



# OATHS PART II

**Colossians 3:12-14** *Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.*

Regarding this idea of oaths and promises, G.K. Chesterton pointed out that when we “fall in love” our natural inclination is not just to express affection but to make promises to each other. We start making vow-like claims that we know the other person wants to hear, such as “I will always love you,” or “It’s just you and me forever.” That’s because real love, biblical love, instinctively desires permanence. When it comes to wedding vows, they are much less a declaration of current love (which should be a given), than they are a mutually binding promise of future love. A wedding shouldn’t be mainly a celebration of how loving you feel now. Rather, it is where you stand up before God, your family and friends, as well as the institutions of our society, and you promise, you vow, to be loving, faithful, and true to the other person in the future regardless of your ever-changing feelings and circumstances.

Today, as in Jesus’ day, there is a lot of confusion about divorce. The reason many of us are confused about divorce is because we are confused about marriage. And the reason we are confused about marriage is because we are confused about love. We like the rest of our culture have approached marriage as consumers. We’ve bought into the idea that our individual’s needs are more important than the relationship. It’s the idea that love is basically a particular kind of feeling measured by how emotionally desirous a person is for the other person’s affection. This is the essence of how love is portrayed in Hollywood movies, television, and novels about love and relationships. And as consumers, when the novelty of the initial passion wears off, (which it always does) we find ourselves thinking that we made a mistake, or it was good while it lasted, and begin looking elsewhere for someone or something to fill the void.

This is not the Biblical model of love on which marriage is built. The Bible grounds all love in God’s covenant love for His people as its foundation. In contrast with our consumer culture, the Bible teaches that the essence of marriage is a sacrificial commitment to the good of the other. That means that love is more an action than it is an emotion. Marital love can be defined by God’s love like this: our love for our spouse is to be with them (refers to our presence), and to be for them (refers to our advocacy) we are on the same team, and to be unto God’s redemptive purpose for each of us (refers to our commitment to their spiritual well being & growth).



Marriage is meant to be the most deeply covenantal relationship possible between two human beings. Both Jesus and the apostle Paul point to this when they quote Genesis 2:24 which describes the first ever marriage ceremony “Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.” This idea of “holding fast to his wife” or “cleaving” means to be “united to” someone through a covenant, a binding promise, or oath. In Hebrew it literally means to be “glued” or “welded” to together. It’s a clear picture of permanence.

We can’t miss the message of Jesus’ teaching here. He wants us to know that divorce is not God’s plan. But we want to ask, “What about this case?” Jesus affirms the sacredness and permanency of marriage as an inviolable union. However, because of sin and hard-heartedness, divorce is permitted, not commanded, when the covenant is broken by sexual immorality or desertion by an unbelieving spouse. Divorce is never willed by God and it is always the result of sin. The deceitfulness of sin can lead to the hardness of heart that Jesus speaks about, and ultimately, there is no control over the response of a sinning and/or unbelieving partner. Hearts can become so hard that they are without prospects of repentance and healing. But even in cases of sexual immorality or desertion, forgiveness is always required on the part of the victim. Where there is repentance there is hope of healing. Marital reconciliation and the restoration and preservation of marriage should always be the goal and prayer of believers. Mark Driscoll put it this way, “You shouldn’t get divorced because you can; you should only get divorced because you have to.”

In essence, Jesus says, “You have heard that it was said, ‘You are permitted to divorce.’ But I say to you, ‘I have come to conquer the hardness of your heart. I have come to die for your sins. I have come to count you as righteous. I have come to show you the drama that marriage was meant to represent in my sacrificial, covenant-keeping love for my sinful bride. I have come to give you the power to stay married so that you keep your promises and show what my covenant is like, and how sacred is the covenant bond of marriage.’”

### GOSPEL CLASS

Starts Wednesday, July 2nd at 6:30pm  
Kids Programs through Elementary.

### YOUTH BBQ FUNDRIASER

July 20, 10:30a-1p  
\$8 includes chips & drink

### BAPTISM INFO CLASS

Sunday following each service.  
Baptisms on August 31st

### SEE ALL UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

[ourelement.org/events](http://ourelement.org/events)

