

Contemporary Ceremony

(Religious)

WELCOME

Friends and family of the Bride and Groom, we are here today because love has gathered us together. On this day, (**GROOM**) and (**BRIDE**) will pledge their lives as one, and commit themselves to each other forever in marriage. (**GROOM**) and (**BRIDE**), there are no obligations on earth more sweet or tender than those you are about to assume. There are no vows more solemn than those you are about to make. There is no human institution more sacred than that of the home you are about to establish. Marriage is the holiest of all earthly relationships. Yes, marriages are made in heaven, but they have to be maintained here on earth. May you see that your love is truly a gift from God. And may your marriage be such that all will know of your deep love for one another, as well as for God, the One who brought you together.

CONSENT

(**GROOM**), will you have (**BRIDE**) to be your wife, to live together in the bonds of marriage? Will you commit yourself completely to her and her alone? And will you promise to love her, care for her, and stand by her through all that life may bring, as long as you both shall live?

(The Groom shall say): **I will.**

And (**BRIDE**), will you have (**GROOM**) to be your husband, to live together in the bonds of marriage? Will you commit yourself completely to him and him alone? And will you promise to love him, care for him, and stand by him through all that life may bring, as long as you both shall live?

(The Bride shall say): **I will.**

Who presents (**BRIDE**) to be married to (**GROOM**)?

(The Escort shall say): **Her Mother and I** or **I do** or **We do** or **Her Family** or other.

(Bride gives bouquet to Maid of Honor).

ADDRESS AND READINGS

Today is the beginning of an exciting new life together for the two of you, (**GROOM**) and (**BRIDE**). It marks the commencement of new relationships to your families, your friends, and certainly to each other. God knew your needs when He brought you together. He knew exactly what you needed to make you complete. Now He wants you to commit yourselves to each other as the one He has chosen to complete you. Total completeness, however, is a process that takes patience, perseverance, and particular

principles that must be practiced so you can achieve the oneness God intended for your marriage. Here are five little “pearls of wisdom” I want to share with you as you begin this new partnership on your journey total completeness.

First, **LISTEN**. Listen to each other. Try to hear what your mate is really saying. The Scripture says, “*Be quick to hear and slow to speak.*” That’s why God gave us two years and only one mouth, so we would talk less and listen more. Take the words you hear from each other into your heart and let them become building blocks for a happy marriage. Communication is vitally important in marriage, so yes, take the time to talk with each other. But more importantly, take the time to listen to each other, for in listening, you communicate that you value your partner’s thoughts and feelings.

Second, **LEARN**. Learn from each other. Both of you are different in many ways. You each bring certain abilities and specific gifts into this relationship. Learn what those talents are. Don’t see them as competition; rather, accept each other’s strengths and combine them with yours to become a better team. Every day will be an adventure as you learn and understand something new about your mate. In fact, the Bible says, “*Husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way.*” So, (**GROOM**), your lifelong assignment is to try to understand this woman, and (**BRIDE**), your lifelong assignment is to make sure he understands you. What an assignment! If you learn from each other, not only will you be better individuals, but also a better couple. So take time to learn all you can about each other.

Listen, Learn, and third, **LABOR** – or work. Be willing to work on your relationship. Make every effort to make this the very best marriage on God’s earth. You don’t find precious gems just lying around on top of the ground. You have to work hard to get to them. But once you find them, they are worth every bit of effort you made. So too, if you work on your marriage relationship, it will be like finding those precious gems, and because of all your labor, you will “strike it rich.”

Listen, Learn, Labor, and fourth, **LAUGH**. Learn to laugh. Laugh at yourself and laugh at each other. Getting married is a serious step, and it should be taken seriously. But I am also serious when I say that having fun and being able to laugh at our mistakes and shortcomings goes a long way in solidifying the mortar of this institution we call marriage. The Bible says that “*laughter is good medicine.*” Studies show that laughter has a profound and positive effect on the body. Laughter is the best medicine for a long and happy life. I guess it can be said that he who laughs . . . is the one who lasts.

Listen, Learn, Labor, Laugh, and finally, **LOVE**. What is love? Countless songs have been sung about it. Poems too many to number have been penned describing it. Books as numerous as the stars in the sky have been authored by both men and women trying to help us understand this little four letter word. But the one Book that rises above them all, the Bible, simply defines love this way:

“Love is very patient and kind, never jealous or envious, never boastful or proud, never haughty or selfish or rude. Love does not demand its own way nor is it

irritable or touchy. It does not hold grudges and will hardly ever notice when others do it wrong. It is never glad about injustice, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. This kind of love knows no boundaries to its tolerance, no end to its trust, no fading of its hope, no limit to its endurance. It can outlast anything. Love is, in fact, the one thing that still stands when all else has failed.” (Reading #12, Version 2 – Contemporary)

So you can see, love is not just something you feel, it is something you do. (**GROOM**), it has been said, “If you treat your wife like a queen, she will treat you like a king.” Or to put it another way, “If you treat her like a thoroughbred, she’ll never turn into an old nag.” ☺

And so . . . **LISTEN, LEARN, LABOR, LAUGH, and LOVE.** Practice these five principles and, with God’s guidance, your marriage will blossom and grow into a life-long partnership that will endure the challenges of life and withstand the tests of time.

