

Bootcamp Challenge #3 - Covenant vs. Contract Relationships
Challenge #3 – Covenant Relationship Worksheet

Step One: Read the Bible text and the accompanying teaching together. Read it out loud.

Ephesians 5:22-33

“²¹ Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

²² Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

²⁴ But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

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

²⁶ so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

²⁷ that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.

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

²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

³⁰ because we are members of His body.

³¹ For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and shall be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

³² This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

³³ Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.”

Covenants and Contracts

If you read this as a contract, both parties will not like it. Your initial emotional response will be: “that can’t be right....”

However! If you read it as a covenant, you will take it to heart.

First Action:

A covenant changes your perspective from what your spouse is doing wrong to what you can do right. Take some time and discuss how often you focus on what you are doing right as a couple. List out things you feel good about, are proud of, or bring deep meaning to your life. (write in the space what you come up with)

Once you are done, keep reading together.

Step Two: We live in a world where the economy is the strongest it has ever been in human history. One factor that has helped our economy grow is its ability to form contracts. Contracts in business are necessary, but contracts in marriages can undermine the goal of intimacy. The main reason why is because contracts treat both parties as the same. The Bible teaches that men and women are of equal value but different. Simply because both men and women work, it is easy to allow the business end of our lives to spill over into the relational side of our lives, especially our marriage relationship.

Second Action: Take another 5 minutes to talk about how the pressures of career, doing business and making money might be influencing your marriage relationship.

Turn the page

MARRIAGE – Covenant vs. Contract

The following is a chart the shows how covenant relationship compare to contract relationships. Take a moment and try to evaluate your relationship. Each of you should put a mark by the quality that you believe best describes your relationship.

Third Action: Take some time and discuss the areas of your relationship that reflect covenant tendencies and those that reflect contract tendencies.

Type of Relationship	Covenant Relationship	Contract Relationships
First Level	Fulfill commitments	Unhealthy Expectations that demand a return
Second Level	Healthy Receiving back/Expect Mutuality	Unhealthy Demanding Back
Third Level	Unselfishness	Self Preservation
Character traits	Unselfishness	Self Preservation
Main Attitude	Humility	Entitlement
How commitment works	I am committed to God, to you and to us.	I am committed to me, to us, you and then God. In that order.
Conditions	I fulfill my vow to God and you	If you do, I will. If you don't, I won't.
Your emotional experience	Commitment overrides feelings	Feelings drive commitment and strength of commitment.

Finally, pick one or two areas that reflect contract and see if you can move them to covenant over the next two weeks.

Fourth Transformation

Contracts put the emphasis on the missing parts, a covenant puts the emphasis on the blessed parts and looks to build new parts.

Fourth Action Step: Practice these actions steps every-day for 1 week.

1. Each day show me how I can build up, encourage, affirm, bless, and love my spouse.
2. Speak daily words of affirmation to each other.
3. Schedule emotional and relational deposits into your relationship.
4. Write down your disagreement process with the goal of reconciliation. Do you want to be reconciled or do you want to be right?
 When we disagree, here is how we will disagree.
 When we disagree, here is how we will work towards unity.

Final Actions Step:

Pray this prayer and/or write your own.

“Lord Jesus, I have areas in my marriage where I have been treating my marriage like a contract. I am expecting things when I should be praying for and desiring things. I am withholding because I feel justified in withholding. Forgive me for treating my relationship with my spouse as a contract instead of a covenant. Show me how to change. Teach me what to do. Encourage me to follow through. Let you Divine presence, your precious Holy Spirit, inspire me to new places, and to experience new joy. Each day show me how I can build up, encourage, affirm, bless, and love my spouse.