

Our Heavenly Father's Two Paramount Covenants

Interwoven And Made Possible By The True Gospel



It's tragic that so many marriages end in divorce without the couple ever knowing why our heavenly Father ordained marriage. On the other hand, couples may remain married, but they've never experienced the fullness of our Father's plan for them together. Both



situations happen because our Father's view of covenants has been lost both within and outside Christianity.

The true Gospel is that Jesus willingly sacrificed Himself on a cross to make possible through His blood a New Covenant with His Father. When you embrace the New Covenant with His Father, He becomes your Father too. Our Father's plan for His children is that your marriage covenant reflect through your physical union your New Covenant intimacy with Him in spiritual union. The indwelling Holy Spirit, Whom our Father gives you when you're born again, makes it possible for your marriage covenant to physically reflect the spiritual nature of the New Covenant.



We want you to value the interwoven connection of these two paramount covenants: your covenant with our Father in union with Jesus and your covenant union of marriage. If you're a grandparent, are still married or are widowed or divorced, and you've never understood the essential nature of His covenants, it's not too late to help yourself or someone else. Our Father's blessings come as you embrace one or both of these two precious covenants. Be blessed in your covenant relationships!

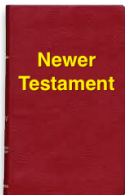
What is a covenant?

Biblically, the word "covenant" can mean "to come into union with". The first paramount Covenant which our heavenly Father offers you through the blood of His Son, Jesus, invites you to live in Covenant union with Him through the indwelling Holy Spirit. It's a Father/child relational union with Him all throughout your life journey.

The second paramount covenant is the covenant of marriage. Our Father intends for the intimacy and union of marriage to physically represent the intimate spiritual Covenant His children have with Him through the indwelling Holy Spirit. These two covenants are interwoven and inseparable. The Covenant with your Father through union with Jesus in His Spirit leads to your salvation at the Judgment Throne. Through the covenant of marriage you reflect the spiritual Covenant union you have with Him. And, the process of covenant union is your bedrock for developing the love, forgiveness and compassion of our Lord Jesus that's first demonstrated in your marriage and then in other relationships.

The Older Testament is THE Source for the True Gospel of Jesus

For you to embrace the Father's Covenant, you need to look to the Older Testament. These Scriptures speak of a Father Who longs for a love relationship with those who respond to His call. While we see in the Newer Testament that our Lord Jesus sacrificed Himself to establish the New Covenant, He tells us that it's in the Older Testament that we find the steps we need to take in order to embrace His Father's Covenant.

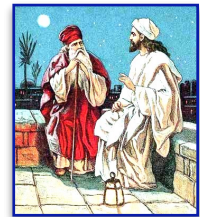


“Whoever trusts in Me, as the Scripture [Older Testament] has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.’ By this Jesus meant the Spirit, whom those who trusted in Him were later to receive” (John 7:38,39). It's vital that we recognize that the only Scripture in existence when Jesus spoke these words was the Hebrew Bible, the Older Testament.

“Streams of living water” refer to the undeniable evidence of the Holy Spirit abiding within those who trust in Jesus as the Older Testament calls for. If you want to trust Jesus “as the Scripture has said,” these parameters are found in the Older Testament. There you discern the true Gospel that enables you to embrace the Father's Covenant.

Over 200 years before the coming of Jesus, a number of what are called the “Hebraic stream” of rabbis taught that a person must experience a spiritual rebirth. These rabbis understood the trust-filled relationship Abraham had with God long before the religious forms and rituals were given to Moses centuries later. “Conversion” for these rabbis meant rebirth. Being “born again” was a shift from religious form being foremost to abiding in a love-based Covenant relationship with God.

When Jesus told the teacher, Nicodemus, that he must be born again (be ‘born from above’) He wasn't citing something that wasn't already practiced by the Hebraic stream of Judaism: *“I tell you the truth, no one can see the Kingdom of God unless he is born again... I tell you the truth, no one can enter the Kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit... You are Israel's teacher,’ said Jesus, ‘and do you not understand these things?’”* (John 3:3,5,10).



Being born again is the point at which your life shifts from reliance on religious practice (or no practice), to wholly relying on Jesus as the One Who has taken the punishment your sins deserve. Jesus endorsed this break from trusting in religious form and practice when He told those who criticized Him about His disciples not fasting:

“No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. If he does, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, he pours new wine into new wineskins” (Mark 2:21,22).

