



Equal Faithfulness (and the Sex-without-Commitment Fallacy)

Sex without commitment always contains a measure of emptiness. Emptiness may not be in the foreground (for a while anyway), and it may not be obvious (at least not immediately), but it always lurks nearby like a robber waiting for his spoils. When I say commitment, I'm not talking about "we're committed to each other" statements. I'm talking about a public and legal vow that we don't enter into lightly because it's so difficult to undo. I'm talking about marriage.

Some years ago during lunch with a single guy we started talking about relationships and got into the waiting-for-sex-until-marriage issue. He confidently pronounced "A marriage license is just a piece of paper." "Well," I said, "since it's not that important, why not go ahead and get one?" You should have seen the look on his face. He paused a second, looked me in the eye and said, "You have a point." Marriage actually was quite important to him, at least negatively – he instantly understood that he wanted no part of such a serious a commitment. I didn't have to utter another word on the subject. We chatted about other things while we finished our sandwiches.

Commitment – It's More Than a Legal Document

Commitment implies continuing exclusivity. It refers to a dependable connection that mustn't be broken. It means faithfully clinging to each other, and it's applied to both human and spiritual relationships – between husband and wife and between people and God.

In Genesis 2:24 God talks about a man *clinging* to his wife. (The translation you use may substitute the word "cleaving" for "clinging." I like the word clinging better. Cleaving sounds more like what I'd expect from an ax murderer.) And it's not just husbands from whom God requires faithfulness, it's also wives. Israel is repeatedly chastised for not being the faithful wife that God desires.

Deuteronomy 4:4 and 10:20 apply the idea of commitment to our relationship with God. These verses say that God – like a husband – *clings* to us. Modern Hebrew uses that same word to refer to glue. Glue binds two separate objects together; if it's super glue it binds them together permanently. So does marriage. Faithfulness and super glue have a lot in common. If you've ever tried to rip apart two objects you'd super-glued together, you've ended up damaging both of them. Ripping apart a marriage has the same result.

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God never budes on His demand for marital faithfulness. He can't, because to do so would compromise this picture of His utter faithfulness to us. If you haven't yet done so, read [God's Startling Analogy](#) for a vivid picture of the intensity of His commitment to those who are "wedded" to Him.

God's insistence on faithfulness is for our benefit. Always, starting with Eden, has He hungered for us to experience pleasure and intimacy with Him. And that's where faithfulness comes in. Faithfulness nourishes both intimacy and pleasure. How so? Confidence in a spouse's faithfulness to us brings a sense of safety; safety increases our willingness to be intimately close to them; and intimate contact allows us to receive the best of pleasure. Delight, as it turns out, rests on the foundation of equal faithfulness.