

For those whom God joins . . .

“To keep your marriage brimming with love in the loving cup: When you’re wrong, admit it; when you’re right, shut up” – Oyden Nash

TO THOSE INTENDING TO HAVE A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

The Christian faith is of far greater importance and value than anything else in life. It is singularly the most serious issue, you and I, face. This concerns life in all its dimensions and transcends time and space. It can equip us for life, suffering, and death and beyond all that. The Christian faith as revealed in both the Old and New Testaments of the Scriptures far surpasses the philosophies and scientific endeavours of all time. These only scratch on the surface of things and are only descriptive of the observable. A little knowledge is always a very dangerous thing. It often produces a degree of arrogance not found in those who have greater knowledge. The men of true learning and wisdom are humbled by their awareness of how little they know. Jesus Christ is the greatest revelation of God, given to mankind. In His incarnation, death and resurrection we find the meaning, purpose, origins and destiny of life. Only in this revelation we escape from meaningless existence. As we look to Him, we discover the futility of all our present day attempts to unravel the mystery of life. Only in the acceptance of Christ’s purpose and mission are we able to look outside the content of this life to Him who is the creator of it all. Without this ability, a void and sense of meaninglessness permeate every aspect of our lives. Only through the death and suffering of Christ is there any possibility of us ever knowing our worth and God’s love for us. Other than this, we would find that as our knowledge of all the intricacies and immensity of the universe increases, we become proportionately more insignificant and disposable.

This century’s Darwinists have played havoc with the minds of thinking people. The strategies of this now largely discredited philosophy were contrived and have consequently destroyed faith in the objectivity of several highly acclaimed scientists. Most Christian theologians cowered before those who boldly paraded their new found “discoveries”. After more than 130 years, Darwinists have failed to provide one single shred of empirical evidence to prove their theory. All the technological advances of man have not improved him as a person. Today man is morally destitute. Technology has only made him more sophisticated in his barbarism. Murder, euphemistically called “abortion”, is legal. Impropropriety, fraud, corruption, disloyalty, and sexual perversions (life styles) of the worst kind are promoted in our homes on TV. Pornography and violence are peddled wholesale to the public. Society is breaking up rapidly. Family life is no longer of value and each person lives only for himself. Disillusionment with life follows

and depression has, therefore, become the disease of our century.

Most of us have, however, grown up in a society where Christianity was still the official religion of the country. Christian norms and standards were the criteria by which truth and behavioural patterns were measured. We had some objective standard by which to measure our values and norms. We could appeal to and provide some prescriptive answers to the moral and ethical challenges of our time. Even if our parents were not all that they should have been morally and spiritually, society in general, imposed upon us the essential values of the Christian faith. In school, sport, over television and on the bookshelves, we lived in a society where Christian values and standards were maintained. If not, we could insist on it. We had some form of appeal. We lived in a society where our Christian values were at least protected. In a real spiritual and material sense, the sceptre of Christ ruled over this country. Demonic spirits and influences were active, but always restrained as they operated in Christ's territory. Today our children grow up in a world you and I never knew. They grow up in a world that is wholly given over to Satan. Today we live and operate for Christ behind enemy lines. Parents now have tremendous responsibility to train their children in the ways of God and in the truth of His word. Fathers and mothers have to know the word of God. Parents have to be aware of the immense pressures with which their children have to wrestle. Their children are growing up in a society that is becoming increasingly more hostile to the Christian faith.

It is for this reason that at your marriage, the onus is placed upon you, husband and wife and hopefully in time as parents, to teach you by your life and example the high values of the Christian faith. You are also to instruct your children the word of God. I urge you to please accept this as the greatest and most serious responsibility and priority in your life. You must apply yourself accordingly and may God help you to do so. The Church and I are here to help and encourage you.