To be “born again” is to trust in Jesus the way Abraham trusted God, with no reservation. Trying to trust in Jesus while relying on religious tradition rips them both apart, rendering both useless. The writer to the Hebrews supports our Lord's emphasis on

becoming a new wineskin and forsaking blind reliance on the religious system, which Jerusalem represented at that time:



“The high priest carries the blood of animals into the Most Holy Place as a sin offering, but the bodies are burned outside the camp. And so Jesus also suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through His own blood. Let us, then, go to Him outside the camp, bearing the disgrace He bore. For here we do not have an enduring city, but we are looking for the city that is to come” (Hebrews 13:11-14).

How do I embrace the Covenant our Father in heaven offers?

His requirements for both ratifying and consummating His Covenant

1. **Repentance**
2. **Love**
3. **Obedient Trust**
4. **Forceful Conviction and Determination**
5. **Forgiving Others**



This is vital! Just as in your marriage, it's your heart devotion to want to live in Covenant union with your Father that makes it happen. As you weigh the requirements, below, for embracing the New Covenant our Father is offering you by His grace, can you see how the five apply to your own marriage covenant?

1. **Can your marriage exist without **Repentance**?**
2. **Can your marriage bloom without your agape **Love**?**
3. **Can there be peace in your marriage without your mutual **Trust**?**
4. **Can your marriage flourish without **Forceful Conviction** and **Steadfast Determination** to make it succeed?**
5. **Can love in your marriage grow without **Forgiveness**?**

1. Embracing the New Covenant begins and continues with your **Repentance**

John the Baptist, Jesus, and Peter at Pentecost all affirmed repentance as the first step toward your salvation. Biblical repentance means *turning away from your sin and turning to God*. You turn away from your old wrong ways and self-rule, and then turn to God in your hunger to be forgiven through the loving sacrifice of Jesus on your behalf. At that very moment you're able to turn to the Holy Spirit Who has come within you to help you live according to Father's will and commands. Don't forget these two distinctives: Turning away from your sin and turning to God. Authentic repentance sets in motion a life with the indwelling Holy Spirit—a life which gratefully responds with good works which the Spirit empowers you to do: *“I declared that they should repent and turn to God and do works befitting repentance” (Acts 26:20).*



These two Older Testament passages stirringly depict our Father's loving acceptance of the repentant, and the heart change you experience when you do repent for your sin:

"Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord does not count against him and in whose spirit is no deceit. When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long. For day and night Your hand was heavy upon me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to You and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord'— and You forgave the guilt of my sin" (Psalm 32:1-5).

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, You will not despise... This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit, and trembles at My word" (Psalms 51:17; Isaiah 66:2).

If you truly want to enter the Father's Covenant in union with Jesus, then examine yourself to determine if holding onto your sins and self-will are more important to you than a Covenant relationship of spiritual intimacy with your Father.

2. Embracing the New Covenant begins and continues with your [Love](#)

The Older Testament speaks of a Father Who longs for a love relationship with His people—in fact, His Word refers to a Husband and wife relationship with Israel! The foundation of this love requirement is found in Deuteronomy 6:4,5:

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

The Hebrew word for love, *ahav* (ah-hahv'), means that you are filled with eager delight and passion for the one you love. You long in your spirit to be with your Father and His Son Jesus and live in Covenant union with Them. The meaning of the Hebrew letters of *ahav* is "a window into the Father's heart." Those who love our Father as He calls for are taken by Him into His own heart. The second of the ten commandments (Exodus 20:5,6) declares our Father's promise to show His love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His commandments.

3. Embracing the New Covenant begins and continues with your [Obedient Trust](#)

The Hebrew word for "faith" (*emunah*) means far more than just belief or intellectual agreement; it is a profound trust in God. Many translations errantly use "believe" and "belief" in a way which falls far short of the trust that's evidenced by your obedience. The Hebrew root for *emunah* means "to jump off a cliff." It's a trust that emanates as an emotional response from your heart. Reliance on the Father penetrates the very core of your being, propelling you to an obedience that starts in your heart and manifests itself in action. Your trust demonstrates that you understand your ALMIGHTY Father's love for you, and your willing dependency on Him ultimately puts to death your own ambitions and plans and goals as you yield to His.



