

First Baptist Church, Tallassee

THE BIBLE SPEAKS TO MARRIAGE

*We purpose to support and uphold the ideal of the Christian home.
A Christian marriage involves a man and woman, both believers,
living according to Biblical principles, committed to each other
exclusively for life, and seeking to rear godly children.*

Church Principles, First Baptist Church

Planning the Wedding Ceremony

As you plan your wedding ceremony, please keep a few things in mind...

Be sure to secure the services of a competent director to help you coordinate the ceremony.

The purpose of a Christian wedding is to "start off" two Christians in a Christian marriage. It is a joyful, and fun, and Christian, and serious occasion. As such, it should emphasize, not only love, but also faith. That is, the words in the ceremony should be consistent with what the Bible teaches.

The conduct of the wedding party and the music selection and the atmosphere should reinforce the purpose of the occasion. I will be glad to give you any input you want in this regard.

I am glad to include Scripture passages that have meant a lot to you as long as the Scripture passages are used to point to the Lord, and not merely used in some sappy sentimental manner.

On the next few pages, you will find portions of various wedding ceremonies I have used. You can pick different parts and assemble them to form the ceremony you like. We can make it as formal or as informal as you like. Circle the ones you want and return this to me. I will print out a copy of the ceremony and paste it into a book with blank pages to use in the ceremony. Then, after the wedding, I will give you the book to keep.

Ceremony Introductions

OPENING REMARKS A

There is a glory to marriage. Some of our best feelings are attached to this institution. One thinks of companionship and intimacy, of children and growing old together, of love, and of joy.

Little girls grow up planning their weddings and a young groom beams with pride over his new bride. A wedding is a beginning people anticipate longingly, plan meticulously, and for which they spend extravagantly.

In fact, there is such a glory to marriage that it is the relationship used in the Scriptures to picture Christ's special union with His people. Marriage is a relationship that is personal, for mutual caring... and is permanent. The two belong to each other.

Both marriage and a relationship with Christ are covenant relationships, entered into knowingly and willingly. And, modern views of marriage notwithstanding, Christ is the bridegroom who provides for His people and protects them. Through the cross, he has provided forgiveness of sins. By His grace, He keeps us. At His coming, He will take us home to live with Him.

Like marriage, a relationship with Jesus is *entered into*; it does not evolve into being nor come about merely through osmosis from our family environment. It is something one must enter into soberly and deliberately ...Just as David and Leann have chosen to do today.

Who Presents {Bride} in marriage?

-or-

Who gives {Bride} in marriage?

Please circle "Gives" or "Presents"

OPENING REMARKS B

In the quiet garden of Eden before the forbidden tree had yielded its fateful fruit, God saw that it was not good for the man to be alone. He made a help suitable for him . . . and established marriage while the heavenly host witnessed the wonderful scene . . . and the Lord saw that it was very good.

Marriage was honored by the presence of Jesus in Cana. It was said by Paul to be "honorable". Throughout the Scriptures it is ordained that a man shall leave his father and mother and that the two shall become one. Thus, marriage is an institution of divine appointment and should not be entered into inadvisably nor lightly, but discreetly and soberly.

Who gives {Bride} in marriage?

[They come up to platform]

EXTRA REMARKS... can be used after the couple come up onto the platform

{Groom} and {Bride}, the covenant you are entering today is not only the traditional covenant, but the Biblical covenant. One where the husband obliges himself to love and lead. One where the wife promises to adapt her career and ambitions to be a help-meet for her husband. A covenant where Christ is the center, the Scriptures point the way, and the home becomes a haven of love. One that makes a house the hub, not only of family, but also of ministry. Covenant vows to raise children who come in the years ahead in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Christian vows which can be made only by Christians and kept only under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Ceremony Introductions

OPENING REMARKS C

Marriage has been ordained by the Almighty – and is a part of what has been called His common grace. It is one of the blessings which in His great generosity God has given us to enjoy.

Marriage was honored by the presence of Jesus in Cana. It was said by Paul to be “honorable”. Throughout the Scriptures it is ordained that a man shall leave his father and mother and that the two shall become one. Thus, marriage is an institution of divine appointment and should not be entered into inadvisably nor lightly, but discreetly and soberly.

Who Presents {Bride} in Marriage?

OPENING REMARKS SET D

Marriage is one of the blessings which, in His infinite generosity, God has given us to enjoy. We do not come to this moment alone or unaided. Parents and family — and friends, too — who share this joy, who have helped shape us, are here. They have loved us and helped us — and some, though now gone — strengthen us still, by the legacy of their example and the lessons they taught. All this provides a frame of reference for understanding what the Christian family is about.

It also provides a goal for which the Christian couple should strive. Not only enjoying a heritage, but also making and leaving one.

So today, we begin a new marriage, start a new family, and open a new chapter in a rich legacy.

We have come for the exchange of vows and rings and solemn promises of commitment.

Who Presents {Bride} in Marriage?

OPENING REMARKS E

{Groom} and {Bride}, today we mark a beginning like that of a launching of a ship. Who knows all the ports on which she will call, the adventures ahead, or the storms she will ride out? A wedding is a beginning people anticipate longingly, plan meticulously, and for which they spend extravagantly. Beginnings are exciting and they are supposed to be!

