

## Love and Whole-ness #4

### Covenant

1 Thes 5:23

23 May God himself, the God who makes everything holy and whole, make you holy and whole, put you together - spirit, soul, and body - and keep you fit for the coming of our Master, Jesus Christ.

### Review----

The Greek philosophers gave us five loves, the bible only accepts four of them:

Storge: Affection Love

Phileo: Friendship Love

Agape: Self-less Love.

Eros: Romantic Love.

What is the false love?

Epithumia: lust, desire. (the bible does not accept this as love)

Why is this false love? Because it is want pretending to be commitment. It is possession pretending to be affection. It is lust pretending to be covenant. Yet it part of the human experience.

The last three Sundays we have talked about how Love makes us whole. We are independent beings; our lives only make sense as part of a larger whole.

God is love... there is theological consequences to God self-defining as love... not “teach” you love, the “source” of love, the “ideal” of love. But love as a noun. As state of existence, not activity.

Today I want to show how each love requires commitment or covenant.

Three things you need to understand about covenants in the bible:

1. Covenants are the backbone of the biblical story. If one understands how the covenants function in the Bible, one will have a good grasp of how the Bible fits together. If we see the big picture in Scripture, we will do a better job of interpreting the details, and the covenant plays a fundamental role in seeing the big picture.

2. Covenant can be defined as follows: a covenant is a chosen relationship in which individuals make binding promises or commitments to each other. A covenant should be distinguished from a contract because it is a personal relationship which people voluntarily enter. The definition of covenant here is rather broad, but that is because there are many different kinds of covenants in Scripture.

3. Covenant in spiritual sense is deeper than a contract. A covenant is an exchange of persons, as opposed to a contract, which is an exchange of promises.

Of the four loves, Friendship is usually the lowest commitment. That does not mean is low commitment.

The story of David and Jonathan are examples of covenant friendship.

There is value in deep friendship. A friend you cannot count on, is not a friend, but an acquaintance.

Family is a higher covenant than friendship.

God's covenant is a family covenant. It is specifically stated in the promises of the covenant as given to God's people in the Old Testament, to Adam and Eve, to Noah, to Abraham and the Patriarchs, to David, and to Israel (Gen. 3:15, 9:9, 17:7, 26:3-4, 28:13-14, Ex. 2:23-25, Ps. 89:29-37, 103:17, Is. 44:3-4). It is implied in all the admonitions to instruct the children of the covenant and the warning against those who do not (Gen. 18:17-19, Ps. 78:1-8, Judges 2:10).

It is for this reason that the Church itself is called a family or household in the New Testament (Gal. 6:10, Eph. 2:19, 3:16). It is built up of families and households (Acts 5:42, 20:20, Col. 1:18-22, etc.), takes the form of a family with its elders and other office-bearers (I Cor. 4:15, Gal. 4:19, I Tim. 5:1, 2), and is altogether the family of God.

Family without trust, without safety, without loyalty, is the greatest source of pain in the world.

The most broken people in the world come from families that are dangerous places.

The most damaged Christians in the world come from churches that are not safe places.

Family is a masterpiece of God's creation

Adam was given Eve to make him whole, not to fix him, but to make him whole. But don't think of Eve only in the context of romantic love. All the blessings of the human family will come to Adam through Eve.

God spoke galaxies into existence, formed the mountains, filled the oceans, and planted forests with a magnificent range of color and variety.

His playful side is evident in creatures such as humming birds, ostriches and skunks. But the masterpiece that reveals more about God than anything else shows up when God made something called "family" (Genesis 1:27-28).

Two essential elements of family — marriage and parenthood — reveal God's character like nothing else in Creation.

The love between a husband and wife provides a glimpse of Christ's passionate devotion to us as His bride.

In the same way, the ups and downs of parenthood offer a compelling picture of God's tenderness and patience toward us as His children.

What do families give us?

They give us Place (you don't need a reason to be here... you belong here)

They give us Provision (what I have is yours)

Families specialize in meeting needs ... even special needs

Even Christ himself was born within the context of a family. "God in the flesh" submitted to an earthly mom and dad to model what it means to honor parents and to benefit from their loving direction. It was within the nurturing care of His earthly family that "Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men" (Luke 2:52).

- Teach "And all thy children shall be taught of the Lord; and great shall be the peace of thy children" (Isaiah 54:13). God promises blessings for your children when you teach them gospel truths: "If thy children will keep my covenant and my testimony that I shall teach them, their children shall also sit upon thy throne for evermore" (Psalm 132:12).

- Listen James 1:19, "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry."

- Forgive The Apostle Peter asked Jesus, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:21–22).

- Apologize Matthew 5:23-24

So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

- Serve Jesus Christ taught that serving others is the same as serving Him: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me" (Matthew 25:40). Serving your family members can help you become more like Jesus Christ.

God makes us whole in a family. He does not remove us from dysfunctional families, heal us, and set us out as orphans seeking a family. He places broken in families TO heal them

Notice 1 John 1 :5-7

5 This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.