



# THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE

The Essence of Marriage (Part 1)



## Love and the Piece of Paper

“Why do we need a piece of paper in order to love one another? I don't need a piece of paper to love you! It only complicates things.”



THE MEANING OF MARRIAGE



## The Overly Subjective View of Love

"Modern people think of love in such subjective terms that if there is *any* duty involved it is considered unhealthy."



## Consumer or Covenant?

- At your table brainstorm as many "love" words as you can.
  - Mark "E" by emotion words
  - Mark an "A" by adjectives (describing words)
  - Mark a "V" by verbs (action words)



## Consumer or Covenant?

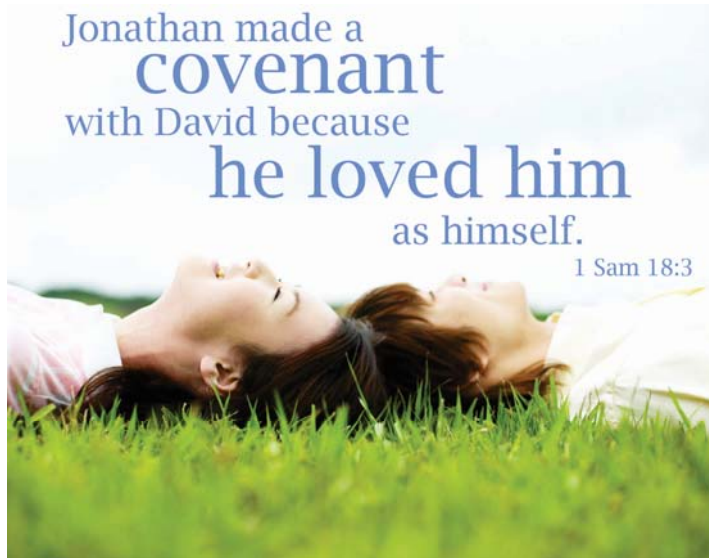
"...the Bible teaches that the essence of marriage is a sacrificial commitment to the good of the other. That means that love is more fundamentally action than emotion."



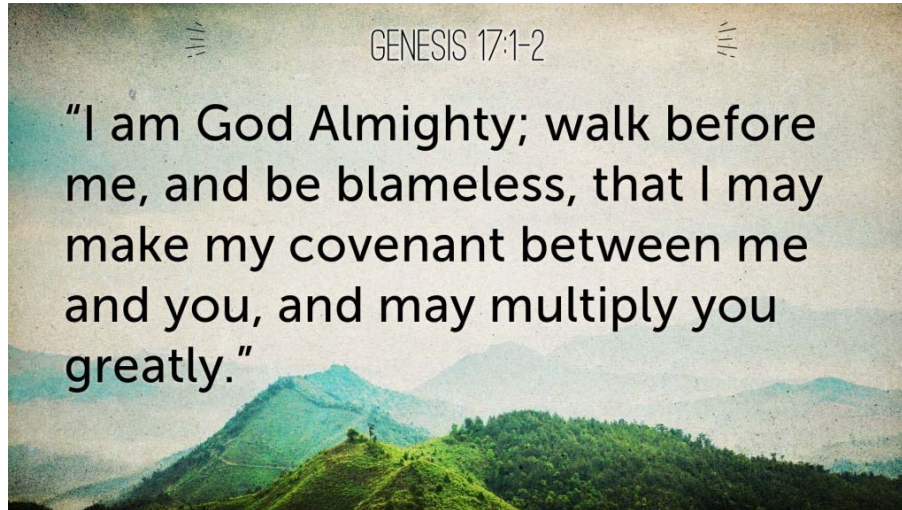
## The Vertical and the Horizontal

Jonathan made a  
**covenant**  
with David because  
**he loved him**  
as himself.

1 Sam 18:3



## The Vertical and the Horizontal



## The Vertical and the Horizontal

"Why do we say that marriage is the most deeply covenantal relationship? It is because marriage has both strong horizontal and vertical aspects to it." (Keller, 86)



## Love and Law



"Love needs a framework of binding obligation to make it fully what it should be. A covenant relationship is not just intimate despite being legal. It is a relationship that is *more* intimate *because* it is legal."



## Love and Law

PLACE ME LIKE A SEAL OVER YOUR HEART,  
 LIKE A SEAL ON YOUR ARM,  
 FOR LOVE IS AS STRONG AS DEATH,  
 ITS ARDOR AS UNYIELDING AS THE GRAVE.  
 IT BURNS LIKE A BLAZING FIRE,  
 LIKE A MIGHTY FLAME.  
 MANY WATERS CANNOT QUENCH LOVE;  
 RIVERS CANNOT WASH IT AWAY.

SONG OF SOLOMON 8:6-7



## The Promise of Future Love

"What can keep marriages together during the rough patches? The vows. A public oath, made to the world, keeps you "tied to the mast" until your mind clears and you begin to understand things better."



## The Promise of Future Love

"Divorce is terribly difficult, and it should be, but the wronged party should not live in shame. Surprisingly, even God claims to have gone through a divorce... He knows what it is like."



I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery. (Jeremiah 3:8).



## The Power of Promising

"[Marriage vows] give love a chance and create stability so the feelings of love, always very fitful and fragile in the early months and years, can grow strong and deep over time. They enable your passion to grow breadth and depth, because they give us the security necessary to open our hearts and speak vulnerably and truthfully without being afraid that our partner will simply walk away."



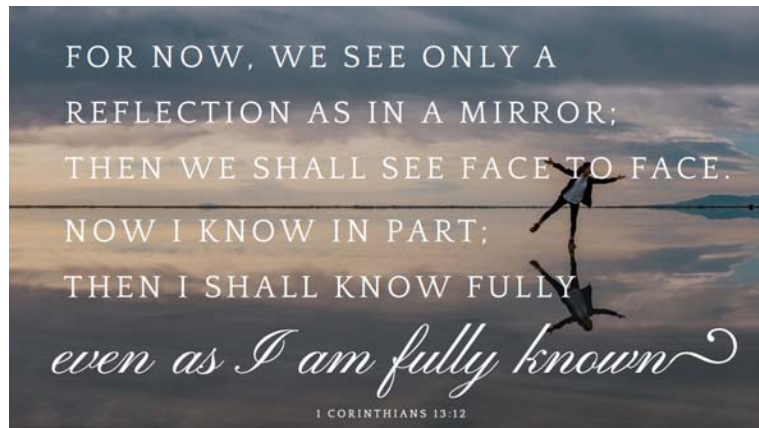
## The Freedom of Promising

"...promising is the means to freedom. In promising, you limit options now, in order to have wonderful, fuller options later. When you make a promise to someone, both of you know that you are going to be there with and for them. 'You have created a small sanctuary of trust within the jungle of unpredictability.'"



## Promise and Passion

"To be known and not loved is our greatest fear. But to be fully known and truly loved is, well, a lot like being loved by God."



## Closing Group Discussion





WE'LL SEE YOU  
NEXT WEEK!



The Essence Marriage (Part 2)