WEDDING VOWS

(The Officiant shall say): (**GROOM**), please repeat after me.

(BRIDE), I thank God He has given us to each other / to share one life, one love, one heart. / With God’s help, / I will try to be everything / that He wants me to be for you, / so I may meet your needs / and fulfill your dreams. / I will love you with an unconditional love / just as Christ loves us. / In love I will lead you, / protect and provide for you, / nurture and care for you, / and honor and respect you. / I promise to stay by your side / no matter what circumstances life may bring, / and I vow to be faithful and true / to you alone. / May my love give you strength all the days of our lives. (Wedding Vow #1a)

(The Officiant shall say): (**BRIDE**), please repeat after me.

(GROOM), as we become husband and wife today, / I promise to love you with an unending love. / I give myself in all things to your care, / as unto the Lord. / As God has prepared me / to be your helpmate and companion in this life, / I commit myself to stand by you / whatever comes our way. / I will be with you in sickness and in health, / whether we are rich or poor, / and during times of happiness, / as well as times of sorrow. / I will honor and respect you, / encourage and support you, / and devote myself to you. / I promise to be faithful and true / to you alone. / May my love bring you joy all the days of our lives. (Wedding Vow #1b)

EXPLANATION OF THE RINGS

You are about to give each other a ring. The wedding ring is a symbol of many things. It is made of precious metals that symbolize a love that is pure and enduring. It is made of

rare gems that symbolize love that is priceless and irreplaceable. It is made in a perfect circle that symbolizes a love that is permanent and everlasting. Whenever you look at this ring, may it forever remind you of the promises you have made this day to keep your love pure, priceless, and permanent.

RING EXCHANGE VOWS

(The Officiant shall say): May I have the token of (**GROOM**)’s love for (**BRIDE**)?
(Officiant receives ring from Best Man. Groom places ring on Bride’s finger.)

(The Officiant shall then say): (**GROOM**), please repeat after me.

(BRIDE), I give you this ring / as a symbol of my love and faithfulness, / and as I place it on your finger, / I commit my very heart and soul to you. / I ask you to wear this ring / as a reminder of the vows we have spoken / on this, our wedding day.
(Ring Vow #2)

(The Officiant shall say): May I have the token of (**BRIDE**)’s love for (**GROOM**)?
(Officiant receives ring from Maid of Honor. Bride places ring on Groom’s finger.)

(The Officiant shall then say): (**BRIDE**), please repeat after me.

(GROOM), I give you this ring, as a sign of my commitment / and the desire of my heart. / May it always be a reminder / that I have chosen you above all others, / and from this day forward, / we shall be united as husband and wife. *(Ring Vow #3)*

LIGHTING OF THE UNITY CANDLE

(Or other optional Wedding Tradition)

Lighting the Unity Candle is a symbol of the union created by a man and a woman who enter into marriage. They are no longer two, but one. The Bible says, “*For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.*” Today, we see two people uniting themselves as one – as one in the flesh and as one in the spirit. These candles symbolize that union. The two other candles represent the individual lives of (**GROOM**) and (**BRIDE**) and the families from which they came. The lighting of this Unity Candle not only symbolizes the coming together of these two individuals, but the joining together of their families, as well. May you all recognize your continuing importance in each other’s lives by sharing with each other the light of your love.

WEDDING PRAYER / BLESSING

Dear Lord, we pray that You will bless this man and this woman as they begin their new journey together. In all the experiences of life, may they always stay close to you and to each other as they share the joys and blessings, as well as the trials and heartaches. Help them to honor and keep the promises made here today. Remind them daily of Your great love for them so they, in turn, may reach out in love to others. Give them such love and devotion that each may be to the other a strength in need, a comfort in sorrow, a counselor in difficulty, and a companion in joy. Amen. (*Prayer #9*)

PRONOUNCEMENT

(GROOM) and **(BRIDE)**, today, before your family and friends, you have openly declared your love for each other. You have joined your hands, spoken your promises, and given these rings, a symbol of your lifelong commitment to each other. And so, I now bestow upon you the most honorable titles that may exist between a man and a woman; I pronounce you husband and wife.

KISS

(The Officiant shall say): **(GROOM)**, you may kiss your Bride.

(Bride and Groom kiss.)

(Bride receives bouquet from Maid of Honor.)

PRESENTATION

(The Officiant shall say): Ladies and Gentlemen, it is my privilege to introduce to you for the very first time, Mr. and Mrs. ____.