The depth of trust our Father requires originates from His relationship with Abraham, “*who trusted God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness*” (Romans 4:3). Paul summarizes the intimate interconnection of the true Gospel, our spiritual forefather Abraham, our unwavering trust in Jesus, and receiving the Holy Spirit:

“Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by trust, and announced the Gospel in advance to Abraham: ‘All nations will be blessed through you.’ So those who rely on trust are blessed along with Abraham, the man of trust. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by trust we might receive the promise of the Spirit” (Galatians 3:8,9,14).

You embrace our Father’s Covenant by trusting in the shed blood of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. You continue by trusting in the loving care of our Father. Where trust in your Father exists, so does peace with Him. Any worry, anxiety, or concern about your future indicates a lack of trust. That’s why we’re exhorted to cast all our cares on Him because He cares for us! (1 Peter 5:7)

4. Embracing the New Covenant begins and continues with your Forceful Conviction and Steadfast Determination

Our Father tests the forceful conviction and steadfast determination of all who belong to Him: “*Some time later God tested Abraham. He said to him, ‘Abraham!’ ‘Here I am,’ he replied*” (Genesis 22:1). He commanded the man to take his only son, Isaac, and sacrifice him on Mount Moriah, where the Jerusalem Temple would later be built.



Centuries later God singled out the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob to be His chosen people, the Israelites. Having held them in Egyptian bondage for over 400 years, He delivered them through His mighty power and initiated His plan to help them develop forceful conviction and steadfast determination in their relationship with Him. He began His developmental testing of them by allowing near catastrophe to overtake them—and then He parted the Red Sea. A sequence of other divine deliverances took place in the desert as they faced one crisis after another. But their leader Moses assured the people,

“Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning” (Exodus 20:20).

Many centuries later Peter would repeat the same insight: “*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you*” (1Peter 4:12).

Other Older Testament writers clearly understood God’s requirement for forceful conviction and steadfast determination:

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me” (Psalms 51:10).

“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in You” (Isaiah 26:3).

Answering the call of our Father to live with forceful conviction and steadfast determination is a vigorous heart response from which no earthly power can hold you back! As Jesus proclaimed, following Him is a heart issue that is rooted in the Older Testament. And such forceful conviction and steadfast determination were the standard among the first followers of our Lord Jesus to embrace His Father's Covenant:



“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it” (Matthew 13:44-46).

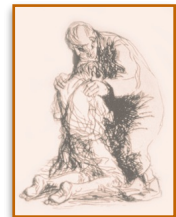
It takes tremendous certainty to give up everything you have in order to lay hold of that which our Father is offering you, both in this life and for eternity. Genuine repentance, unrelenting love, and your complete trust produce the depth of forceful conviction and steadfast determination our Father requires.

As with Abraham and other Older Testament individuals held in high esteem, our Lord Jesus as well as the Newer Testament writers understood the high cost in remaining true to following Him and remaining true to His Father's Covenant requirements:

- *“Everyone will hate you because of Me. But he who endures to the end shall be saved” (Mark 13:13).*
- *“You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what He has promised. And, ‘But My righteous one will live by trust. And I take no pleasure in the one who shrinks back.’ But we do not belong to those who shrink back and are destroyed, but to those who have faith and are saved” (Hebrews 10:36,38,39).*

5. Embracing the New Covenant begins and continues with you **Forgiving Others**

Forgiving others is THE most overlooked truth that's required by our Father. Jesus warns, *“If you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins”* (Matthew 6:15). Can we be forgiven of *anything* by our heavenly Father if we do not forgive those who have violated us? **NO!** Jesus warns what His Father does to the unforgiving:



“His master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers, until he should pay back all he owed. ‘This is how My heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart’” (Matthew 18:34,35).

The Apostle John also warns us about unforgiveness:

“We love because He first loved us. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And He has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother” (1 John 4:19-21).

Those who first followed our Lord Jesus understood that our Father won't allow an unforgiving person to embrace His Covenant. Why? In light of the supreme sacrifice of



His own Son, our Father views **unforgiving people** as **bitter and proud**. Bitterness reflects pride, which our Father resists. We're warned, "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:6).

A bitter person shows no evidence of the Holy Spirit operating as "streams of living water." Our Father doesn't need "streams of bitter water" representing Him in this world. A person who clings to unforgiveness has failed to appreciate how much he or she needed to be forgiven by the shed blood of Jesus. Your decision to forgive opens the way for the Holy Spirit to take up His residence in you. It is He Who heals your heart and emotions, for you can never heal yourself.

