

Wedding Exhortation: Understanding Marriage Vows

by Tim Isbell

[1 Corinthians 13.4-7](#) describes the kind of love that holds a marriage together.

In a moment, you will exchange Christian vows of marriage. They express the biblical truth about marriage and have survived the test of time. Listen to them before you say them.

"I <groom> take you <bride>..." and vice versa.

You take one another just as they are. It's not like going to a buffet restaurant where you can choose each item on your plate. It's like going to a friend's house for dinner, where you graciously accept the combination of foods the host prepared. In marriage, God wants you to receive the whole person graciously - just as they are. Your marriage vows are not a license to change your spouse but an acceptance of your spouse.

"To be my wedded wife or husband."

Marriage is about two becoming one – two people giving up their individuality to let God create an integrated reality. Life is no longer what's best for me but what is best for your "team."

"To have and to hold."

The Bible tells us that we give ourselves to one another when we marry. God designed you to enjoy each other, protect each other, and hold one another close.

"From this day forward."

This day will end in a few hours. From this day forward, you begin a new life together. April 29, 2023, is branded into your minds. Let this ceremony always remind you that God has united you two individuals into one.

"For better or worse."

We will pray for the "better" for your marriage. But when "worse" times come - and they will - trust God to use them to refine your marriage.

"For richer, for poorer."

Marcin and Ellen, you are intelligent people who can acquire much in this life. But don't let the love of money or possessions come between you or between you and God.

"In sickness and health."

When sickness comes - and it will - remember, you married a whole person - not just a physical body. When you have been married for 40 years, it won't matter what the outside looks like because you will have united much deeper.

"To love, honor, and cherish."

The love you have is more than a feeling; it is a commitment to one another. Love and cherish one another.

"As long as we both shall live."

Keeping them is essential for a stable household. They will matter to your children and grandchildren - and to your extended families and friends.

Are you ready to make these vows?