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COVENANT OR CONTRACT ?

LOVE, MARRIAGE & MONEY SERIES

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Topic: Covenant or Contract?

Text: Proverbs 18:22 - *"He who finds a wife finds a good thing, And obtains favor from the LORD."* (NKJV)

Introduction

Each time God wants to help a man, He sends such an individual a good husband like a shepherd or a good wife who possesses wisdom to make a great home.

Previously, we learnt that there are dimensions you will arrive at to win the battles of marriage especially when choosing a correct and good spouse. We discovered that before you win, you must fight, finish, have faith and attain the

fragrance gift. If you are not ready to fight a battle then you are not ready to win. No battle is won by sitting but by rising, facing and fighting. A great marriage is made when you rise to fight not physically but by bending your knees. When you notice a wrong character in your spouse, you don't argue it instead you bury it on bended knees.

"Every kneeling Christian is always in control and winning. You kneel to win."

In the last teaching, we discussed that **the first battle you must fight and win is the Battle of Conviction.** Especially for singles, because if you don't fight this battle, your marriage might not work. Stop believing that only love is enough to carry a marriage. I have said many times that marriage is a "miracle worker" which will remove the scales of love from your eyes. For the married, I want you to know that what keeps you to the end is your conviction because there are points you will reach where what you didn't bargain for will begin to play out. The conviction of marriage is key because if you do not win this battle of conviction, you will encounter some other battles in marriage which might force you to pack out. **Conviction is one of the things that keeps you going.**

Even beyond that, I have seen first-hand how the conviction of a woman fueled her faith which made her husband recover from a deadly sickness. She said, *"I have the conviction that this man is my husband, therefore he cannot die."*

Conviction is more than an intellectual perception of physical appearance. I explained last time, how conviction is gotten via prayer, watching, hearing the voice of God and confirmation. Please note it is important you know how God speaks even before you are at the crux of marriage partner.

The second battle we discussed is the Battle of Character Building. You can get the conviction about a person to marry but such a person has a flaw of character. In the school of choosing a life partner, after conviction the next thing to check is

character. Please I have been repeating, Watch and Pray so that you will win any battle of marriage. Don't be deceived by appearances, observe the character exhibited by the individual you are convinced about. Don't marry someone who is always insecure when you are with the opposite gender. Such a person is not mature, because maturity entails being able to contain and control your emotions. Rebekah was hospitable and accommodating, these are great virtues to look out for. Let me add, never marry someone who is not teachable. You must build basic characters that will make your home great.

Let's proceed to the other battles you must win to find a good wife or husband in marriage from our scripture Genesis 24.

3. The Battle of Parental and Family Consent

How can you have conviction about a person, propose to the person and start courting for months up to a year and no one knows not to talk of approving in your family? This is wrong. Please if you are in a courtship for more than a year and you have not even spoken to any family member of your partner, just run. Whatever relationship you are testing for 6 months and it does not work, it definitely can't for years to come. So don't let anyone camouflage to you by saying, "Let's test the waters first."

"A Christian courtship is not done in secret."

Let's pick lessons from verses in the scripture

Verses 27 and 28 - *And he said, "Blessed be the LORD God of my master Abraham, who has not forsaken His mercy and His truth toward my master. As for me, being on the way, the LORD led me to the house of my master's brethren." Go the young woman ran and told her mother's household these things. (NKJV)*

Rebekah ran to tell her household the moment the servant mentioned where he came from. It is important that you have a correct reporting system in courtship and marriage. Not all third party causes doom to a relationship. In fact, the wedding at Canaan of Galilee was only successful because they consulted a third party. Carry your family and parent (physical and spiritual) along. You might have this question inside you, "*What if I tell them and they don't agree?*". You wait and report them to God in prayers.

Parental consent is a battle sincerely because sometimes many parents have another partner in mind for their children in a bid to strengthen friendship bonds. This is very common in our Yoruba culture and unfortunately many of these "matchmaking" end up making their marriage miserable. May God give you grace.

When you are going to meet the parent of your fiance/fiancee to get consent, there are some things you should note;

Verse 32 - *Then the man came to the house. And he unloaded the camels, and provided straw and feed for the camels, and water to wash his feet and the feet of the men who were with him. (NKJV)*

The servant carried gifts along to the house of Rebekah (intended in-laws). **Do not go empty-handed to your fiance/fiancee's family house for the first time.** Even before your physical appearance to them do the least by sending gifts ahead. In fact, a Yoruba saying translates, "*Pour cold water on the ground first to be able to walk on a cool surface.*" Let your "cold water" be gifts in this context so your in-laws can have a good impression of you. Some married will cast their mind to their first time in their in-laws' place, going there with nothing. It is an error to do so.

Verse 33 - *Food was set before him to eat, but he said, "I will not eat until I have told about my errand." And he said, "Speak on." (NKJV)*

Be cautious of your actions during your visit to their place. They notice everything from your arrival to your dressing, carriage and your response to their hospitality. I believe eating on your first visit to your in-law is the wrong thing to do. It's more dignifying if your food is packed for you if they insist, stop being greedy. Be modest and behave well. Dress well and present yourself responsibly and not in a pretentious way. This is a pearl of wisdom in winning the battle of parental consent.

Verse 34 - *So he said, "I am Abraham's servant. (NKJV)*

The servant had an identity. **Present yourself to your in-laws in a traceable way.** Let me share an experience with you. One of my disciples went to meet his fiancée's parents for the first time and he introduced himself as a bonafide disciple of mine. Afterwards, privily his fiancée's mother met with another Baptist Pastor to reach out to me and confirmed his credibility which I did because he is a good follower. Have a local church you are identified with. Don't have identify crisis.

Verse 40 - *But he said to me, "The LORD, before whom I walk, will send His angel with you and prosper your way; and you shall take a wife for my son from my family and from my father's house. (NKJV)*

Have humility in addressing them even after your visit. Reach out to them regularly and ask about their welfare. Even to the married, when last have you checked up on your in-laws?

4. The Battle of Pre-Wedding Preparation

There are battles when it comes to pre-wedding preparations caused by you and even people around you. When planning for your wedding, don't go extravagant. This is where the popular saying comes into action "Cut your cloth according to

your material, not even cloth this time around." Don't spend unnecessarily for one day, save! Reduce expenses, don't follow trends and enter your marriage with debts.

When I settled to wed my beloved, I remember how my wife and I started saving a year before the wedding and afterwards received so many monetary gifts on the big day which we combined with the savings to get our first plot of land. It is all about planning appropriately.

Verse 60 - *And they blessed Rebekah and said to her: "Our sister, may you become The mother of thousands of ten thousands; And may your descendants possess The gates of those who hate them."* (NKJV)

In addition to preparation, please wait for blessings. Don't get pregnant before your marriage. The joining of the court does not carry enough importance as the priestly and parental blessing you receive during joining in church. Please do not engage in couples' life all because you are almost wedded. It carries a curse.

Prayer

Lord, may I not fall into the trap of wrong marriage.