

Series: Thriving in Faith

Title: Covenant Relationships Require Faith

Text: (Gen 16-17)

Covenant: an agreement, usually formal, between two or more persons to do or not do something specified.

We make agreements all the time.

When we borrow money or use credit.

When we get a driver's license.

When we purchase goods and services.

It used to be done on a handshake.

Now it has miles of legal jargon.

Car Commercials – to new toaster ovens have agreements.

In the Bible, AGREEMENTS are called COVENANTS-not

Contracts

A **Contract** is based on limiting Risk

– A **Covenant** is based on Trust

A **Contract** involves limiting liability

– A **Covenant** is based on assuming full responsibility

A **Contract** can be voided by new circumstances

- A **Covenant** cannot be broken,
Irregardless of the circumstances.

God's covenants with man are a way of revealing...

Who He IS.

What He is Like - Character.

What His plan is for us - Sovereignty.

God uses covenants to offer unto us His grace.

God never forces anyone into a covenant, but offers it freely.

Once God has entered into a covenant, He never backs out!

Adamic Covenant: (Gen 3:15-19) The Messiah would come.

Noahic Covenant (Gen 9:9-17)

God promised not to destroy the world by water again

Abrahamic Covenant

(Gen 12:1-3) Vs 2* I Will Bless thee

(Gen 13:13-17) Vs 15-16* I will give you the land, and many descendants.

(Gen 15:1-6) A Child from his own body.

Abram is our example of Faith: (Gen 15:6) *And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness.*

Abram is still learning to Trust God.

Sarai is still learning to trust God through Abram.

10 more years go by from Gen 12-Gen 15.

In (Gen 15:4), God says, one conceived by you!

A year goes by, and Sarai is still not pregnant.

So Sarai decides to "Help" God along.

1st: God doesn't need our help in fulfilling His Promises.

2nd: God will not lead you contrary to His Word to fulfill His promises.

(Gen 16:1-2) Sarai blames God for her inability to conceive.

God's Delay's Are Not God's Denials.

Don't Fall for Satan's Trap:

(Gen 3:1) He question's God's Word.

(Gen 3:4) He Deny's God's plain Truth.

(Gen 3:5) He Re-Interprets God's Word to mislead the ignorant.

(Gen 16:2-3) Sarai leads Abram to violate their marriage covenant to "Help God along" with His plan.

Abram should have stopped this.

But, Abram was struggling with his faith too.

(Gen 3) Where was Adam when Eve was approached by Satan?

Adam heard the command 1st hand, and should have instructed her better.

Adam heard the command and was supposed to be protecting the home spiritually.

Adam was asleep at the wheel.

Abram heard God's Promise, not Sarai.

Abram took God at His word, & should have waited.

God has never let him down.

Satan is quick to prey upon the areas where our faith is weak.

(Gen 16:3) "To wife",

Really, not one instance int he bible is there a peaceful home!

How were they expecting this to work out?

She was just going to be happy as the baby momma?

The uterine donor?

We don't consider the consequences when acting in the Flesh!

(Gen 16:8) God does not recognize the marriage.

"Sarai's Maid"

(Gen 16:11-12) She will bare the father of all those that have persecuted God's chosen people for the 3600 years.

(Gal 4:29) *But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.*

When God made a covenant with man, He would give us a token or symbol to remember it by.

Adamic Covenant: Man Child (Gen 4:1)

Noahic Covenant: Rainbow

Abrahamic Covenant: Circumcision (Gen 17:9-10)

(Gen 17:1-8)

– Father many nations.

- His descendants would be Kings.

- Everlasting Covenant with his descendants.

God promised to bless him with many descendants, the land of Canaan, and that He would bless those that bless him, and curse those that cursed him.

There are Three Prominent Covenants in the Bible for us.

1. Salvation Covenant: It all starts here!

(Is 1:18) – "Reason Together?"

God's covenants are not subject to modification.

(Jn 14:6) (Rom 10:9-10,13)

These are all IF/Then Agreements

(John 3:16) – Believeth 1st, then everlasting life is bestowed.

He doesn't need our help to fulfill it: (Titus 3:5)(Rom 4:5)

The Token of the Covenant: God gave us *the earnest of the Spirit* of God indwelling us. (2 Cor 1:22) (2 Cor 5:5)

He never Nullifies it: (John 6:37) "*In No Wise cast out.*"

(John 10:28-29) "*Never Perish...Pluck out*"

Illus: *We use lawyers when setting up Contracts, because we have a tendency to not keep our promises.*

Would you enter into an agreement with someone, if you knew in advance they weren't going to keep their end of it? NO!