Our Father's Covenant and The Marriage Covenant

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the [called-out ones] and gave Himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25).

A Hebraic perspective of marriage among the first followers of our Lord Jesus reflected within the intimacy of their physical union the couple's Covenant spiritual union with their Father through the Holy Spirit. It was for this loving and reconciling relationship of obedient trust that our Lord Jesus sacrificed Himself on the cross (see Ephesians 5:1,2). It was well-known among the Jewish followers of Jesus that the highest gift our Father ever gives a man is a wife. So by interweaving both his covenant with His Lord and his covenant with his wife, a husband could proclaim,



"If you want to know the depth of my relationship with Jesus Christ, see it in the love He has given me for my wife."

The sacrificial love a man is called to have for his wife is the same type of sacrificial love Jesus has for His followers. Jesus fully yielded Himself on behalf of the collective body of His called-out ones, and that's the depth of love He commands husbands to extend to their wives. If he isn't loving her that way, he needs to cry out to our Lord through the Holy Spirit in him to enable him to love her with all that is within him. "He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord" (Proverbs 18:22).

Through the humility it takes to sacrificially love your wife as our Lord requires, your character becomes increasingly conformed to that of Jesus. Marriage is a mutually interdependent relationship encompassing a lifetime of humility and personal sacrifice. Every man who marries puts his ego to death so that he may demonstrate more of Jesus to others: first to his wife, and then to all who know him.

The Bible sternly warns husbands to not mistreat their wives:

"You husbands, likewise, dwell with your wife with understanding as being physically weaker than you are and respecting her as a fellow-heir of the gracious gift of Life, so your prayers will not be hindered" (1Peter 3:7).

***“A wife of noble character is her husband’s crown,
but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones”*** (Proverbs 12:4).

When a woman chooses to be a wife, she is giving up all sense of independence. After God created Adam, He realized that it wasn’t good for the man to be without a life partner. Adam needed a *“helper suitable for him”*—an ezer (EH-zer) (see Genesis 2:18). This Hebrew word implies that a wife completes her husband in areas in which he’d be weaker otherwise. Literally, the word indicates that she *“answers to him.”* Our Father supplies a wife as a beloved companion to come alongside and assist her husband, especially in time of need. But this is by no means a slavish position of lower status! The word ezer is used most often in reference to God as the One Who meets the needs of His people Israel.



A wife as an ezer helps her husband fulfill ALL of his responsibilities before God. That’s because the role of a wife as a companion helper who’s suitable for him is more encompassing than her husband’s role as provider and protector in his companionship. Three Proverbs in particular remind a wife that she needs to maintain a peaceful atmosphere in their home:

“Better to live on a corner of the roof than share a house with a quarrelsome wife” (21:9).

“Better to live in a desert than with a quarrelsome and nagging wife” (21:19).

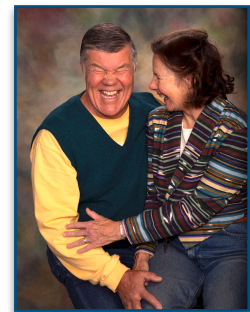
“The wise woman builds her house, But the foolish pulls it down with her hands” (14:1).

Picture the covenant of marriage as a tree. Jesus is the root, a husband is the tree trunk, and a wife is its many branches.



- ***A trunk without branches is a telephone pole, sturdy but fruitless.***
- ***Branches without a trunk are a bush with no stature or sturdiness.***
- ***And a tree without roots is dead.***

The Covenant union of a husband and wife who are born again in their Spirit is a beautiful thing not only on earth but in our Father’s eyes as well. Not all are called to marry, but going it alone in life has never been our heavenly Father’s desire for His children. He recognizes each person’s need for a close friend with whom to share life’s joys and burdens. The relational union that is revealed in the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is perhaps pictured by the intimate interconnection of a marriage. And our Father knows that people more readily give way to sin if they don’t have ongoing encouragement to walk righteously:



“But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Hebrews 3:13).

Out of the loving intimacy and encouragement of a godly marriage other people receive blessing. You could say that the New Covenant with our Father in Christ finds its expression in a marriage that keeps growing in the character of Jesus.

