**CONTRACT WITH GOD**

***My Signature Is Binding***

Twenty seven years ago, Newt Gingrich, then minority leader of the House of Representatives and want-to-be Speaker of the House in our nation’s capital, gathered about 300 members (and prospective members who were then running for election) to announce his “Contract With America.” In this contract they pledged, with their signatures, to bring ten specific reforms to the floor of the House for a vote within the first 100 days of the new 104th Congress. It was a new twist to campaign stumping. It went a step beyond mere verbal promises all politicians make. It was a contract. By definition a contract is: “a signed agreement to do something, enforceable by law; a document containing the terms of an agreement.”

A mortgage loan for your house is a contract. A business merger is sealed with a contract. Marriage is only made authentic with a contract. This contract is meant to bind both parties to their word, with serious consequences as punishment for not keeping your end of the deal. In the case of the Republicans who signed that “Contract With America” back in 1994 that “penalty” was assumed to be getting voted out of office in 1996 for “breach of contract” by failing to vote on those ten reforms.

As a Christian I have, for all intents and purposes, signed a contract with God. On April 26, 1964 I wrote my signature on God’s document called the New Testament which proclaimed loudly the good confession that “*Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*” (Matt. 16:18), and that Jesus is “*my Lord and my God*” (Jn. 20:29). On that day I signed that “contract” with God I did what those 56 signers did on the document we call “The Declaration of Independence” when they pledged “our life, our fortune, our sacred honor.” So we did too. I pledged to be “steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord” (I Cor. 15:58). I pledged to be “faithful unto death” (Rev. 2:10).

But let me tell you what I also pledged when I gave my word and signed my name to God’s contract. Regarding my role in the Home I signed on the dotted line, with no fine print, the following oath:

As Husband:
“I will dwell with my wife according to knowledge” (I Pet. 3:7)
“I will love my wife as Christ loves the church” (Eph. 5:25)
“I will stay married for God joined us together for life” (Matt. 19:6-9)
“I will honor my marriage and never be unfaithful to her” (Heb. 13:4)
“I will never be bitter toward my wife” (Col. 3:19).

As Father:
“I will not provoke my children to anger, but raise them in the Lord” (Eph. 6:4)
“I will not discourage my children” (Col. 3:21)
“I will rule my house well having my children in submission with reverence” (I Tim. 3:4)

If you are a wife and mother here is what you signed a contract with God to do:

As Wife:
“I will submit to my husband as unto the Lord” (Eph. 5:22)
“I will respect my husband” (Eph. 5:33)
“I will give myself to my husband, keeping our marriage honorable (Heb. 13:4)
“I will love and obey my husband” (Tit. 2:4-5)
“I will never divorce my husband, for God has joined us together” (Matt. 19:6)

As Mother:
“I will love my children and be a homemaker for my family (Tit. 2:4-5)
“I will manage the house” (I Tim. 5:14)
“I will watch over the way of my home so my children will rise up to call me blessed” (Prov. 31:27-28)

Now, knowing the terms of the contract, would you be willing to put your signature on it? In reality you already have. Sadly, some take their mortgage payment, business deal, or even the credit card bill, more seriously than they do their marriage covenant.

But think to the time when you went to the Court House to get a marriage “License.” You had to put your name on that legal paper that you were going to marry each other. Then, when the ceremony was completed, you had to sign and mail that license to the recorder at the state courthouse that you were now officially married. That was just as binding as 300 congressmen signing a “Contract with America,” or Delta and Northwest Airlines signing a business merger, or 56 signatures on the Declaration of Independence. Making a vow before God is serious business. Solomon reminds us these sobering words in Ecclesiastes 5:2-5,

*2 Do not be rash with your mouth, And let not your heart utter anything hastily before God. For God is in heaven, and you on earth; Therefore let your words be few.
3 For a dream comes through much activity, And a fool’s voice is known by his many words. 4 When you make a vow to God, do not delay to pay it; For He has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you have vowed— 5 Better not to vow than to vow and not pay.*

Forty four years (and counting) of marriage is a great teacher as to the real meaning of a “Contract With God.” It is designed as the perfect illustration of my “Contract with Christ” as a member of His church (Eph. 5:32-33). Being faithful in this earthly contract is a foretaste to my faithfulness to my heavenly contract. It beautifully portrays what commitment to my signature is all about.

So, how has your Contract with God gone with your marriage?
Just as important, how your Contract with God has gone with your discipleship.
Work on one, and you have disciplined yourself to work on the other.

Have you signed your contract with God? If not…

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