



A Closer Walk through Commitment

by Dr. Wil and Jacquie Chevalier

**“Commitment is making a choice
to give up other choices.”**

Commitment is fundamentally about choosing something or someone for the future—a matter of choosing and implementing a course of action.

1. God has designed marriage to be one of His great tools for sanctification.
2. Marriage is a mystery, and the more we embrace that reality by esteeming one of God’s great gifts to us (our spouse), the less we will be tempted to build on the faulty foundation of trying to “remake” our spouse.
3. The more we embrace our differences with love and respect, however, the more we realize that God’s blueprint for marriage is about changing me.
4. Clearly, we live at a time in history when storms of various origins seem to beat endlessly against traditional marriage.

Commitment to Embracing our Differences

1. Understand the importance of renewing your commitment, turning toward your spouse, and rekindling the relationship.
2. Learn to value your spouse and how not to de-value your spouse.

God created men and women to be different.

1. Marriage is an arena in which God's glory is displayed in the right ordering of the man and the woman. This does not conjure up notions of selfish demands, but attitudes of honor, mutual concern, nurture, and love.
2. Being a helpmate should not lead us to think of our spouse as an employee who exists to serve our personal desires. Instead, our marriage should model our joint membership and mutual responsibilities in Christ.

Broken relationships started in the Garden of Eden and have impacted mankind with three specific effects of sin ever since.

In Genesis 3:7, after disobeying God, Adam and Eve immediately knew they had done wrong. Their *knowledge* of sin (they *knew* that they were naked) produced feelings of *guilt* when their consciences kicked in.

In Genesis 3:8, Adam and Eve immediately hid themselves because they broke their relationship with God—which produced feelings of *shame* (covering themselves).

In Genesis 3:10 they *hid* themselves because they broke God's trust and were now in a position of *fear* before God. Hiding, blaming, fear, and guilt are nothing new:

“Down through history and across the world, these three emotional reactions to sin [guilt, shame, fear] became the three basic building blocks that exist in all cultures today. Some cultures have more of one than another, but all three are present in all cultures today” (Shame & Honor, Roland Muller, 2000, p.19).

1. In order to truly appreciate our differences, there must be a mutual loss of independence.
2. For the marriage relationship to be what it was intended to be, a celebration and embodiment of God's love, it requires choosing a lifestyle of patience, self-control, and service.
3. Therefore, spouses need to be sensitive to the ways that men and women respond differently. Embracing our differences demands that we be in charge of ourselves, knowing ourselves to be under the charge of God.
4. It is important to be reminded that the marriage relationship will be mutually gratifying when each spouse is careful to attend to and thoughtfully serve the other—becoming passionately motivated by the welfare of the other.

Your level of commitment is a vital factor in determining the success or failure of your relationship.

Commitment to Having a Sacred Marriage

Marriage is a commitment. God's Word tells us that when a man and a woman are married, “the two shall become one flesh.” This unique relationship involves a mysterious merging of two separate but equal individuals in such a way that they learn to complement each other and thereby complete each other. Jesus refers to the Church as being the bride and likens the relationship of Jesus to the Church as that of the groom to the bride.

How do you look at marriage? What do you expect from your marriage?

Marriage is a refining process. It is an opportunity to be refined by God into the person He wants us to be. Conflict—along with trials, suffering, and other hardships—can be what God uses to bring us closer to Himself and closer to those around us. Remember, a wedding is an event but marriage is a way of life.

God can use marriage to make us holy, which is more important than to make us happy.

1. **Love.** Marriage is an opportunity for love to be learned. Love is at the heart of all relationships. Without love, anger and disrespect rule.

2. **Respect.** Respect your husband and he will serve you. Conversely, respect your wife's need to be loved and valued and she will respond to you

3. **Communication.** There are two extremely critical times for communication between husband and wife, which can set the tone for the day and the evening. These are the first few minutes upon awakening in the morning, and the first few minutes when you are reunited at the end of the day.

4. **Forgiveness.** Forgiveness is accepting the other when both of you know he or she has done something hurtful. Many marriages are gradually eroded and eventually destroyed because one person is unable to forgive.

Like never before, the storms of life are beating endlessly against the foundations of our marriages. Jesus gives a warning to those who attempt to build their lives on the shifting sands of human wisdom. Remember, the Lord assures us that the storms of life will come—to those who break all the rules, as well as those who keep all the rules.

Commitment involves both the initial act of marriage and the ongoing decision to do what it takes to be like the wise builder—constructing our foundation on the Rock. Learn endurance as you recommit yourself daily to your marriage.

Commitment to Casting a Bigger Vision for Your Marriage

God instituted marriage from the beginning of His creation.

1. Marriage is an unconditional commitment—not a contract. And commitment involves action.

2. It is a private binding pledge or promise you also make public. It is a total giving of oneself to another person.

3. The success of a marriage comes not in finding the “right” person, but in the ability of both partners to adjust to the real person they inevitably realize they married.

4. There is something about biblical marriage that is interconnected with the heart of the love relationship between God and His people.

You need eyes that see past today and eyes that see something bigger than your immediate struggles. When we both can confess that there is no such thing as a “perfect marriage,” we can start accepting the beauty of our struggles—marital or otherwise. And, in community there is deliverance from the power of the enemy of marriage. So it isn't just you and the devil. It's you, God, and other believers against the devil.

FOR DISCUSSION

“The whole pleasure of marriage is that it is a perpetual crisis.” –G.K. Chesterton

Based on the quote (above) from G.K. Chesterton, discuss: Do you agree with his observation? Why or why not?