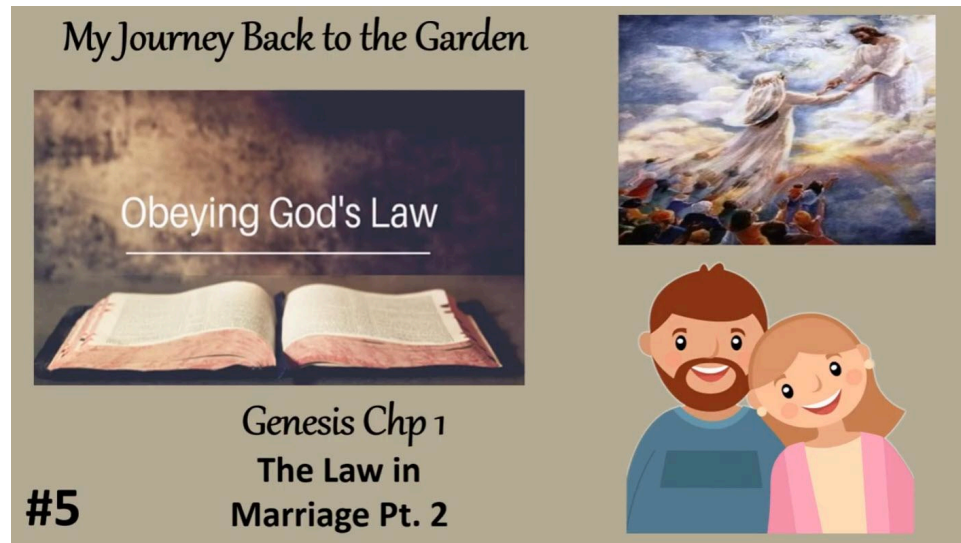


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[#5 Genesis My Journey Back to the Garden Creation as our Foundation The Marriage Covenant and the Law of God](#)

Introduction: The Importance of Understanding Law

Hello everybody. Why don't we start? We're going to just jump right in, so we're going to pray. I'm just going to pray right away.

Heavenly Father, I pray that you'd bless this video. I pray that you would really prepare our hearts, Father, that if there's something that we can glean personally, that you would help us to see that and to be obedient to whatever it is you're asking. Father, I pray this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Okay, we're going to jump right in and we're going to go. So, you're not married. You might think, "The marriage videos don't apply to me, Karen, because I'm not married," but they do. Every believer is in a marriage covenant, betrothed to Jesus. So, how can you relate if you are not married? Well, sometimes it is through what is observed, like your parents' marriage or a friend's marriage. Sometimes it is through TV—a lot of us grew up on TV.

And which apostle wrote the most about marriage? It was Paul. And we know he wasn't married at the time. They believe he wasn't ever married, but I don't know; however, he wasn't married

at the time. In 1 Corinthians 7:7, it says: *"I wish that all men were even as I myself am. However, each man has his own gift from God, one in this manner and another in that. But I say to the unmarried and to widows that it is good for them if they remain even as I."* So the Holy Spirit gives us understanding about a marriage covenant whether we're married or not, just as most of us aren't farmers, but we glean spiritual truths from agricultural parables such as the parable of the sower, the wheat, and the tares. I hope that helps for those of you who are not married, because you are in a marriage covenant.

Okay, let's move on. So, how does God receive love? Well, he says, "If you love me, keep my commandments." He receives love through obedience to his commandments, his law, and his instructions. I'm always going to link those because the more that we hear it, the more it will get in there. What is law? Often, all we think about regarding "law" is that it's negative. But if we will understand the definition from the Word of God, remember: His law was that big umbrella, and under it you have commandments and instructions.

This is really important: "If you love me, you will keep my commandments." He receives love through obedience to his commandments, but not in terms of earning his love. It's just like in a marriage; regarding your vows, hopefully you don't keep them just to earn your spouse's love. The whole reason you got married is because you love each other. And then comes the daily act of living together and walking out those vows out of a heart to show love to your spouse. So going forward, when we read the Old Testament, I hope that we will understand on a much deeper level why God is so upset about his instructions constantly being violated.

Law means instructions and can also be viewed as vows. If you're in a marriage covenant and we're instructing each other, those are vows. You know, when you keep your vows out of a heart of love, it's like saying, "I promise to do this" or "I promise to do that." Vows don't stop at the marriage ceremony; it's just the beginning of learning how to love your spouse. So after you are married, you learn more through your communication and your instruction to each other as you grow together in intimacy. And it's the same with God.

God is love, and the law—the instructions—hang off of his love. We can never look at the law void of his love. When we do, it becomes cold and burdensome, much like your vows can become in a marriage. When you first get married, you're in love. It's all new and shiny and wonderful. You both are very receptive to the marriage vows. And it's the same when you first get saved; you're very receptive to the instructions. Now, when you first get married in an earthly marriage, your vows are delightful. You're in wedded bliss—or some confusion, because you're getting used to always being with your spouse and you're learning more about them. I've read that the first year of a marriage can actually be one of the hardest.