Addendum: The Biblical Backdrop To Covenants

Understanding The Framework Of Our Father's Use Of Covenants



Covenants permeate God's Word. Our Father is both a **Covenant-giver** and a **Covenant-keeper** (Deuteronomy 7:9). It's in the Older Testament that we discover our Father as the Initiator of any covenant He establishes between Himself and people. Each covenant comprises three distinct parameters:

- Our Father's requirements in order to accept His covenant.
- His promises of blessing for obedience.
- His chastisement for breaking the covenant.

Most of the first followers of Jesus were Jewish and were well-steeped in the significance of biblical covenants. Today, though, covenants are understood dimly at best. But the Bible cites the word *covenant* a whopping 293 times—so we ought to pay attention! God established covenants with His people through Noah, Abraham, Moses and David. Yet Jeremiah had prophesied that the Jews could expect a New Covenant, one in which the teachings of God's way of life would be written in their hearts (Jeremiah 31:31-33).

When Jesus stresses, *"This cup is the New Covenant in My blood, which is poured out for you"* (Luke 22:20), He is not focusing on the cup of wine. Rather, He's directing our attention to the goal of our Father that all who put their trust in the atoning blood of Jesus may enter into the New Covenant He offers. The emphasis is on the reconciliation our Father seeks with each person through His Son's sacrifice.

Consider this parallel of the purpose of the New Covenant our Father offers and the covenant of marriage:

When a couple marries, which is more important: the ceremony, or the loving, intimate relationship which the ceremony makes possible? Of course, the ongoing relationship! Our goal in living in union with our Father is that we experience the intimacy of the Father/child relationship that's inherent in the New Covenant. The New Covenant and the marriage covenant are intricately linked. Like marriage, our relationship with our Lord Jesus and our heavenly Father is evidenced by deep devotion in our hearts and our responsive interaction through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

A Covenant Must Be Both Ratified and Consummated

Every covenant requires both ratification and consummation to confirm that the conditions of the covenant have been accepted by both parties. In the wedding ceremony a couple ratifies the intent of the marriage as they pledge from their hearts their vows, such as, "For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, until death do us part." That's why these are called wedding vows. The couple is making a promise to each other, ratifying that their union will be permanent. For a lasting marriage covenant to come into being, there needs to be a pure motive of heart on behalf of both parties.

While the ceremony ratifies the marriage covenant, it is not consummated until the couple shares their first intercourse. Consummation is the critical part that seals the covenant. Breaking the hymen is the seal, the sign that the marriage covenant has been consummated.

Understanding A Covenant Ceremony

Ancient customs depict the way in which a covenant was generally ratified and consummated. Two men would pledge their loyalty to each other, which ratified the covenant. Then they'd cut an animal in two and place the halves between them as they faced each other, half on one side and half on the other. Both men would walk through the middle of the two pieces doing a figure "8" around each other as the blood of the animal drenched their feet.

The figure "8" signifies infinity, which means the covenant was to last forever. The covenant was consummated in the blood of the sacrifice. The two would exchange precious gifts with each other to seal their covenant. Note that with every covenant there must be a seal, a sign that a covenant has been consummated. (Later in this article, when we discuss the New Covenant with our Father that's made possible by the sacrifice of Jesus, our Lord's bloody sacrifice will have even more significance.)

A Covenant Must Be Periodically Renewed

Each time a husband has intercourse with his wife, they are renewing their covenant. The usual place of covenant renewal is their bed, which is why the writer of Hebrews could admonish, "*Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure [undefiled], for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral*" (13:4).

When a child of our Father receives the body and blood of Jesus as they recall in their hearts their union with Him, they are renewing their Covenant with Him. Covenant renewal isn't to be taken lightly. The Corinthian believers were taking the body and blood without understanding the seriousness of Covenant renewal. Paul warned them,

"For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves. That is why many among you are weak and sick, and a number of you have fallen asleep [died]" (1Corinthians 11:29,30).

Communion is much more than consuming bread and wine, or even commemorating a spiritual act. It is the precious Covenant renewal with our Father, remembering that which Jesus has accomplished on our behalf until He comes back for us.

Embracing the New Covenant Is Embracing Your Father's Purposes

The Older Testament ends with the prophet Malachi explaining the Lord's purpose for marriage as well as pronouncing judgment on those who broke their marriage covenant through divorce. We today need to pay special attention to how intensely our Father regards the marriage covenant, despite how widespread divorce has become:

“The LORD is acting as the witness between you and the wife of your youth, because you have broken faith with her, though she is your partner, the wife of your marriage covenant. Has not the LORD made them one [to live in union]? In flesh and spirit they are His. And why one? Because He was seeking godly offspring. So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith with the wife of your youth. ‘I hate divorce,’ says the LORD God of Israel, ‘and I hate a man’s covering himself with violence as well as with his garment,’ says the LORD Almighty. ‘So guard yourself in your spirit, and do not break faith’” (Malachi 2:14-16).

