



## DISCUSSION GUIDE

Circles: Keeping God at the Center of Our Relationships – Part 2  
Trading Places: Understanding Your Most Important Relationships  
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**Main Idea** – Blood covenants are the most significant relationships because they include God as one of the parties. Blood covenants include: Our relationship with God Himself, Our relationship with our spouse, Our relationship with the children that come from the relationship with our spouse, and Our relationship with other brothers and sisters in Christ.

### Marriage and other covenants

- Each of us makes numerous covenants (contractual agreements) in life.
- Some covenants are more important than others. Not all covenants are on the same level.
- The two most important decisions a person makes in life are the God one chooses to worship, and the person one chooses to marry.
- Next to your relationship with God, your marriage is your most important relationship.

### Blood covenants

- Blood covenants are the most important covenants because God is a party to the agreement.
- Your blood covenants are:
  - your relationship with God,
  - your relationship with your spouse,
  - your relationship with the children that come from the relationship with your spouse,
  - your relationship with your brothers and sisters in Christ.
- Blood covenants contain the process of trading places. One must be completely engaged, and committed, to the other's well-being.
- As Christians know, Jesus traded places with us. That is the foundation of our covenant with God. **2 Corinthians 5: 21 – For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.**

### The marriage covenant can be confusing

- As with other blood covenants, the marriage covenant involves being able to trade places with the other partner.
- Solomon was confused about marriage, as evidenced by his many wives and by

this proverb that he apparently wrote: **Proverbs 30: 18-19 – There are three things which are too wonderful for me. Yes, four which I do not understand: the way of an eagle in the air, the way of a serpent on a rock, the way of a ship in the midst of the sea, and the way of a man with a virgin.**

- “the way of a man with a virgin” is referring to marriage.
- “Having many is never as good as having one” is a wisdom saying Solomon obviously did not follow in his personal life.

### **Myths about the marriage covenant**

1. An expensive wedding will make for a happy marriage.
2. Having children will fix the problems in the marriage.
3. “I’ll marry him/her, then s/he will change.”
4. “A lot of money and things will bring happiness to our marriage.”

### **Principles of blood covenants**

- **Genesis 15: 9-17 describes a covenant agreement that took place between God and Abraham, where an innocent animal died and the participants ended up facing each other (trading places.)**
- For a blood covenant to take place, something has to die. Through the process of something dying (being sacrificed) the two parties effectively trade places.
- Steps of a blood covenant are:
  1. Trading coats – symbolizing provision for the other person
  2. Trading belts – symbolizing promising to never cause harm to the other person
  3. Trading promises (Hebrew word “berith”) – is represented by the vows of the covenant. The Bible contains the promises God made to us in our covenant relationship with Him.

### **Blessings of the marriage covenant**

- The marriage covenant between two people also contains God as the third party.
- **Ecclesiastes 4: 9-12 – Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their labor, for if they fall, one will lift up his companion. But woe to him who is alone when he falls, for he has no one to help him up. Again, if two lie down together, they will keep warm; but how can one be warm alone? Though one may be overpowered by another, two can withstand him. And a threefold cord is not quickly broken.**
- God is the invisible third cord in Christian marriages.
- Threefold cords cannot be easily broken.
- Those who are currently single should embrace this season of life. In this season, understand God as your “husband.” **Isaiah 54:5 – For your Maker is**

**your husband. The Lord of hosts is His name; and your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel; He is called the God of the whole earth.**

## **Reflective Questions for Circles: Keeping God at the Center of Our Relationships – Part 2**

1. Pastor Mike said that blood covenants are more important than other types of covenants. Can you explain why the four types of blood covenants (above) are more significant than other contractual agreements?
2. To maintain a blood covenant, each party must be able to trade places with the other. Jesus already traded places with us to enable our blood covenant with God.
  - a. Give an example of what it means for marriage partners to “trade places.”
  - b. What does it mean for parents to be able to “trade places” with their children?
  - c. What does it mean to be able to “trade places” with your brothers and sisters in Christ?
3. Why is it necessary to have God as the third cord in our blood covenants?

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