

If emotional love ship-wrecks because of human-to-human failure, God's command to the husband in Ephesians 5, to "...so love his own wife as himself..." still applies, and the husband must be obedient if he is to have God's approval.

Likewise, "...let the wife see that she respects her husband..." controls the attitude of the wife in the human-to-human relationship, if her relationship to God is to remain intact.

Colossians 3:24 explains: "*And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord...*" When a human's commitment is, first of all, to God and then to human relationships — husband/wife, parent/child, neighbor, business partner, whatever they may be — God is both the basis and the control factor for attitudes, words, and behavior, even on the human-to-human scale. The eternal commitment to Him safeguards us in our daily dealings with each other.

### **Choosing a Marriage Partner**

*"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will*

*dwell in them, And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.' Therefore, 'Come out from among them, And be separate,' says the Lord. 'Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters,' Says the LORD Almighty."(2 Corinthians 6:14-18).*

Many would deny that this Scripture is saying, "Marry only a dedicated Christian", but the words are very clear. If you knew that 8 out of 10 people trying to cross a field would be killed by an explosive, would you risk your life in such a way? Eight out of ten marriages of Christians to non-Christians bring about the spiritual death of the Christian, and his/her children ... grandchildren ... great-grand-children .... Is the romantic bloom of such a marriage worth the risk in eternal cost?

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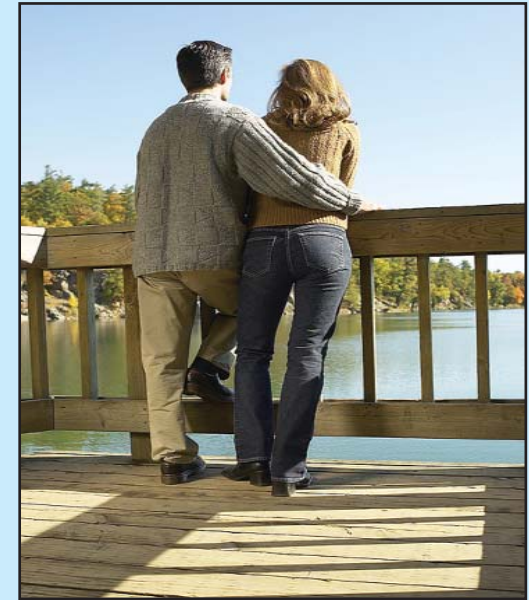
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# **Commitment in Marriage**

**Betty Burton Choate**



## Commitment in Marriage

Betty Burton Choate

In this age of immorality, broken marriages, “no fault” divorce, and “live-ins”, what can the caring person do to ensure that his/her marriage is durable, made of strong enough stuff to last through the years and through all the challenges that will come with those years?

**Some would say, “Build your marriage on like-mindedness.”** Certainly, if two people have similar values, enjoy similar things, and have personalities that are much alike, they should be able to move along smoothly toward their life-goals.

But in growing through the changes of life, sometimes people themselves change so drastically that a mate can be “outgrown” or left behind.

**Others would suggest that a strong marriage must be built on love.** Yes, love — in all its many aspects of nurturing and cherishing — love is an important factor.

But sometimes love that has flourished also wanes and even dies. Can the marriage survive?

**Someone else has wisely said that most marriages today lack total commitment.** If a man and woman make a commitment to the marriage from the beginning, determined to

subordinate their own wishes and self-interests for the welfare of the marriage, it is most likely that such a relationship will grow stronger and sweeter with the years.

But there are occasions when, for one reason or the other, one partner or the other either ceases to put the commitment first or ceases to “deserve” that degree of unswerving loyalty — and so, the marriage may become endangered.

The weakness with all of these priorities in the husband/wife relationship is that they are built on *human-to-human behavior*. And the problem with that kind of foundation is that **humans fall short of perfection, and humans act and react in relation to each other.**

Like-mindedness is a wonderful asset to any marriage, as long as the likeness remains. Love is a wonderful asset as long as both remain lovable, and as long as both cherish and nurture the other. Commitment to each other is a wonderful asset, as long as the two remain mutually committed. But since it is not uncommon for one marriage partner to behave in such a way that a negative and ugly response is aroused in the heart of the mate, then a marriage that is dependent on one or more of these factors may break up in stormy seas.

What is the basis of a strong marriage? I believe it is **commitment to God**. Does the

answer seem unlikely? Consider these thoughts:

In contrast to the human-to-human relationship, this is a human-to-God relationship, which means that one element does not change. He is an absolute, One on Whom we can fix our lives and know that He will remain constant.

Therefore, fixing our lives on Him, what does He require if the human-to-God relationship is to be maintained? He requires our love (*“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”* Matthew 22:37).

He requires our obedience (*“If you love Me, keep My commandments”* John 14:15).

Within the framework of that love and that obedience to His commands lie **all the rules regarding human relationships**. He makes it clear that *in order to maintain a living relationship with Him as His children, we must be obedient to His rules regarding fellow human beings*. **Mates must be faithful in their marriage, or forfeit as well their relationship with God.**

So, in such a marriage, built on an enduring commitment to God, if the human-to-human likeness dissipates, God’s requirements of mutual consideration as outlined in 1 Corinthians 7:1-5 remain in force and must be obeyed, if the relationship with Him is to remain intact.