - and do **not be harsh** or **bitter** or **resentful** toward them."*

~ Colossians 3:19 (Amplified)

*"...You husbands need to live **understandingly** with your wives as with a **weaker** vessel, rendering them honor as **joint heirs** with you of the grace of life, so that your **praying** may not be **hindered**."*

~ 1 Peter 3:7 (New Berkeley)

*"Love **endures long** and is **patient** and **kind**; love **never** is **envious** nor boils over with **jealousy**; it is **not boastful** or **vainglorious**, does not display itself **haughtily**. It is **not conceited**, arrogant and inflated with pride; it is **not rude** [unmannerly], and **does not act unbecomingly**. Love [God's love in us] does **not** insist on its **own rights** or its own way, for it is not self-seeking. It is not touchy or fretful or resentful; it **takes no account of the evil done to it** - pays no attention to a suffered wrong. It does not rejoice at injustice and unrighteousness, but rejoices when right and truth prevail. Love **bears up under anything and everything** that comes, is **ever ready to believe the best of every person**, its hopes are fadeless under **all** circumstances, and it **endures everything** [without weakening]. Love **never fails** - never fades out or becomes obsolete or comes to an end... And so faith, hope, love abide; [faith, conviction, and belief respecting man's relation to God and divine things; hope, joyful and confident expectation or eternal salvation; love, true affection for God and man, growing out of God's love for us and in us], these three, but the **greatest of these is love**.*

~ 1 Corinthians 13:4-8a, 13 (Amplified)

*"Do two walk **together**, except they...have **agreed**?"*

- Amos 3:3 (Amplified)

*"**Two are better than one** because they have a good return for their labor. For if either of them falls, the one will lift up his companion. But woe to the one who falls when there is not another to lift him up."*

~ Ecclesiastes 4:9-10 (New American Standard)

*"So let us then definitely aim for and eagerly pursue what makes for **harmony** and for **mutual upbuilding** [edification and development] of one another."*

~ Romans 14:19 (Amplified)

*"...Being of the **same** mind, maintaining the **same** love, **united**, intent on **one** purpose. Do nothing from **selfishness** or **empty conceit**, but with **humility of mind** let each of you **regard the other as more important than himself**; do not merely look out for your **own** personal interests, but also for the interests of **others**."*

~ Philippians 2:2-4 (New American Standard)

*"Whether, then, you eat or drink or **whatever you do**, do **all** to the glory of God."*

A MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN

By Brent Hunter

Introduction

- A. “Holy **Head**-lock” or “Holy **Wed**-lock”? (Is love the **wine of life** and marriage the **hangover**?)
- B. A “marriage made in heaven” (not perfect, but highly satisfactory) **IS** possible!
 - 1. “It takes two to tango---three to marry”
 - 2. “What GOD joins together...” Matt 19:6
 - 3. GOD invented marriage. It’s the only part of **Paradise** left!
- C. KEY: Return to the **beginning** (source, blueprint)
- D. The Garden of Eden provides **4 MUSTS** (pillars) for a **successful marriage**
 - 1. When building, concentrate on YOURSELF, not your spouse!
 - 2. “*Marriage is not so much **finding** the right person as **being** the right person.*”

The 4 PILLARS FOR A SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE ---

#1 SEVERANCE

- a. “Leave & cleave” --- breaking the parent/child bond is ESSENTIAL!
- b. Weddings are simultaneously sad and beautiful --- there is a loss!
- c. When there is no severance, there is trouble.
 - 1. Adam & Eve represent the perfect family (no problems)
 - 2. Adam had no mother-in-law! (no parent/child conflicts)
- d. If one can’t leave, one shouldn’t marry!
Illus.: The song “Billy Boy” shows that if the girl is “a young thing and cannot leave her mother,”...it’s a good reason to not take her for a wife.
- e. “A man SHALL leave...” is strongly stated. It’s not might or may.

#2 PERMANENCE

- a. Cleave means “to cling to, to grab or hold with firmness”
- b. It’s not drifting from the dock and tying up somewhere else!
- c. **IT IS FOR LIFE!** (Not masking tape, but super glue!)
- d. KEY: Never consider divorce an option!
- e. “What GOD has joined together...” Matt 19:6
 - 1. Don’t prematurely sever marriage by divorce, but only by death.
 - 2. Embalming & divorce: 2 things not to be done before their time!
- f. We must learn to live with and just accept some things like our bodies, the day of our death, and the people we have chosen to marry.
- g. **Choose your love and love your choice!**

#3 UNITY

- a. "Shall **become** one..." It's a PROCESS designed perfectly by GOD for us.
- b. "*Marriage is two becoming one and the whole time you are trying to figure out which one you are becoming!*"
- c. This is a growth process you work **toward**.
 - 1. It's not just liking the same things (though that helps)!
 - 2. It's more than just **uniformity**.
- d. There must be **surrender**, or it becomes **uniformity**, not **unity**!
Illus.—Picture two cats with tails tied together thrown over a fence... is this union or unity???
- e. Unity involves the willingness to blend wills, YOURS with your MATE's!
 - 1. KEY: Look for mutual goals.
 - 2. "*Love is not so much looking into each other's eyes, but looking in the same direction!*"
 - 3. Only then will you become one!

THE GOAL: To grow closer to each other by molding each one's will to GOD's!

