

# Rules of Engagement

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## ACTIVITY SHEET



The spiritual and legal significance of a biblical marriage is one of the key characteristics that sets it apart from all of the other national and cultural marriage approaches. A biblical approach to marriage is not merely a commitment between you and your spouse, but it is also a commitment between you and God.



### SESSION OBJECTIVES

**This Rules of Engagement session is designed to help you:**

- (a)** differentiate between casual, contractual and covenant approaches to marriage
- (b)** understand the Biblical approach to marriage
- (c)** establish a vision, purpose or long-term goal for your marriage

# Diverse perspectives toward marriage.

Throughout the ages, different cultures with different customs, have upheld different reasons for getting married. In our contemporary day and age, there's a progressive push to redefine marriage, whilst others struggle to see the point of marriage at all. But if you are considering marriage, there must be a reason why? What's your motive? What's the vision, purpose or long-term goal you see for your relationship? And importantly, what approach are you taking towards marriage?

There are typically 3 different perspectives of marriage.



Marriage is viewed as a celebration of love and friendship – a good excuse for a party. However, once married, nothing actually changes per se. The signing of a marriage certificate is just a formality.



Marriage is viewed as a contract with a number of benefits. The couple gains a marriage licence, are entitled to citizenship, cultural standing, status or financial/tax benefits. Contracts are time-limited, transactional and can be terminated. Terms and conditions apply.



Marriage is viewed as two people being bound to each other, at the exclusion of all others, for life. A covenant is permanent, with no exit clause – because what God has joined together, no one should separate.

# The spiritual and legal significance of Biblical marriage.

In Hebrew culture (around the time of Jesus), a wedding would require a number of legal stages. There is an important parallel between a Jewish marriage and the covenant God has entered into with us.



**STEP 1**  
Entering into the

## **KETUBAH**

(legal marriage bond)

**STEP 2**  
Payment of the

## **MOHAR**

(bride price)

**STEP 3**  
Consummate  
marriage in the

## **CHUPPAH**

(honeymoon suite)



**STEP 1**  
A price for our  
freedom is

## **NEGOTIATED**

“For you were bought at a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”

**(1 Corinthians 6:20 NKJV)**

**STEP 2**  
Jesus makes the  
ultimate

## **SACRIFICE**

“And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”

**(Hebrews 10:10 NIV)**

**STEP 3**  
Entered into a new

## **COVENANT**

“He is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance”

**(Hebrews 9:15 ESV)**

# A Biblical perspective on marriage.

From a Biblical perspective, marriage is the promise of entering a lifelong commitment to love, nurture and respect the person you will be joined with. This solemn commitment is made at the exclusion of all other people. In other words, your marriage starts with the surrender of your freedom and the sacrificing of your availability to anyone else, ever! Additionally, it is also a commitment to God that you will strive for the ideal of marriage, intended by Him since creation.



Consider which mindsets below relate to contractual or covenant approaches to marriage.

CONTRACT COVENANT

|   |                       |                       |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| <p>"I do" for as long as fidelity is maintained and the relationship remains mutually beneficial.</p>                             | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <p>"I do" for better or for worse, in sickness and in health, in richer and for poorer, for as long as we both shall live.</p>    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <p>Irrespective whether individual needs are entirely met, our commitment to each other is permanent and unwavering.</p>          | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <p>Our commitment to each other is steadfast and resolute so long as each party upholds their roles and responsibilities.</p>     | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <p>Marriage is mutually beneficial and rewarding. Even when the going gets tough, stick by and support one another.</p>           | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <p>If love is something we 'fall into' then its also possible to 'fall out' of love. We respect each others right to move on.</p> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <p>Separation is justified should marriage ever become unsatisfactory or irreconcilable differences arise.</p>                    | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| <p>If our relationship is in crisis, we're committed to getting the appropriate help to make our marriage healthy again.</p>      | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |



**“AND I SAW THE HOLY CITY,  
THE NEW JERUSALEM,  
COMING DOWN FROM GOD  
OUT OF HEAVEN LIKE A BRIDE  
BEAUTIFULLY DRESSED FOR  
HER HUSBAND” (REVELATION  
21:2 NLT). MARRIAGE IS A  
REPRESENTATION OF THE  
EVERLASTING RELATIONSHIP  
THAT JESUS INVITES US (HIS  
CHURCH) TO BE IN WITH HIM.  
HE’S ALREADY PAID THE BRIDE  
PRICE, AND FOR THOSE WHO  
HAVE SAID YES, WE EAGERLY  
AWAIT HIS RETURN.**

# **the Spirit and the bride say, “Come.”**

**- REVELATION 22:17**





## DISCUSSION POINTS

**Q:** What kind of approach are you taking towards your marriage?

CASUAL



CONTRACT



COVENANT



### For him:

**Q:** What does the ideal marriage look like to you?

### For her:

**Q:** What does the ideal marriage look like to you?

### For you both:

**Q:** What's the vision, purpose or long-term goal you see for your marriage?