



The Bride Price (It Costs to Be God's Intimate)

In many cultures, ancient and modern, grooms must pay the bride's family a bride price before they're free to marry their betrothed. Prices vary, as does how they're determined – in some cultures brides are priced by education or social status, in others by how much they weigh! But here's what's important: the couple cannot be joined before the bridegroom pays the bride price. Only then can the veil separating them be removed.

God often uses human customs to illustrate His own activity; the wedding veil (and, as we'll see shortly, the bride price) are two examples.

Temple Veils and Bridal Veils

When God told Moses how to build a place in which to worship Him, He made sure the place contained a veil. Moses' structure was a portable tent or tabernacle, followed by Solomon's and then Herod's temple. Three different structures. But each of the three contained a special room, the Holy of Holies, where God was present. And each of the three contained a veil which stood at the entrance to the Holy of Holies and separated the people from the presence of God.

These veils were no gossamer flimsy things, but imposing barriers. Rabbinic tradition describes the temple veil as almost four inches thick. The message was clear: God stays on one side of the veil; the people stay on the other. Once a year the high priest got to enter, and they tied a cord to his leg so they could drag him out of that fearsome encounter if he was unable to exit on his own.

The Old Testament describes several kinds of coverings which our English Bibles translate as "veil": a woven web or blanket, the scarf Moses uses to cover his shining face, curtains used at entrances of tents, the shawl with which Rebekah covers herself when she sees Isaac approaching, the woman's veil worn by virgins and brides, and the temple veil. The New Testament describes two veils: the veil used by Moses to cover his shining face and the veil in the temple.

While all those veils provide a barrier and block the view, two of them, the bride's veil and the temple's veil, illustrate God's parallel between weddings and worship. These two veils – whether the flimsy veil between bride and groom or the thick veil between us and God – form a barrier that must be removed before either pair can become one.

**We can easily remove a bride's sheer veil.
Only God can remove the thick veil between us and Him.**

God Pays a Bride Price

It costs to be God's intimate, but it doesn't cost *us*. It cost *Jesus*. It cost Him His life.

The temple veil, the thickest of all biblical veils, formed an impenetrable barrier between humanity and God ... until God tore it apart. When did He do that? The moment Jesus died. Why did He do it? To signal the availability of intimacy with Him. For whom did He do it? For anyone who asks.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20...you are not your own; you have been bought with a price...
Ephesians 2:13 ...you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ

Love Requires Choice

Most every little kid in Sunday school has sung “Jesus loves me this I know, for the bible tells me so,” but few of us, kids or adults, think about what love implies. Love is a choice – it can't be mandated, by people or by God. Without choice, love is not love. Love *requires* choice. Mutual love requires mutual choice – each party chooses to give themselves to the other.

God loves the world (John 3:16), yet refuses to require that the world love Him. God won't force Himself on anyone. Through Jesus, He *offers* everyone intimacy with Himself yet *gives* everyone the freedom to accept or reject His offer. Said more personally, God gives each person the freedom to break His heart.

God gives each of us the freedom to break His heart.

Our heavenly suitor has paid the bride price, proposed, and given us the choice to welcome or refuse Him. We're free to push Him away. But if we welcome Him? Ahhh! Then our wedding approaches. Full intimacy draws near. And Jesus, our bridegroom, awaits.

Two Questions

How about you - do you want to be at this wedding?
Have you RSVP'd?

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This post offers content from my current book-in-progress:
Sex & Worship: The Presence of Intimacy, Passion, and Pleasure.
[Preview Its Table of Contents Here](#)

[For further understanding of what it means to be the bride of Christ, see [Rav Stedman's analysis of Romans 7:1-6.](#)]