Notice our Father’s distinct purpose for the marriage covenant: “Because He was seeking godly offspring.” But He wasn’t just “making them one” to have children. He intended that these children be trained to walk uprightly in loving service to Him! This is why God chose the Patriarch Abraham (Genesis 18:19) Every covenant that’s initiated by our Father entails purposes to be fulfilled by the person who embraces the covenant with Him. In the Covenant offered to us through Jesus, His purpose is emphasized in Ephesians 2:8-10:

“For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do” (see also Matthew 28:18-20).

Sadly, Both The New Covenant And The Covenant Of Marriage Can Be Broken

You are capable of breaking the Covenant with your Father. How? Through intentionally abandoning, divorcing yourself from keeping His five requirements for entering the Covenant. Our Father’s part of the Covenant will never be broken, but we, as the Older Testament has shown, are not always that faithful. Consider these passages offered by Newer Testament writers as a warning to those who break the New Covenant:

“Watch out, brothers, so that there will not be in any one of you an evil heart lacking trust, which could lead you to apostatize from the living God! Instead, keep exhorting each other every day [keep working out your salvation together], as long as it is called Today, so that none of you will become hardened by the deceit of sin. For we have become sharers in the Messiah, provided, however, that we hold firmly to the conviction we began with, right through until the goal is reached” (Hebrews 3:12-14, JNT).

The writer continues his warning:

“It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting Him to public disgrace” (Hebrews 6:4-6).

Peter as well sounded the alarm about giving way to worldly compromise that causes someone to reject Jesus as Lord:

“If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them” (2 Peter 2:20,21).



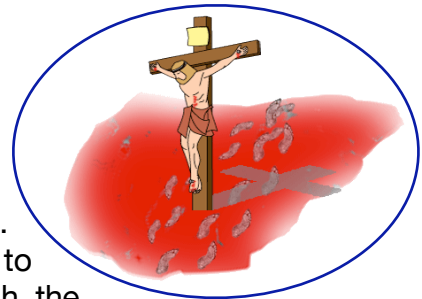
There's a life and death commitment that surrounds embracing our Father's New Covenant. He is looking for your resolute determination to go on living in *Covenant union* with Him. This is why He calls for those who embrace His Covenant to be baptized through immersion in water: “[T]he water of immersion, which is not the removal of dirt from the body, but one's pledge to keep a good conscience toward God, through the resurrection of Jesus the Messiah” (1Peter 3:21, JNT). Baptism is a response of obedience that confirms the pure motivation of your heart toward your Father.



When Jesus declares, “*This is My blood of the covenant*” (Mark 14:24), He is affirming that the Father's Covenant calls for entering into THE most important intimate relationship—because it involves eternal consequences. The goal is to live in covenant relationship with our Father through lovingly obeying our part of the Covenant since He is so faithful to fulfill His part by His grace.

Our Father's Covenant Ceremony

Picture yourself spiritually ratifying and consummating the conditions of our Father's Covenant through the blood of His Son. Father God stands opposite you. You agree in your heart to the requirements for entering His Covenant. When Father God sees the pure motivation of your heart to want this relationship above all things, He walks through the blood of the Sacrifice with you. And Who is the Sacrifice? **Jesus**. You and your Father do a figure “8” in the blood of Jesus. This consummates the Covenant through the blood of the Lamb.



What is the sign that seals the Covenant? Our Father seals you with the Holy Spirit, guaranteeing that if you do not break the Covenant, you will receive salvation at the Judgment Throne. You have been adopted into our Father's family:

“Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, ‘Abba [Dad, Papa], Father.’ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir” (Galatians 4:6,7). Keep in mind that receiving the Holy Spirit as a sign, a seal of the consummation, is vital to your ability to keep the Covenant.

Just as only by God's grace did He call you to Himself through Jesus, only through abiding in His Spirit can you press on in your life journey toward heaven's welcome.