Yours with love and deep concern,

Fred Shaw

“Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words, or He will rebuke you and prove you a liar.” Two things I ask of you O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, ‘Who is the LORD?’ Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God” – Proverbs 30:5-9

No.	Question	Yes	No
1.	Have you read the above letter and are you aware of great privileges, duties and responsibilities of Christians in this present world?		
2.	Do Christians in their marriage follow the norms of society?		
3.	Are the standards by which Christians live and model their marriage and home found in the popular media, music, television, films, novels etc?		
4.	Are the standards by which Christians live and model their marriage and home found in the Bible?		
5.	If this is so, do you study your Bible daily so that under the direction of the Holy Spirit you know what those standards are?		
6.	<p><i>“Your word I have hidden in my heart That I might not sin against You!” – Psalm 119:11</i></p> <p>Do you obtain your strength to resist and cope with the influences and pressures of the Godless society in which you live from your friends, other people, drugs, alcohol, other stimulants?</p>		
7.	Do you obtain your strength to resist and cope with the influences and pressures of the Godless society in which you live from Prayer?		
8.	<p><i>“But those who wait on the Lord Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” – Isaiah 40:31</i></p> <p>Do you wait upon the Lord in prayer daily?</p>		
9.	If you live according to the norms of a Godless society, are you living in a state of submission to the sovereignty of God?		
10.	Do you agree that a Godless society does not keep the Lord’s Day in any special way?		

No.	Question	Yes	No
11.	<p><i>"You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God."</i> – James 4:4</p> <p>If you are, are you then living in a state of rebellion against God and His Kingdom?</p>		
12.	<p><i>"If you keep the Sabbath holy, not having your own fun and business on that day, but enjoying the Sabbath, speaking of it with delight as the Lord's Holy Day, and honouring the Lord in what you do, not following your own desires and pleasure nor talking idly—then the Lord will be your delight, and I will see to it that you ride high and get your full share of the blessings I promised to Jacob, your father."</i> — Isaiah 58:13-14</p> <p>Do you agree that Godless people and families do only as they please on Sundays?</p>		
13.	Do you agree that they also do not Worship God on Sundays and on special Christian Holy Days such as Good Friday and Ascension day?		
14.	Do you?		
15.	If no, is it because you are indifferent to God and are, therefore, influenced and guided by laziness, others and other things that are more important than God?		
16.	What about rebellion? If no, is it because of circumstances beyond your control?		
17.	If yes, are you doing something to change those circumstances?		
18.	Do you really want to know God better and to Love Him more?		
19.	<p><i>"Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful"</i>— Matthew 13:22</p> <p>Whatever misconceptions, disobedience and indifference you may have had in the past, are you prepared to seek God's forgiveness?</p>		
20.	Are you prepared to repent... that is to turn from disobedience to God's commandments to full obedience?		

No.	Question	Yes	No
21.	<p>Only those who have placed themselves under the authority of God and His Word are Christians and only Christians can make a Christian Marriage. Christians do not choose which laws of God to obey. To decide to ignore any one of the laws of God is to defy God's authority IN ALL THINGS. He is either Lord of all your life or He is not Lord at all.</p> <p>Do you think that any person who makes solemn vows to God and places themselves under His authority and then does his/her "own thing" will get away with it?</p>		
22.	<p>Those who persistently rebel against God are to be cast forever into the abyss, hell. Hell is the rubbish pit of God and those who revel and scorn God are rubbish, fit only for hell. Those who do not believe this have no need for a Christian marriage because they are not Christians. They are not Christians because they do not believe the Bible. They discard what the Bible teaches about God. Such people do not believe in God. They have a convenient god whom they have concocted for themselves. They do not believe that their partner and their children are God's. They will not provide a Christian home for their children.</p> <p>You do not want to be like the enemies of God? Like those who do and speak only the things that are for their own pleasure?</p>		
23.	<p>You are wanting to follow the example Jesus set for you:-</p> <p><i>"So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; He has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases Him." — John 8:28-29</i></p>		

If at this stage you are in any doubt as to whether or not you are a Christian, you are probably not one.

Christian Marriage is NOT essentially a social or legal institution.

DID THE IDEA OF A CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE COME TO YOU:-

No.	Question	Yes	No
1.	In order to please the family?		
2.	Because of tradition and it is expected of you?		
3.	Just for appearance sake?		
4.	Because of some lingering superstitious belief that a Christian Marriage Service has in itself some kind of mystical power?		
5.	Because you want to start and continue with Christ and the Word of God as the strong foundation of your home?		