Today, we understand in a fresh way the words of Scriptures, “He who finds a wife finds what is good and receives favor from the Lord” (Proverbs 18:22)... “A prudent wife is from the Lord.”

We gather stand today with your church family. In this family you first openly professed your faith in Jesus Christ. Before them, you were baptized. Here you sat under the preaching of God’s Word. And here you stand today entering into marriage by covenant.

{Groom} and {Bride}, the covenant you are entering today is not only the traditional covenant, but the Biblical covenant. One where the husband obliges himself to love and lead. One where the wife promises to adapt her career and ambitions to be a help-meet for her husband. A covenant where Christ is the center, the Scriptures point the way, and the home becomes a haven of love. One that makes a house the hub, not only of family, but also of ministry. Covenant vows to raise children who come in the years ahead in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Christian vows which can be made only by Christians and kept only under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Scripture Readings

SCRIPTURE READING A

From the Word of God:

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave himself for it . . . So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, just as the Lord does the church . . . 'For this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one. . . ' . . . Let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself. . ."

Ephesians 5 - selected verses NKJV

"Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewelry and fine clothes. Instead it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful."

I Peter 3:3-5 NIV

SCRIPTURE READING B

{Groom}, the Scriptures say to the husband...

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies."

Ephesians 5:25-28 - NIV

{Groom}, hearing these Scriptures, do you accept them as God's command for you in marriage and will you obey God in your marriage as you live with {Bride}?

{Groom}: I will, God being my helper]

{Bride}, the Scriptures say to the bride...

"Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands"

{Bride}, hearing these Scriptures, do you accept them as God's command for you in marriage and will you obey God in your marriage as you live with {Groom}?

[{Bride}: I will, God being my helper]

{Groom} and {Bride}, the Scriptures command you both to love each other with a biblical love.

First Corinthians 13 summarizes that kind of love this way:

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

{Bride} and {Groom}, do you come to this altar vowing that you will love one another in the love of Christ?

[{Bride} & {Groom}: We do, God being our helper]

Scripture Readings

Scripture Reading C

Shorter Scripture Reading

From the Word of God...

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

28 So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself.

And {Bride}...

3 ...Let your adornment be...

4 ...the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands

Pre-Ceremony Scripture Reading

May be read by a Christian family member

Genesis 1 & 2 Selected Verses

New Revised Standard Version

26 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness

27 So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth..."

18 Then the LORD God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his partner."

21 So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then he took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh.

22 And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man.

23 Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken."

24 Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one...

Vows

VOWS SET A

{Groom}, take the right hand of {Bride}
and repeat to her after me:

I {Groom} take you {Bride}
to be my wedded wife,
and promise to build together
A Christian home
under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
I will provide for you and protect you,
Cherish and grant you honor,
as a fellow heir of the grace of God.
I will be faithful to you, and honest with
you,
I will stand with you
In sickness or in health,
in good times or hard
Till death alone shall part us.

{Bride}, repeat after me

I {Bride} take you {Groom}
to be my wedded husband,
and promise to build together
A Christian home
under the Lordship of Jesus Christ.
I will be an encourager to you,
And give you my respect
I will adapt as needed to be your helper
I will be loyal and faithful to you,
I will stand with you
in sickness or in health,
in good times or hard,
Till death alone shall part us.

VOWS SET B

{Groom}, take the right hand of {Bride}:

Do you {Groom}, take {Bride},
to be your wife,
Do you promise to build together a
Christian home?
Providing for her and protecting her,
Finding your satisfaction and joy only in
her,
Being honest with her and faithful to her?
Do you promise to stand by her in sickness
or in health, in good times or bad,
till death alone shall part you?
[I do]

Do you, {Bride}, take {Groom}
to be your husband
Do you promise to build together a
Christian home?
Being an encourager to him and adapting as
needed to be a helper to him,
Finding your satisfaction and joy only in
him,
Being honest with him and faithful to him?
Do you promise to stand by him in sickness
or in health, in good times or bad,
till death alone shall part you?
[I do]

Vows

VOWS SET C

{Groom}, take the right hand of {Bride} and repeat to her after me:

I {Groom}, take you {Bride},
to be my wedded wife,
to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love and to cherish,
till death us do part,
according to God's holy ordinance.

{Bride}, now you likewise, repeat to {Groom} after me:

I {Bride}, you take {Groom}
to be my wedded husband,
to have and to hold
from this day forward,
for better, for worse,
for richer, for poorer,
in sickness and in health,
to love, to cherish, and to obey,
till death us do part,
according to God's holy ordinance.

VOWS SET D (Combines Ring Ceremony)

{Groom} and {Bride}, we now come to the exchange of rings and vows and solemn promises. You are today entering into a covenant... a do-whatever-it-takes, no-excuses, commitment to God and to each other. As long as you both shall live, you will be bound by this covenant.

{Groom}, please place the ring you have for {Bride} on her hand.

