

Welcome to a Year of Celebration!

Week 33: August 14-20, 2022

Celebrate The Wedding of the Ages (pt. 4)

This year, we are focusing on who God is and how we can celebrate him and the life that he offers to us. We will draw deeper into a relationship with the Lord through examining his nature and desire for personal intimacy with us as his people, and we are going to do so in such a fun way! We are going to journey in 2022 through practical ways to celebrate various holidays! We will look at many of your favorite celebrations: Christmas, Easter, Valentine's Day and much more. We will explore the historic, liturgical holidays of the year, learn about the Jewish festivals of the Bible days, and even consider some of the celebrations of other religious faiths. I'm so glad you will be on this journey with us.

In this packet, you will find some ideas for you to grow closer to God, your family, and others. Nothing is required. It is all for fun and your personal enjoyment and growth. There are enough activities that you could do one or two per day during the week if you want. If you don't want to do something, skip it. If another idea comes to mind, do it. Watch for God's abundant goodness and celebrate it.

Come Join Us as We
CELEBRATE GOD!



**“They celebrate your abundant goodness
and joyfully sing of your righteousness.”**

Dr. Patrick Wilson

(Psalm 145:7)

2022

Video Devotional

Go to Patrick Wilson's YouTube page and watch the video devotional for this week: Celebrate Wedding of the Ages (part 4). Then, consider and discuss with your family/friends the following questions:

- How would you define a "vow?" Give examples.
- Why is it important for us to take our commitments seriously?
- What does this covenant language mean to you: "God is our God, and we are his people?"
- Why do you think Jesus chose a wedding for his first miracle?
- Why do you think Jesus had the servants fill the jars with water before supplying the wine?
- How is Jesus the best option (wine) for us in life?
- What vow do you need to make to Jesus today?

Craft: Customizable Checklist

Vows are ways of expressing our intent to keep a commitment. Sometimes we need to be reminded about our commitments around the house (chores), at school (homework) and in our relationship with God.

This week, help kids make their own personalized checklist of things that they want to commit to in their relationship with Jesus.

1. With the ruler and a pen divide the page vertically into columns for each day of the week with one additional column on the left side for your checklist items.
2. Then, list out the things that you want to commit to (i.e., don't worry, go to church, smile at someone, help a friend).
3. Shade the boxes for the days that you want to do a given task.
4. Establish a time at dinner or the end of the day to go over your checklist together and encourage each other.

Needed Supplies:

- Paper
- Ruler
- Pens/Markers
- Stickers to Mark Completed Tasks



Diet/Weight Loss

Most all of us have done it. We've set goals or resolutions to lose weight, start exercising, eat healthier, and get in shape. However, we oftentimes fizzle out on these goals. Don't let shame cripple you and cause you to give up on your weight management aspirations. Consider these suggestions from Brianna Steinhilber as you consider your "vows" the fall:

1. Set S.M.A.R.T. Goals:

- Specific: How much weight do I want to lose? A specific number.
- Measurable: Is there a way that I can track the results?
- Attainable: Is the goal realistic?
- Relevant: Is this something that I actually want to do? What will keep you intrinsically motivated in setting a goal that's meaningful to you?
- Time-bound: When is it going to be completed? What steps happen next?

2. Plan Ahead: Have a schedule for the day/week that includes your values. Carve out time to get in the things that matter most and to work towards your goals for the week.

3. Ask for Help from Family/Friends: Include everyone in the home on the decisions and the degree that each person will participate in the goals you have. Be honest with each other about what you hope to accomplish and what you need for accountability and support. What is purchased at the store, where you eat out, and the times of day for meals may need to fluctuate for you to be successful for your goals.

4. Use Mini-Motivation Boosters Each Week: Celebrate small successes each week by having a weekly check in time with yourself, spouse, or friend. Identify what went well (and what needs to be improved. Schedule "cheat meals" and gym breaks in your routine. A day off here and there for special events will help you stay the course over the long term. Have a slip up plan, forgive yourself when you fail, and get back at it again.

If you decide to make changes to your health, be sure that you do it for yourself and not to please the doctor, your spouse, a future boy/girlfriend, etc. Healthy people (spiritually, mentally, emotionally, physically and socially) are happy people.



