

God's Cement for Marriage

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The King James translates **Genesis 2:24**, "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*" Other translations render the word "cleave" as "be joined to" (NKJV), "hold fast" (ESV), "cling" (NRSV), "bond with" (HCSB), and "unites" (NET). Cleave carries with it the idea that you are stuck. The Septuagint footnotes that in Greek, the word literally means to "be cemented." It is the same word in **Ruth 1:14**, "*but Ruth clave to her*" (KJV, emphasis mine).

When a marriage begins, the vow cements the husband and wife together. "I do" is synonymous with "I Gorilla Glue." The vow leaves no room to exit the same way you came. One is no longer "never married" again. It is a step that unequivocally renders both parties STUCK.

Paul, in **Ephesians 5:22-33**, outlines the relationship agreement each party makes through his or her vow. The woman accepts her relation to the husband, to be his helper and companion, comparable to him. She is his counterpart, designed specifically by God to complete the familial relationship and perfectly partner with her man in their journey together. Through the power of choice, she submits. The man, in turn, vows to love her with the love of Christ. He uses his position in the relationship to sacrifice. Just as he would rest his body when it fell ill, he considers her good before his own.

The passage concludes in **verse 32**, "*this is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church.*" The cemented relationship between husband and wife is centered around the same principles described in the relationship between Christ and the church.

We learn about this relationship in **Isaiah 42:1-7**. The Servant in whom the soul of the Lord delights (note **Matthew 3:17**) will be given to the people as a covenant (especially note **verse 6**). The church is in a covenant relationship with Christ. He was given as a pledge of God's love. **John 3:16** reminds us, "*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son....*" God promised this covenant to Abraham (**Genesis 12:3, 15:5, 17:7**) thousands of years before Christ arrived. And when he came, Zacharias could see God's promises fulfilled (**Luke 1:71-73**). The Lord keeps his promises, being faithful to fulfillment.

A covenant relationship means that the promised vow, agreement, or pledge is kept through to its fulfillment. There is no time constraint. There are no qualifications for service. One party's non-fulfillment does not prevent the other party from fulfilling. In **Leviticus 26:40-45**, God prophesies to the people that a day is coming when they may break the covenant with him and thus find themselves in their enemy's land. Yet, God expresses a great truth in **verses 44-45**,

Yet for all that, when they are in the land of their enemies, I will not cast them away, nor shall I abhor them, to utterly destroy them and break my covenant with them...but for their sake, I will remember the covenant of their ancestors....

Even when the Israelites did not hold up their end of the relationship, God was faithful. The promised covenant remains that we might enter a relationship with him. It is a relationship based on covenant, with the cornerstone founded on faithfulness and forgiveness.

Marriage is this type of covenant relationship, with faithfulness and forgiveness cementing its foundation. And when done with faithfulness and forgiveness, being stuck is a marvelous gift. It means that marriage provides companionship and support through the ebb and flow of life. To be "stuck" is to be stable through good and bad, abundance and poverty, health and illness. It is to know that God is always

with us, no matter our circumstances, so our spouse will always be by our side, regardless of the current situation.

It is also to know a relationship of forgiveness as God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness, so we enter a covenant of sacrifice where forgiveness and renewal constantly avail themselves.

Therefore, we must heed Christ's warning in **Mark 10:5**. The cement broke in scripture because of the "*hardness of [man's] heart.*" Man considers his wants, his own interests, his own rights, and he forgets the words of Paul in **Ephesians 5:21**, "*submitting to one another in the fear of God.*" The hard heart refuses to compromise. It holds itself as superior. It demands and never concedes. It kills the relationship. How is this the love that suffers long? How is this the love that does not seek its own? (**1 Corinthians 13:4-5**)

If you find yourself cemented by a vow, renew that vow in the love of God through a love that bears all things and expresses itself by kind words and deeds. Fill your foundation once more with faithfulness and forgiveness. Be humble enough to recognize the great blessing God gave in joining you two together. Rejoice, knowing that you are "stuck" through God's glorious design. You cemented perfectly because God desired that two would come together with tender hearts toward each other, join themselves in a covenant of sacrificial love, and experience the goodness overflowing from Him. Monogamous matrimony makes mankind marvelously STUCK in a relationship designed by God for our benefit.

Therefore, what God has cemented, let not man separate!