Folk often think that the vows made in the marriage will in itself make the marriage work out better. There is nothing magic about a Church wedding. It requires commitment to Christ and His Church and constantly working on the marriage relationship. If not, this is an exercise in futility. It is taking God's name in vain and severely downgrades His whole Church.

As a minister of the Word of God, it is my duty to warn couples of committing the most serious sin of blasphemy. This is also what happens when people make solemn vows before God and then nonchalantly break them. There can never be an excuse for breaking a commitment one makes to God. It is the deadly result of sin. The attitude adopted by many is that it doesn't matter if one fails to keep one's vows to God, because God understands. This sloppy idea is a lie and a deception hatched by the devil himself. He is the father of lies. God cannot look upon sin let alone understand it. God forgives sin but He does not understand sin. To do what we want and assume God understands is presumptuous and false. God can only understand that which emanates from God, Himself. Sin and disobedience do not come from God.

To make vows before God and excuse oneself for breaking those vows is the height of arrogance. It is to treat God with contempt. Who can do this and survive? It is to be in a state of rebellion. When we work out our own daily programmes and follow our own agenda we will always find it inconvenient to Worship God. We will, readily, discard the vows we made to Him. Such folk cannot call themselves Christians.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain." – **Exodus 20:7**

"But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgement for every careless word they have spoken." – **Matthew 12:36**

"If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sin is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgement and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the Law of Moses did without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you

think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of Grace? For we know Him who said: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge His people." It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God," – Hebrews 10:26-31

The marriage service is a commitment to a specific programme of action. This is not easy; it needs dedication, perseverance and constant working at to the end of life. The fruits, however, are glorious and infinitely more so when compared with the heartache, sorrow and meaningless existence of those who choose the alternative route. The alternative is attractive, exciting, easy and very promising, but at the end it is always the same.

"There is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death." – Proverbs 14:12

God does not understand sin, but He does forgive sin. He forgives when we confess and are determined never to sin again.

A CHRISTIAN IS A PERSON WHO;-

- Factually, surrenders his life to God.
- He doesn't position God somewhere in his life.
- He positions himself, under the authority and instructions, of God's word.
- He seeks God's guidance and centres his daily programme around God.
- The fulfilment of his commitments to God is of pivotal importance.

If you are not sure that you are a Christian and would like to know how you can be sure, then please do not hesitate to ask the minister for help. You can also ask for the booklet entitled "**The Way to God**". It will be our great joy and privilege to share with you the wonderful and meaningful life that comes to those that walk with God. It is important for all wishing to have a Christian marriage to carefully and with much prayer and heart searching, complete the study of this document.

It is very encouraging and most commendable when in our time; couples wish to be married in accordance with the Word of God. It is also true that our Lord Jesus Christ Himself requires this of His children.

"But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female'. 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh;' so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. "Therefore what God has joined together, let no man separate." In the house, His disciples also asked Him again about the same matter. So He said to them: "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her." "And if a woman divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery," – Mark 10:6-12

NOTE: The commitment to marriage is so complete that when a man marries, he places all his old friends, habits and even his nearest and most precious relationships, which are normally his mother and father, after his wife. He must say goodbye to his old life and all that went with it. The same principle also applies to the wife.

Christian Marriage is a very serious, solemn but joyous and delightful undertaking between two people who love each other in accordance with God's law. This is an agreement they reach and voluntarily enter into. This is between themselves (jointly and individually) and God. It concerns a very special responsibility and commitment that they undertake in respect of each other. Each to the other is a very precious person who God entrusts to each other's care. Each believing partner is more loved and treasured by God than by the other partner. The marriage is so sacred that it is compared in scripture to the union that is between Christ and His Church. The Holy Scriptures also state that marriage is honourable not only for Christians but for all people:

"Marriage is honourable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge" – **Hebrews 13:4**

Love is a very hallowed gift that God bestows upon His Children and must not be set at risk or speculated with. Marriage must not be undertaken, unadvisedly, carelessly, or promiscuously, but reverently, advisedly, carefully, soberly, and in the fear of God. Careful consideration must be given to reasons for which God ordained marriage.