Movies to Watch

If you are movie fan, pick out a favorite movie to watch alone or with family/friends. According to the Knot, these movies have the best wedding vow scenes. If you'd rather, just pick another great movie to watch together. Pop some popcorn, curl up on the couch, and enjoy the show!

Wedding Vow Movies:

- Sex and the City 2
- The Vow
- Wedding Crashers
- Madea's Family Reunion
- The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 1
- Rachel Getting Married
- American Wedding
- Runaway Bride
- Father of the Bride
- When Harry Met Sally

Games Where You Have to Lie

Lying or breaking our promises is not a good habit to cultivate. We lose credibility with others when we are dishonest. Our word becomes less reliable when we lose our integrity.

However, it can be fun to play games where you do have to break a "vow" or display a poker face. Play a game where you have to discover who is telling the truth and who is not. Below are a list of some board games that you might check out and try:

- A Fake Artist Goes to New York
- The Chameleon: Try to Blend In
- Deception: Murder in Hong Kong
- Sherriff of Nottingham
- The Resistance: Avalon
- One Night Ultimate Werewolf
- Liar's Dice
- Don't Get Got
- Wadjet
- Coup



Bible Study

“When you make a vow to God, do not delay to fulfill it. He has no pleasure in fools; fulfill your vow. It is better not to make a vow than to make one and not fulfill it” (Ecclesiastes 5:4-5).

The Teacher in this passage encourages us to take our commitments to God seriously. In the preceding verses of the chapter, he speaks of going to God with a desire to listen rather than arrogantly coming in haste, uttering to God all the things we want him to do.

Having humility when we come to God is important when we make commitments to follow him. The passage encourages us to be hasty to do what we have committed to do rather than to be quick to dictate to God what he should do. It is foolish for us to be proud before God. Instead, we should be intentional in our vows and follow through with them to the best of our ability.

Yet, we are sinful and imperfect people who make foolish decisions and break our promises at times. So, one option might be to avoid making any vows to God out of fear that we'd fail to keep them. However, relationships are based on trust and trust is developed through commitment. A healthy approach is to be thoughtful, intentional, and not over-zealous in our commitments. In other words, commit to take one step at a time. As we commit and follow through, our resolve grows and our commitment is strengthened.

Prayer Time

So much of our prayer life tends to be about us asking God to do things we are hopeful he will do for us or those we love. However, one of the most meaningful aspects of prayer is to meditate on God and to listen to his nudging in our souls. Ask God to reveal to you something that needs attention in your life.

Spend time wrestling with God about this. Seek clarity of action. Express your hesitancy or feelings of inadequacy. Lean in to your dependence on his strength, power, and provision to enable you to step into what is unnatural for you.

Thank God for his unconditional acceptance and love, regardless of your success. Commit to God your best effort. Remember that the goal is not perfection but growth.

