

How is My Commitment to Jesus like a Wedding Vow?

Many people believe and teach that all one needs to do to get to heaven is to say a prayer to accept Jesus. While accepting Jesus is important, it is just the beginning and not the end. Our verbally accepting Jesus, confessing before man – Romans 10:9, is important for it is our conscious acknowledgement of the inner work that God has been doing in our soul since we were born. God, who is the sovereign judge, has the right to extend salvation to anyone that he deems worthy in His eyes. God spoke of this right of judgment in Exodus 33:19 NLT: **The LORD replied, "I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will call out My name, Yahweh, before you. For I will show mercy to anyone I choose, and I will show compassion to anyone I choose.** So our conscious acknowledgement of His grace is not absolutely required for us to receive His grace, but it is essential if we want to grow spiritual in Him.

This was the very case for the children of Israel back in the days of their enslavement in Egypt. They knew of God but they did not know Him personally. The events led by Moses, brought the children of Israel into personal knowledge of God, as they saw Him operate in the various miracles. The ultimate realization of God came at Mount Sinai, where God spoke to the people of the commandments. The people agreed to obey the commandments and in so doing they agreed to a covenant of union with God. God would bless the people as the people showed their obedience to the will of God. This covenant was referred to as a marriage contract with God, with Him assuming the role of husband, Isaiah 54:5 NLT: **For your Creator will be your husband; the LORD of Heaven's Armies is His name! He is your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel, the God of all the earth.** Just as the apostle Paul writes that a wife is to submit to her husband (and the husband is to love the wife in a sacrificial manner as did Jesus) the people of God were to submit to God.

Jesus reinforced this concept during His earthly ministry. The religious leaders of His day had perverted the intentions of the Torah, the instructions for righteous living given by Moses, into a list of do's and don'ts that were inspired by the wisdom of mankind. Jesus rebuked this type of teaching and would bring the teaching of the Torah concepts back to their original intent. You can see this pattern in the Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7 of the book Matthew) where Jesus said, 'it was written....but I now say....' Jesus was exerting His authority as the husband of the body of believers. The believers are referred to as the 'bride of Christ' with the great culmination of our spiritual journey being at the Wedding Supper of the Lamb.

Since Jesus is our husband and we are His bride, we need to submit to His authority in our lives. So the concept of saying the prayer and then living our lives to our own satisfaction is missing the mark. We need to submit to Him as Lord and Savior, and not just Savior. Submitting to Jesus doesn't mean submitting a list of do's and don'ts authored by men or to the authority of human leaders only, for then we are back in the same situation as the Jews were at the time of Christ. We are to submit to the Word of God, as revealed to us by the Holy Spirit. God has a plan for each person and only the Holy Spirit knows how to fulfill that plan. When we find Godly leaders that will allow God's plan to come forth in our lives, and not their own agendas, do we then submit to the authority that God has given them as elders of the people. These leaders will work in harmony with the husbandly authority of Jesus to guide us on our spiritual journey on to maturity in Christ.