Paul reiterates that the seal of the Holy Spirit is a sign that the Covenant has been consummated: *“Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee”* (2 Corinthians 1:21,22). The presence of the Spirit in our lives guarantees our Father’s faithfulness to set His children apart for His purposes:

“In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, having trusted, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by Whom you were sealed for the day of redemption” (Ephesians 1:13, 4:30).

Noticeable signs are evident when you are indwelt by the Spirit. As much as the rainbow (His covenant with Noah, Genesis 9:13), circumcision (His covenant with Abraham, Genesis 17:11), or David wearing Jonathan’s robe was a sign of their covenant (1Samuel 18:1-4), the Bible makes plain the seal. The seal is the sign that reveals the indwelling Holy Spirit and that our Father’s Covenant has been both ratified and consummated in you. When the Holy Spirit entered the earliest followers of Jesus, some prophesied while others spoke in tongues. Still others healed the sick, or worked miracles (see 1Corinthians 12:4-11).

The Holy Spirit doesn’t just take up a passive existence within you. The same noticeable indicators we see among the first who embraced the New Covenant should be readily apparent if you have entered the New Covenant with your Father. The indwelling Holy Spirit and the sign of His presence is crucial verification for you. Satan has created a myriad of false gospels that can’t change lives or transform people from within. Paul warns, *“And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ”* (Romans 8:9). If you’ve become the Father’s child, you WILL know it!

What Is Salvation And When Do We Experience It?

Salvation was understood by the earliest followers of Jesus to occur at the end of our pilgrimage on earth when we see Jesus face to face. For those who endure to the end by upholding Father’s requirements for the New Covenant, our Lord promises, *“He who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out his name from the book of life, but will acknowledge his name before My Father and His angels”* (Revelation 3:5). THIS IS THE MOMENT OF SALVATION! For your name to be inscribed in the Lamb’s Book of Life calls for you to understand two essential biblical truths:



Justification—placing your trust in, and continuing to trust in, the shed blood of Jesus as payment for the penalty of your sins. You can do nothing to atone for your sins. Purely by grace Jesus accomplished this by atoning for your sins on the cross: *“Since we have now been justified by His blood, how much more will we be delivered through Him from the anger of God’s judgment!!”* (Romans 5:9). Jesus paid the price as our Substitute, the Sinless for the sinful. Accepting the atoning work of His death alone justifies us before our Father and reconciles us to Him.

Sanctification—the lifelong purifying process of the indwelling Holy Spirit Who enables you to be conformed to the character qualities of Jesus. In its fullest sense, sanctification is a transformation process worked in us through the indwelling Spirit. Throughout your life’s journey to your salvation the Holy Spirit transforms you to shine with the love of Jesus: *“And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord’s glory, are being transformed into His image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, Who is the Spirit”* (2Corinthians 3:18).

The pilgrimage toward your salvation:

- Begins with Justification—the day you’re born again, receiving the Holy Spirit because you trust in the shed blood of Jesus;
- Continues as a lifelong process of Sanctification where you become more and more Christ-like through the Spirit at work in you;
- Culminates ultimately in Salvation before the Throne as your name is proclaimed.

Relating The Outworking of the New Covenant To Your Marriage Covenant

- **“Justification” is the day you get married.**
- **“Sanctification” is living out your marriage with ever increasing Christ-likeness.**
- **“Salvation” is when you both have your names proclaimed to the hosts of heaven.**

A Christ-honoring marriage needs to be worked out together in cooperation with the Holy Spirit until you both leave this earth. This ongoing process is dependent on His divine presence within you both as you press on in continuing obedience to live out His purpose and His will for your lives:

“Therefore, my beloved friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence— continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to His good purpose” (Philippians 2:12,13).

Three essential premises have undergirded this article on the two covenants:

1. The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross inaugurated a New Covenant. But, the requirements for you to enter this Covenant—to be born again—are found in the only Scriptures in existence at the time of Jesus, the Older Testament (the Hebrew Bible).
2. Embracing the New Covenant that is offered by our Father starts you on a pilgrimage with His Spirit that will transform you into ever-increasing Christ-likeness as you yield to His will and His purpose.
3. Remaining in Covenant union with your Father when you complete your pilgrimage to your salvation at your earthly journey’s end will find you welcomed at the Judgment Throne.

For further help in living out these essential truths, go to our ***Jesus In Your Home Bytesize*** videos available for free at our website. <<http://www.restorationministries.org/jesus-in-your-home.html>>