Now, in your marriage covenant with God, when you're newly saved, reading the Bible is delightful and you're excited to learn. But if we're honest, the Bible, when you first are saved, is hard to understand and you might not be sure of what you're doing. In your earthly marriage, everything goes well for a while, but after time, neglect in small areas begins to break down the intimacy. Some of the vows start to become a burden and they begin to feel like bondage. Guess what? The same thing you experience in the earthly shadows the heavenly marriage

covenant. Compromise, laziness, selfishness, unforgiveness—sin leads to a serious strain on the marriage.

When we struggle with our relationship with God, it is an indication of how our earthly marriage is going. They shadow each other back and forth. When we let go in small areas, before you know it, everything becomes cold. Basically, our earthly marriages shadow our heavenly marriage covenant with God. Your relationship with God will affect your marriage with your spouse, either for good or bad.

Notice the progression of the breakdown: neglect in small matters can and does lead to more serious problems. I remember counseling with a pastor, and he said it's the small things. We don't think it's the small things, but remember the weeds. If you just pull out those weeds that are easy, then you don't get that network of weeds. That is so indicative of our marriages—paying attention to each other and those little things, not letting them get a foothold.

It's very important that we don't get a bad view of the law, the instructions, or the wedding vows. Otherwise, that taints our understanding of Scripture. The Law equals Truth that hangs off of Love. The law only becomes bondage when we misunderstand it or begin to compromise and disobey it. Then it switches from love to something that feels like shackles around your hands, keeping you from what, in your mind, is freedom.

Our earthly marriage is such a clear demonstration of our relationship to God. If we just go through the motions, we become disillusioned with our vows, the relationship begins to crumble, and the vows become bondage. God is always going to tell us to die to our inclination to love our spouses however we feel like. He's always going to encourage sacrificial love in a marriage. And let's be honest: our flesh, our sinful nature, doesn't like that.

We can see why it is so sorrowful when we disobey God. He's telling us, "Guard our vows; guard what I have told you of how I want to be loved and how I receive love, so that we can have intimacy." We need to model and teach this to our children so that they can grow up and one day repeat what a healthy marriage truly is. This brings glory to God as we shadow a marriage covenant with him.

The marriage begins to break down when we don't follow instructions from a heart of love. And that, of course, is God's love, not our love. Our love tends to be superficial, conditional, and emotional; but God's love is sacrificial. That sacrificial love is what carries us through the times when we just don't want to obey.

Now, I'm not talking about a perfect marriage. No marriage is perfect. We all fight. When my husband and I got married 36 years ago, we were 19. We got pregnant right away, had my son, and then we got a restaurant right away and worked together. The kitchen wasn't that big, and oh my gosh, sometimes we would fight and argue. In this one fight, we were peeling potatoes and potatoes started flying! All of a sudden, my husband grabbed either the mustard or the ketchup—you should have seen the look on his face. It was like, "Ooh, I'm going to bury you in this." I remember going home; it was a mess.

We used to have this one customer who would come in and say, "Yeah, me and my wife, we've been married maybe three years, and we have never once fought in our marriage." I thought, "Oh my gosh." I was young, so I was like, "God, me and Russ, man, we must really be in trouble because we fight all the time." And lo and behold, he comes in one day and they were divorced. I just remember thinking, "Wow." I think fighting is okay, but you have to fight in the right way. You have to learn how to communicate through challenges and not act like everything's okay. I did not know how to be married; it was hard. Nor did my husband. We had a really tough time, but thankfully God got us through it.

Don't let the little things get a foothold. That really is where everything starts to break down in both relationships. The vows become bondage when we refuse to obey what is instructed, but they are a delight when we are in a right relationship. We're living in really rough times, and it's nice to come home to a home where you have some peace and are shielded from the stresses of the world.

When we don't feel like walking in our vows, they are our guardrails nudging us to get back to where we should be. That's why we don't avoid conflict. That's why we read our Bible. Sometimes when we don't want to do something, we won't open up our Bible because the Bible is going to tell us things that we don't want to hear. It's a discipline to open up your Bible and read the Word.

Romans 8:12 says: *"So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh—for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are the sons of God."* It's the Spirit of Truth. Jesus is the Law. He's always going to lead you back to do what is right. That's where we have to overcome the flesh that says, "I don't want to read my Bible. I don't want to talk about hard things."

God has revealed in his Word how he wishes to be loved. Sometimes we downright don't understand some of it. In my marriage, sometimes my husband and I are a complete mystery to each other. We are so different, and it has taken a lot of prayer and work to view each other's different perspectives as a good thing instead of trying to fight against it. With God, although we won't always fully understand him because his ways and his thoughts are far above ours, our relationship comes down to this: Do we trust that he is a good God, and are we willing to let him lead us through his Word?