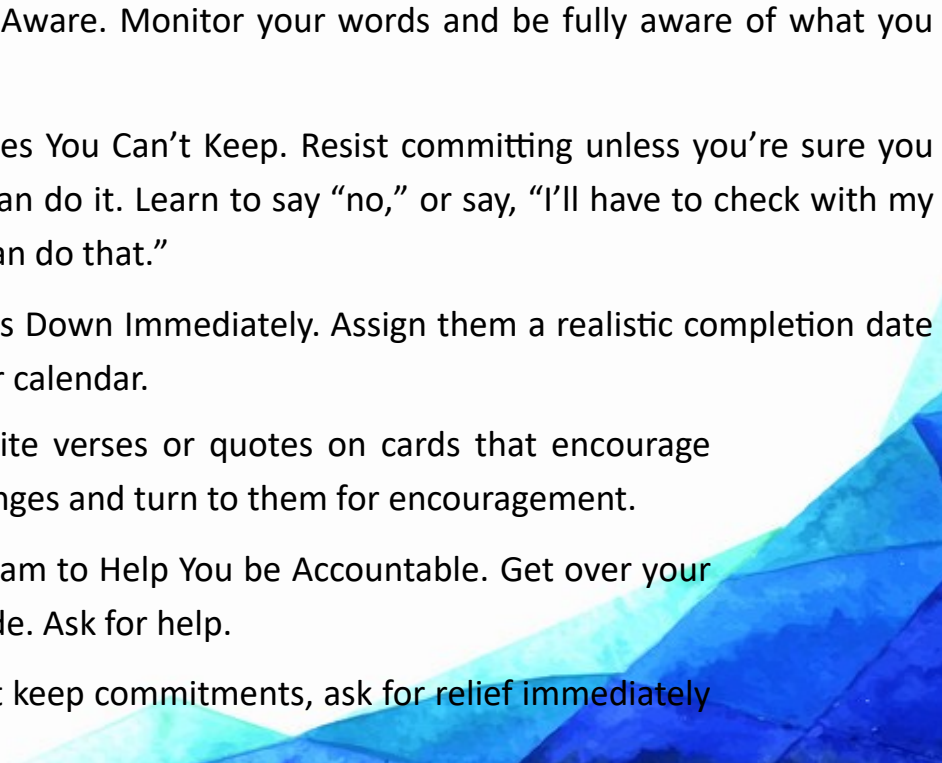


Serve: Model Confession

Amidst our best efforts, we will fail to keep our promises to others at times. While we should strive to follow through with what we commit, it is also very valuable for us to confess when we fall short. One of the best ways that you can serve others is through your example. Persevere through the guilt and pride of trying to cover it up. Come clean. Be honest with those you have hurt. Commit to change and grow. Let go of your mistakes and strive for better.

Connect: Keeping Promises

Keeping promises can be quite challenging. Others count on us to keep our word when we promise to do something. When we fail to follow through with something we said we would do, there can be minor or disastrous outcomes. Consider these suggestions from *Leading with Honor*. Pick one to work on and try to apply it to the promises you make this week.

1. **Be Intentional.** If keeping your word is important to you, recommit to it as one of your key values. Test yourself for a couple of days and track how well you currently keep your promises.
 2. **Become More Self-Aware.** Monitor your words and be fully aware of what you are promising.
 3. **Don't Make Promises You Can't Keep.** Resist committing unless you're sure you want to do it and can do it. Learn to say "no," or say, "I'll have to check with my team to see if we can do that."
 4. **Write Commitments Down Immediately.** Assign them a realistic completion date on your to-do list or calendar.
 5. **Be Courageous.** Write verses or quotes on cards that encourage you to step into challenges and turn to them for encouragement.
 6. **Ask Your Support Team to Help You be Accountable.** Get over your independence and pride. Ask for help.
 7. **Fail Fast.** If you can't keep commitments, ask for relief immediately versus ignoring it.
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Worship

Carve out some time to listen to worship music, hum or sing along. Here are some great songs to get you started. These songs focus on our commitment to God. Look them up on YouTube if you don't have them in your music repertoire.

Pick your own songs and spend time worshipping and celebrating who God is to you and all the ways that he has blessed your life.

Commitment Worship Songs:

- King of My Heart
- I Surrender All
- In Christ Alone
- I Will Follow
- I'd Rather Have Jesus
- Open Our Eyes
- Lord, I Need You
- Change My Heart, O God
- Give Me Jesus
- Take My Life and Let it Be
- I Have Decided to Follow Jesus
- Step by Step

Challenge:

Spiritual Disciplines

The word "discipline" carries a negative connotation for most of us; we associate it with punishment. Yet, the term speaks of having self-discipline/commitment to growth as a follower of Jesus.

Identify an area of your life that you'd like to cultivate greater discipline in. There are many books that can guide you in identifying disciplines and ways to grow them. For example, Gil Stieglitz' book: *Spiritual Disciplines of a C.H.R.I.S.T.I.A.N.* identifies 22 disciplines. You can listen to his teaching on them, here:

https://www.ptlb.com/spiritual-disciplines-of-a-christian?gclid=CjwKCAjw6MKXBhA5EiwANWLODF1kkFF38MigKabARj0CEMEQtoHQhsEkl09OK8_gJ_-ExKQCDEgAuBoCxKoQAvD_BwE

"The three great essentials to achieve anything worthwhile are, first, hard work; second, stick-to-itiveness; third, common sense."

— Thomas Edison