#4 INTIMACY

- a. They were "*both naked and **not ashamed***."
 - 1. This is literal, but broader than physical.
 - 2. It means no emotional barriers --- no covering up.
 - 3. Be emotionally naked and open before each other...not afraid!
- b. It's tragic when one can't share his/her life with the other.
 - 1. KEY: **Meaningful self-disclosure**!
 - 2. This requires some T.V. --- Transparent Vulnerability!
- c. Being totally open with each other's faults, knowing you are still loved anyway, and trusting this information will not be misused, then you will truly discover a **MARRIAGE MADE IN HEAVEN!**

CONCLUSION:

THESE ARE GOD's PRINCIPLES --- THEY WILL WORK TO BLESS US
IF WE WILL WORK TO USE THEM!!!

“Unity”

**Man satisfies the woman;
Woman satisfies the man;
GOD blesses the union.**

**Man plants the seed;
Woman bears the child;
GOD gives the spirit.**

**Man sets the discipline standards;
Woman sets the love standards;
GOD balance discipline with love.**

**Man is the bread winner;
Woman is the bread warmer;
GOD is the bread provider.**

**Man is woman's hero;
Woman is man's cheerleader;
GOD is the coach.**

**Man leads as the woman's head;
Woman follows as the man's body;
GOD makes them become one flesh.**

**Man presents a picture of Christ;
Woman presents a picture of the church;
GOD makes them joint-heirs.**

SYMPTOMS OF SPIRITUAL DIVORCE

Symptoms of **spiritual divorce** are indicators that a separation is *developing* and needs to be confronted through dialogue. They are “*signs*” and are present at some time in every marriage. **Take about 20 minutes apiece for each to privately do this exercise then exchange your answers and discuss together.** Don’t allow fear to prevent you from being open with each other.

Instructions:

- **Read through all the symptoms.** Which symptoms are currently present in your marriage? Place a check mark next to each one.
- Re-read those that are checked. Select **2 or 3 you feel most strongly about** right now.
- **Write and describe your feelings** about those 2 or 3. If time allows, continue on to the others checked.

1. Prolonged **moods of sadness** in our marriage and in the family
2. Feelings of **disillusionment, boredom, and emptiness**
3. **Dissatisfaction**
4. **Indifference** to each other’s problems
5. Occasions of **coldness** in our relationship
6. **Avoiding or refusing sexual relationship**
7. No interest in things of the other – **lack of sensitivity**
8. Lack of **kindness, tenderness, and small courtesies**
9. **Failure to take time to think deeply**
10. Feelings of **insecurity** and **mutual distrust**
11. **More confidence in a third person** other than with each other
12. Lack of **dialogue** and **intimate communication**
13. Most **communication mechanical, routine, and surface**
14. Feelings of **being alone** and **not understood**
15. Frequent **bad humor** and **tension**
16. Feeling **used**
17. Frequent **quarrels**: in private, or in front of children or others
18. **Ridicule** of each other
19. **Superficial life** and **continuous escapes**, together or alone, such as liquor, drugs, TV, compulsive socializing
20. Attitude of **selfishness**
21. **Insults, rude words, and sarcasm**
22. **Avoidance of situations that deeply need attention**
23. Personal **relationship with God causing conflict**
24. Lack of **appreciation**
25. Lack or **loss of a sense of wonder**
26. Lack of **faith in love and marriage**
27. **Insensitive teasing**
28. **Nagging**

THE MARRIAGE CREED

- **COMFORT EACH OTHER...**Provide a refuge and sanctuary for each other from the chill winds of the world. Your marriage is a hearth, from whence comes the peace, harmony, and warmth of soul and spirit.
- **CARESS AS YOU WOULD BE CARESSED...**Warm your loved one's body with your healing touch. Remember that as babies can die with lack of touching, so marriages can wither from lack of closeness.
- **BE A FRIEND AND PARTNER...**Friendship can be a peaceful island, separate and apart, in a world of turmoil and strife. Reflect upon the tranquility of the many future years you can share with a true friend and beware of becoming battling enemies under the same roof.
- **BE OPEN WITH ONE ANOTHER...**Bind not yourselves in the secretness that causes suspicion and doubt. Trust and reveal yourselves to each other, even as the budding rose opens to reveal its fragrance and beauty. **REALLY LISTEN...**and hear not only words, but also the non-language of tone, mood, and expression. Learn to listen in order to understand rather than listening to argue.
- **RESPECT EACH OTHER'S RIGHTS...**Remember that each is a person of flesh and blood, entitled to his or her own choices and mistakes. Each owns himself and has the right to equality.
- **ALLOW FOR INDIVIDUALITY...**Seek not to create for each other a new mold that can only fit with much discomfort and pain. Accept the other as he or she is, just as you would have yourself accepted.
- **GIVE MUTUAL APPROVAL...**Remember, criticism divides while compliments encourage confidence in the other. Hasten not to point out the other's mistakes, for each will soon discover his own.
- **CHERISH YOUR UNION...**Let no one come between your togetherness...not child, not friend, not worldly goods. Yet maintain enough separateness to allow each other his or her own uniqueness.
- **LOVE ONE ANOTHER...**Love is your *river of life*---your eternal source of re-creating yourselves. Above all else---love one another.