The depth of loneliness I experienced in my marriage many years ago was worse than when I was single, because sometimes it felt like intimacy was dangled before me but was always out of reach. So God placed this on my heart to ask: How has your spouse revealed to you how they receive love? Do you try and love him or her that way? Do you have any bitterness or unforgiveness? Do you just downright refuse to love in the way they have asked?

God sees your spouse's pain. *"For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and*

is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from his sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account."

Consistently ignoring your spouse's plea to be loved as instructed can be the same as taking His name in vain, because the marriage may look good on the outside but be broken on the inside. Is there one thing your spouse has asked of you that you refuse to do? It's kind of like when the children of Israel brought their offerings to God and he said the offerings made him sick because they brought the offering but had no intention to obey him. We will do anything else except the one thing that we are being asked to do. Please consider and pray about that.

God's law is truth, vows, and instructions. And those are the guardrails to bring us back into right relationship. He's saying, "Return. Return to your first love." Guard yourselves from letting a root of bitterness grow inside of us.

Let's move on to a scripture in Revelation. Revelation 21:9 says: *"Then one of the seven angels... came to me and talked with me, saying, 'Come, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife.' And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great and high mountain, and showed me the great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God."* The New Jerusalem is the bride, the Lamb's wife.

When you're walking on the road, the law is like a billboard; it's there to give you direction. Notice the narrow path leads to the city. Jesus came and walked out the law perfectly, so he is our perfect example. To sin means to "miss the goal" or "miss the path." Sin wants you off the path. What are we supposed to do? Open up our Bible. Proverbs 4:26 says: *"Ponder the path of your feet, and let all your ways be established."* Psalm 86:11 says: *"Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; unite my heart to fear your name."* Bible reading is so important. It's always going to convict you, but it's also going to encourage you. God knows what it's like to be misunderstood, rejected, isolated, and alone. He says, "I will never leave you or forsake you." He was willing to go to the cross and take the wrath that you should have taken. That's how loved you are.

I want to talk a little bit about sin. The root word for sin means "to err from the mark," like an archer missing the mark. The root word for law is *Yarah*, which means "to lay or throw, especially an arrow; to shoot." It's an archer shooting to hit the bullseye. That's what the law is. Hitting the mark is what Jesus did.

How does grace and mercy work in all of this? Grace is what gets us on the narrow road in the first place. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."* We all struggle with sin and get off the road sometimes. Grace is there to get us back onto the narrow road.

Titus 2:11 says: *"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age."* Grace is to get us back to obedience. What is the definition of sin? It's

transgression of the law. Grace is absolutely necessary for us. It's not "grace gone wild" so we can go do our own thing, because that leads to destruction.

Jesus is light, holy, and righteous; the law is light, holy, and righteous. You can't separate them. The basic foundational understanding is that law is instructing us in how Jesus receives love from his bride. It's relationship. It's intimacy.

We live in crazy times. We're witnessing society unravel because we took down the boundaries. We took down the commandments from our homes, our schools, and the public square. That's why the world is in such a mess. The Ten Commandments are foundational to marriage, and marriage is foundational to families. We've taken down the fences that provide safe spaces and the freedom to cultivate intimacy. Our children are huddled in the corner waiting for us to restore boundaries.

Yeshua, who is salvation, is coming as the bridegroom to gather his bride. He is also returning as King to judge the lawless. We need to repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

The verse that started this whole series is Psalm 1:2: *"But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree firmly planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in its season and its leaf does not wither; and in whatever he does, he prospers."* We're not in the presence of Jesus yet, so we meditate on the law. If your spouse took a long trip and faithfully wrote to you, you would cherish those letters. In the scroll of the book, it is written of Him. The law is leading us to the person of Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 10, it says these things from the Old Testament became our examples so that we should not lust after evil things. All these things happened to them as examples and they were written for our admonition. No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able.

In Luke 24, Jesus said, *"These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me."* And he opened their understanding that they might comprehend the Scriptures. We need that understanding. One of the manifestations of the Spirit is understanding. The fear of the Lord leads to wisdom, wisdom to understanding, understanding to counsel, counsel to power, and power to knowledge.

For those who are single or widowed, you are betrothed to Christ. This is your time to draw near to God. The Apostle Paul said it was better to be single because all your time can be devoted to God. For those that are divorced or going through a divorce, I'm so sorry. I know that marriages end and that is one of the hardest things to go through. In Jeremiah 3:8, it says: *"And I saw that for all the adulteries of faithless Israel, I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce."* He knows how to speak to you. My prayer is for complete healing, because God can bring beauty from ashes.

Return to your first love. Walk in the fullness of his commandments so that you may experience times of refreshing. I'll leave you with this from Psalm 40:8: *"I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart."* God bless, and I hope to see you very soon