THESE ARE:

The reciprocal fellowship, help, support and comfort the marriage partners are, under all circumstances, to give each other.

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, His body, of which He is the Saviour. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. – Ephesians 5:19

In a Christian home, Christ is in control. If Christ is the head of your home, nothing will be in your home and nothing will be said or done there that is out of harmony with the nature, holiness and character of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ will at all times be at home in your house, even while watching T.V. The Bible is the final authority and guide in your home. The final arbiter, in all matters of faith and behaviour, is not the human sciences, the media or accredited specialists, BUT THE HOLY BIBLE. Consequently, the children are steeped in the knowledge of God and His Word. In your home, the HUSBAND is the strong spiritual leader. NOT THE BOSS. The family never sees him out of control and without inner strength and dignity. The wife and children see honesty, truthfulness, integrity; stability and behaviour that make them respect him. His word is his honour. His strength and masculinity do not come from alcohol, shouting, swearing, sexual exploits, dirty jokes, aggression or material success. His manliness comes from the invincible authority and power God implants in him. This belongs to all whose lives are pure, incorruptible and undefiled. Next to God, the family respects the husband and father above all else. He is responsible and answerable to God for the spiritual well-being of his wife and Children.

“A wife of noble character who can find? She is worth far more than rubies. Her husband has full confidence in her and lacks nothing of value. She brings him good, not harm, all the days of their life. She selects wool and flax and works with eager hands. She is like the merchant ships, bringing her food from afar. She gets up while it is still dark; she provides food for her family and portions for her servant girls. She considers a field and buys it; out of her earnings she plants a vineyard. She sets about her work vigorously; her arms are strong for her tasks. She sees that her trading is profitable, and her lamp does not go out at night. In her hand she holds the distaff and grasps the spindle with her fingers. She opens her arms to the poor and extends her hands to the needy. When it snows, she has no fear for her household, for all of them are clothed in scarlet. She makes coverings for her bed; she is clothed in fine linen and purple. Her husband is respected at the city gate, where he takes his seat among the elders of the land. She makes linen garments and sells them, and supplies the merchants with sashes. She is clothed with strength and dignity; she can laugh at the days to come. She speaks with wisdom, and faithful instruction is on her tongue. She watches over the affairs of her husband also, and he praises her. Many women do noble things, but you surpass them all. Charm is deceptive, and beauty is fleeting; but a woman who fears the Lord is to be praised. Give her the reward she has earned, and let her works bring her praise at the city gate. – Proverbs 31:10-31

“That children might be brought up to know and to love God.” This implies that they learn to live in obedience to His laws. They must be taught to submit to His will and to live to the praise of His Holy Name.”

“Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgements which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, “That you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged “Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe it, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you, -‘a land flowing with milk and honey’.”Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. “You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. “You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” – Deuteronomy 6:1-9

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

No.	Question	Answer
1.	In what way should a husband and wife leave their respective parents for each other?	
2.	In what way is love the same as responsibility?	
3.	What is the difference between being the head of the house and being the boss?	
4.	In what is true masculinity seen? I.e. what is true manliness?	
5.	What are the spiritual responsibilities of the husband in respect of his wife and children?	
6.	What is a wife's responsibility towards her husband?	
7.	What is a wife's responsibility towards her children?	
8.	What is a wife's responsibility towards others?	
9.	In what ways does she bring honour to her husband and home?	

Apart from the Marriage Laws of the State which are prescribed and incorporated into the Marriage Service, each partner will be required in the presence of God's Church, to vow to God that they shall each undertake:-

- To live together according to the law of God in the holy estate of matrimony.
- To love each other.
- To honour each other.
- To care for and protect each other.
- To forsake all past relationships with other persons.
- To form no new relationships with other persons.
- To maintain these vows and keep themselves only to each other from the day of their marriage until death separates them from each other. This means to love and cherish your partner just the same through:-
 - All circumstances of life.
 - For better or worse.
 - Riches or poverty.
 - Sickness or health.
 - Honour or disgrace.