God knew, in advance, we were not going to keep our end,
but He entered into it anyway.
(Gen 15:17-18) Only God passed between the Pieces.

God never nullifies it!

If He did, He said that would make Him a Liar.
(Num 23:19*) (Titus 1:2) *Says God cannot Lie.*
(P 138:2) He magnified His word above His Name
WHY? Because if his Word is no good,
His Name is No Good!

When we go back on our agreements, we become liars, and
our word is no good either!

Illus: I have heard so many people make hospital vows.
If God lets me out I will
It is better not to vow a vow, than vow a vow & break it.

2. Marriage Covenant:

Men: *We are commanded to...*

Love: our wives. (Eph 5:25)
Love is a Choice, Not a feeling. (Deut 7:7-8)
Honor: (1Pet 3:7) *giving honour unto the wife weaker*
Cherish: (Eph 5:28-29) It Takes GRACE!

Women: *You are Commanded to...*

Love: (Titus 2:4)
Honor: Reverence (Eph 5:33) *IT Takes GRACE:*
No man has earned it, But JESUS HAS!
Obey: Eph 5: 22-24 The Key is Trusting God
No man is worthy of it, but JESUS IS!

Illus: Why does God command this?
Because you will never answer to God for the decisions your
*husband makes. **He will.***

So God says to let him have the latitude to make decisions
You Trust the Lord to lead him.
You Pray God capture his heart.
You Trust God to take care of you.

Will he make Boneheaded decisions, YES, that's where you
have to Trust the Lord! It Requires Faith & Grace.

3. Church Covenant: a solemn agreement between the
members of a church to act together in harmony with the
precepts of the gospel.

We enter into this when we become members of this church.
Illus: Do you always read the fine print?
Illus: Installing new software, there is a legal agreement you
have to OK before they will let you install the software.

You need to read what it says, and what freedoms we give
over to the Software Company.

Have you read the fine print on the church covenant?

READ THE CHURCH COVENANT

It says in Bold print that we are covenanting to...

To walk together in Christian love;

We are promising to be sweet and play nice.
- *Oh to live above with the saints we love, That would be*
glory, but to live below with the saints we know, now that's a
different story!

To strive for the advancement of this Church in knowledge, holiness and comfort; *The church is only as knowledgeable or holy as its members.*

This is Trust we have with each other.

You are promising to advance the church by advancing yourself in knowledge of God, Personal Holiness, and to Comfort each other!

To promote its prosperity and spirituality;
To sustain its worship, ordinances, discipline and doctrines;
To contribute cheerfully and regularly, for the support of the ministry, the expenses of the Church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the Gospel throughout all nations.

This is Ownership!! Full Responsibility of the ministry.

It Goes On to say...

To maintain family and secret devotions,
To religiously educate our children;
To seek the salvation of our kindred and acquaintances;
To walk circumspectly in the world;
To be just in our dealings, faithful in our engagements, and exemplary in our deportment;
To avoid all tattling, backbiting and excessive anger;
To abstain from the sale and use of intoxicating drinks, as well as the illegal use, abuse or sale of all mind altering substances and chemicals;

This is Ownership!! Full Responsibility of the Testimony.

To be zealous in our efforts to advance the kingdom of our Savior.
To watch over one another in brotherly love;

To remember one another in prayer;
To aid one another in sickness and distress;
To cultivate Christian sympathy in feeling, and Christian courtesy in speech;
To be slow to take offense, but always ready for reconciliation and mindful of the rules of our Savior to secure it without delay.

This is Ownership!! Full Responsibility of Each Other.

Why is it this way?

We are a body, and all the parts have to function.

No one is vestigial.

No one is a leftover or without purpose. (1 Cor 12:12-13)

We are a Household, everything has to be done decently and in order. (Eph 2:19)

We are a family. We have to follow our authorities and care for each other. (Eph 3:15; Gal 6:10)

Its time to Fall in Love with your Church.

Join It-Membership has it's privileges and responsibilities
Love It-*You can give without loving, but you can't love without giving*

So Support It- In Prayer

For Each other.

For the church as a whole – God Strengthen, Stir, Show

So Support It–Financially *You tithes don't need to go on Vacation!*

Fulfill It's Purpose- Bring Glory to God! Eph 3:21