With this ring, do you take {Bride}, to be your wife,

Vowing to build together a Christian home under the Lordship of Jesus Christ?
Providing for her and protecting her,
Cherishing her and granting her honor,
as a fellow heir of the grace of God,
Finding your satisfaction and joy only in her,
till death alone shall part you?

[I do]

{Bride}, please place the ring you have for {Groom} on his hand.

With this ring, do you take {Groom}, to be your husband,

Vowing to build together a Christian home under the Lordship of Jesus Christ?
Giving {Groom} your respect,
adapting as needed to be his helper,
Being supportive and an encourager to him,
Finding your satisfaction and joy only in him,
till death alone shall part you?

[I do]

Ring Ceremonies

RING CEREMONY A

As a sign and seal of this covenant {Groom} and {Bride} each possess a ring for the other. In all ages and among all people, the ring has been used to seal important covenants. In marriage it remains a ceaseless reminder of this lifetime commitment.

{Groom}, you will now seal your vows by placing this ring on {Bride}'s finger and repeating after me:

In token and pledge
of our constant faith
and abiding love
with this ring
I thee wed
in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit
Amen.

{Bride}, you likewise will now bind your vows by placing this ring on {Groom}'s finger and repeating after me:

In token and pledge
of our constant faith
and abiding love
with this ring
I thee wed
in the name of the Father
and of the Son
and of the Holy Spirit
Amen.

RING CEREMONY B

We come now to the time for the exchange of rings. {Groom} and {Bride}, the rings you have chosen have no beginning and no end. They are made of gold, which does not easily tarnish. They picture the eternal nature of real love and represent the trust you promise each other this day.

{Groom}, take the ring you have for {Bride} and place it on her finger. Please repeat these words to {Bride}...

I give you this ring,
as a token of my eternal love
and commitment,
to live with you in Christian marriage,
from this day forward.
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

{Bride}, take this ring and place it upon {Groom}'s finger. Please repeat these words to {Groom}...

I give you this ring,
as a token of my eternal love
and commitment,
to live with you in Christian marriage,
from this day forward.
In the name of the Father,
and of the Son,
and of the Holy Spirit.

Unity Candle & Pronouncement

UNITY CANDLE CEREMONY A

As a reminder that a couple once married are no longer two but one, three candles are set up. {Groom} and {Bride} will light a new candle and extinguish the two.

Song Starts — They light candle and return

UNITY CANDLE CEREMONY B

As a reminder that a couple once married are no longer two but one, three candles are set up. {Groom} and {Bride} will light the third unlit candle to symbolize the establishment of a new home.

{Groom} and {Bride}, you have expressed your desire for a Christ-honoring marriage.

It was Jesus, upon whom you are building your marriage, who made this claim:

“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness”

And He told us, that as His people...

“You are the light of the world. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and praise your Father in heaven”

As you enter marriage, may the light of His presence in your lives together – and His work through you – shine as light in the darkness.

And as you have taken two separate candles and blended them into one new flame, may the Lord unite you as a new family in one faith, with a shared commitment to the one true God.

Unity candle is optional

Return of True Love Waits Rings

For years, both {Groom} and {Bride} have had True Love Waits Promise Rings. They represent their pledge to save themselves for the one whom they will marry. {Bride} received one [how and when] {Groom} received his [how and when]. Today, they will return these rings to their mothers. This first promise has been kept. Their mothers, in turn, will then give each of them the wedding bands they will be giving to one another.

This part of the ceremony is for those who have True Love Waits Promise Rings and is optional. This portion of the ceremony would take place just before the exchange of rings.

PRONOUNCEMENT

{Groom} and {Bride}, you have entered into covenant vows and have exchanged rings as tokens of your commitment. Publicly, legally, and deliberately have you entered into the holy state of matrimony. Wherefore, I now pronounce you husband and wife. And what God has joined together let not man put asunder.

You may kiss your bride.

Ladies and Gentlemen: I proudly introduce to you, for the first time as man and wife,
Mr. and Mrs. {Groom} {Last Name}

Prayer Time with Congregation Participation

I am going to ask each member of this assembly to have an important part in this ceremony – not only witnessing the vows, but also – by joining in silent prayer, asking God to bless this union. Let us bow for prayer:

With our heads bowed, would you pray that God will protect this union and bless it with many happy and healthy years.

Ask God to grow the love {Groom} and {Bride} have for one another as the years go by, enabling each one to delight increasingly in the other.

Pray that God would bless them in their Christian walk and service, using them individually and as a couple to be a blessing in the lives of others.

Think of the possible challenges ahead. Pray that God will enable them to always rely on His grace.

Pray that children to come in the years ahead, will come to Christ in their youth and will grow to be strong in the Lord.

Father, we thank you that today you are joining together {Groom} and {Bride}. We pray that this marriage will be blessed and be a blessing. Amen

This prayer time is usually placed shortly before the pronouncement

Additional Prayer Requests That Can Be Added:

Pray that God will bless their Christian growth, empowering them to persevere in their relationship with Christ.

Pray for them as a team. Ask God to prepare them for each assignment that He has ahead for them.

Consider the churches they will serve. Ask God to go ahead of them and prepare the churches to receive the ministry.