This is also a covenant that is made and sealed by a ring or rings and is done in the Divine name of the Father, of the Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.” – Ephesians 5:15-18

By keeping the marriage vows of the Marriage service, God protects the Christian home against all the pervading and ever present forces of darkness and demonic activity. These forces would, otherwise, cause the husband, wife and children to become insensitive to the working of the Holy Spirit and the message of salvation.

“For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places.” – Ephesians 6:12

The first statement of the Vow

“To live together according to the law of God in the holy estate of matrimony”.

What does it mean to live together according to the law of God in the holy estate of matrimony?

WHAT ARE THE LAWS OF GOD?

These are essentially the TEN COMMANDMENTS which are set out below:

And God spoke all these words: “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

- 1. “You shall have no other gods before me.”*
- 2. “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above, or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”*
- 3. “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name.”*
- 4. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the*

LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

5. *“Honour your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.”*
6. *“You shall not murder.”*
7. *“You shall not commit adultery.”*
8. *“You shall not steal.”*
9. *“You shall not give false testimony to your neighbour.”*
10. *“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house. You shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour.”*

— EXODUS 20:1-26

WHAT DOES JESUS SAY ABOUT KEEPING THE LAWS OF GOD?

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen; will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practises and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven. –

Matthew 5:17-20

“This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.” –

John 15:12

“Jesus replied, “If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. He who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.” – **John 14:23-24**

By the grace of God, when the husband and wife are obedient to the Word of God, they provide the right climate under which their marriage and family can come to know God. To know God, is eternal life.

“After Jesus said this, He looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son may glorify You. For You granted Him authority over all people that He might give eternal life to all those You have given Him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” – **John 17:1-3**

You are about to start your married life and build a home for your family. Will you make sure the main objective for yourself and your family will be to know God and to love Him with all your heart?

YES / NO

The second statement of the Vow

“To love each other”

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO LOVE EACH OTHER?

“Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful nor proud, never haughty, selfish, nor rude. Love does not demand its own way. It is not irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly ever notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice but rejoices whenever truth wins out. If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him and always stand your ground in defending him. All the special gifts and powers from God will someday come to an end, but love goes on forever. There are three things- faith, hope and love- that keep on forever but the greatest of these is love.”

– 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 & 13 from the living Bible

STATE 20 QUALITIES OF LOVE

1.	11.
2.	12.
3.	13.
4.	14.
5.	15.
6.	16.
7.	17.
8.	18.
9.	19.
10.	20.

The third statement of the Vow

“To honour each other”

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HONOUR EACH OTHER?

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will. For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgement, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man’s gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy let him do it cheerfully. Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves. Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer. Share with God’s people who are in need. Practise hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be proud, but be willing to associate with people of low position. Do not be conceited. Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God’s wrath, for it is written: “It is mine to avenge; I will repay,” says the Lord. On the contrary: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head.” Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.” – Romans 12:1-21

The fourth statement of the Vow

“To care for and protect each other”

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CARE FOR AND PROTECT EACH OTHER?

“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” – Timothy 5:8

“Love does not delight in evil, but rejoice with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres.” – 1 Corinthians 13:6-7

“That is: If you love someone you will be loyal to him no matter what the cost. You will always believe in him, always expect the best of him and always stand your ground in defending him.”

Do you agree that love is responsibility and that love without responsibility is lust?

YES / NO

GIVE THREE WAYS IN WHICH YOU INTEND TO PROTECT AND CARE FOR EACH OTHER

1.
2.
3.

The fifth and sixth statement of the Vow

“To forsake all past relationships with other persons. To form no new relationships with other persons.”

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO FORSAKE ALL PAST RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PERSONS AND TO FORM NO NEW RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER PERSONS?

CAREFULLY CONSIDER THE SERIOUS MANNER IN WHICH THE WORD OF THE GOD WHO CREATED US SEES THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS VOW. THE FOLLOWING VERSES FROM SCRIPTURE ARE BUT A FEW, THAT ILLUSTRATE THIS FACT.

