**Marriage Ceremony**

 ***originally used by Herbert W Armstrong -
(Taken from the ministerial Black Book)***

We are here as family and friends to celebrate the wedding of......................................................

Having grown to love one another ..................................and ................................... have chosen to commit their lives to each other and so today, they are asking God to bind them as Husband and Wife.

Surely there can be no more joyous ceremony than this we now [enter](http://cogiw.org/misc/marriageCeremony.htm).

Marriage is not only a natural [union](http://cogiw.org/misc/marriageCeremony.htm), but it is a divine institution ordained by God.

It was established, not by man, but by the eternal God at creation and derives its authority from the divine laws of God which are immutable and unchangeable.

Men and women were created with the marvelous potential of eternal life in the family of God. At the foundation this present evil world mankind, by rejecting the tree of life, rejected the government and the immutable laws of God and built his own civilization with its customs and laws respecting marriage. God's laws however are in force within the church, which is called out to be separate from the world.

Therefore it is only fitting that we should consider the laws of God governing this union as revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

When God created life upon the earth He made human beings the pinnacle of the physical creation, fashioned in His own image.

When God created the first man upon earth the eternal God said in *Genesis 2:18 "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him."* When the woman was presented to him, Adam said, *"This is now*[*bone*](http://cogiw.org/misc/marriageCeremony.htm)*of my bones and flesh of my flesh." Gen. 2:23-24* The Creator then united the first man and woman as husband and wife. *"Therefore man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and they shall become one flesh."* *"And God blessed them and God said unto them be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth."*

And Jesus said....*from the beginning of creation God made them male and female. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother and cleave unto his wife and they shall become one flesh so then they are no more two, but one flesh.*

*What therefore God hath joined together let not man put asunder*....and He said unto the Church, *whosoever shall put away his wife and marry another commits adultery against her, and if a woman shall put away her husband and shall be married to another she commits adultery.*

Thus it is revealed that within the church it is God, not man or the laws of man, who joins together husband and wife as one flesh, and what God has so united and bound for life, man is commanded on that authority which supersedes all authority, not to separate or marry another, except on scriptural grounds; and any lessor codes of man granting such separation or remarriage are, for the church, in defiance of, and rendered null and void by the higher laws of Almighty God the creator.

This marriage therefore is bound by the authority of the Supreme Court of Heaven.

Let us now notice God's scriptural instructions regarding the marriage state.

In Ephesians chapter 5 it says to both husband and wife...*"submit yourselves one to another in the fear of God."* The sacred marriage covenant calls upon you to yield yourselves to God and each other always giving preference to the welfare of the other.

Paul goes on to say: *"Wives submit yourselves unto your husbands as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church. Therefore as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their husbands in everything."*

Paul also discusses the husbands responsibility. He says, *"Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. That He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That He might present it to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that it might be holy and without blemish. So ought men to love their wives.......let every one of you in particular so love his wife even as himself, and the wife, see that she deeply respects her husband."*

In I Peter 3 Paul said,.....*"likewise you wives be in subjection to your own husbands.....even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are so long as you do well.*

*Likewise you husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel and as being heirs together of the grace of life that your prayers be not hindered."*

The essential qualities of a happy and successful marriage are those that express an ever growing Godly love as described by the apostle Paul.

In I Corinthians 13 he wrote: *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it is not rude, it is not self seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of evil. Love does not delight itself in evil, but rejoices in the truth, it always protects, trusts, hopes and preserves....love never fails."*

As a loving Father, God wants to pour out upon us His richest blessings. He wants us to be supremely happy. To this end He has given you..............................and you....................................the wonderful gift of marriage.

Because marriage is a divine institution and we are asking God to bind you as husband and wife, it is fitting and right that each of you should faithfully promise before God to accept the sacred marriage covenant according to the divinely ordained conditions established by God.

Repeat after me: I.............................., faithfully promise and covenant with God in the presence of these witnesses, to take you................................to be my lawful wedded wife for as long as we both shall live, to love you, to cherish you, to honor you and to provide for you.

Repeat after me: I ............................., faithfully promise and covenant with God in the presence of these witnesses to take you.................................to be my lawful wedded husband for as long as we both shall live. To love you, to cherish you, to honor you, and, as God has ordained, to submit myself to you.

Inasmuch as the scriptural example in all cases of ordination, or setting apart, is the laying on of hands, please join your right hands and with the laying on of my hands I will ask the Eternal God to unite you as husband and wife.