“But God came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man’s wife.” – **Genesis 20:3**

“Thus says the LORD: “Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house; and I will take your wives before your eyes and give them to your neighbour, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this sun. “For you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the sun.” “So David said to Nathan, “I have sinned against the LORD.” And Nathan said to David, “The LORD also has put away your sin; you shall not die. “However, because by this deed you have given great occasion to the enemies of the LORD to blaspheme, the child also who is born to you shall surely die.” Then Nathan departed to his house. And the LORD struck the child that Uriah’s wife bore to David, and it became ill. David therefore pleaded with God for the child and David fasted and went in and lay all night on the ground. So the elders of his house arose and went to him, to raise him up from the ground. But he would not, nor did he eat food with them. Then on the seventh day it came to pass that the child died. And the servants of David were afraid to tell him that the child was dead. For they said: “Indeed while the child was alive, we spoke to him, and he would not heed our voice. How can we tell him that the child is dead? He may do some harm!” – **2 Samuel 12:11-18**

“To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words; which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God. For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.” – **Proverbs 2:16**

“To keep thee from the evil woman, form the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman. Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids. For by means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread: and the adulteress will hunt for the precious life. Can a man take fire in his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned? So he that goeth into his neighbour’s wife; whosoever toucheth her shall not be innocent.” – Proverbs 6:24

“But whose committeth adultery with a woman lacketh understanding: he that doeth it destroyeth his own soul. A wound and dishonour shall he get; and his reproach shall not be wiped away.” – Proverbs 6:32

“A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, to call passengers who go right on their ways: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.” – Proverbs 9:13

“They say, If a man put away his wife, and go from him, and become another man’s, shall he return unto her again? Shall not that land be greatly polluted? But thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; yet return again to me, saith the LORD” – Jeremiah 3:1

“For the land is full of adulterers; for because of swearing the land mourneth; the pleasant places of the wilderness are dried up, and their course is evil, and their force is not right.” – Jeremiah 23:10

“Hear the word of the LORD. Ye children of Israel: for the LORD hath a controversy with the inhabitants of the land, because there is no truth, nor mercy, nor knowledge of God in the land. By swearing, and lying, and killing, and stealing, and committing adultery, they break out, and blood touches blood.” – Hosea 4:1

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

“But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” – Matthew 5:32

“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, and blasphemies.” – Matthew 15:19

“And I say unto you, whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery; and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” – Matthew 19:9

“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders.” – Mark 7:21

“And he saith unto them, whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.” – Mark 10:11-12

Thou knowest the commandments. Do not commit adultery. Do not kill. Do not steal. Do not bear false witness. Defraud not. Honour thy father and mother.” – Mark 10:19

“So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man.” – Romans 7:3

“Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of an harlot? God forbid. What? Know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? For two, saith he, shall be one flesh. But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit. Flee fornication. Every sin that a man doeth is without the body; but he that committeth fornication sinneth against his own body.” — 1 Corinthians 6:15

“Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.” – 1 Corinthians 10:8

“And lest, when I come again, my God will humble me among you, and that I shall bewail many which have sinned already, and have not repented of the uncleanness and fornication and lasciviousness which they have committed.” — 2 Corinthians 12:21

“Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.” – Galatians 5:19/21

“For he that said, do not commit adultery, said also, do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou are become a transgressor of the law.”
– **James 2:11**

“For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banqueting, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you.” — **1 Peter 4:3**

“Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children?”
— **2 Peter 2:14**

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” – **Jude 1:7**

“Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.” – **Revelations 9:21**

FROM THE FOLLOWING SCRIPTURES, FIND FIVE WAYS THAT CAN HELP YOU OVERCOME THE TEMPTATIONS OF THE FLESH

“This I say then, walk in the spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.” – **Galatians 5:16-25**

“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.” — **Philippians 4:8**

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the

renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is His good, pleasing and perfect will," – Romans 12:1-2

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“Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him. Do not add to His words, or He will rebuke you and prove you a liar. “Two things I ask of you, O LORD; do not refuse me before I die: Keep falsehood and lies far from me; give me neither poverty nor riches, but give me only my daily bread. Otherwise, I may have too much and disown you and say, “Who is the LORD?” Or I may become poor and steal, and so dishonour the name of my God,”

– **Proverbs 30:5-9**