

## God is for You

### Romans 8:31-32 (NIV)

What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?

Dear family and friends of Jacey & Tyler, and especially to the bride and the groom,

You two are about to make promises that you are going to follow God's commands and design for marriage – to be faithful to each other, cherish each other, support each other, and help each other in sickness and in health as long as you both shall live. This is no small thing. Being uncomfortably honest, you've seen other marriages fail and fall apart. How are you going to be able to do all these things? How will you be different? How will you stay together and get through all the highs and lows of married life?

Hopefully you two remember some of what we went through in premarital counseling. I asked you what the essential bond to marriage is and the answer was: commitment. Commitment is the answer because with commitment you will hold every day to the promises you make today. With commitment, you can work through every problem - through the money difficulties, the career changes, the raising of the kids, any health problems, the extended family drama, even through the ways that you will sin against each other. Commitment will have you sticking to the vows you make today so that you can weather and work through all the hard stuff.

But commitment is the essential bond? Shouldn't the preacher have said, "God. God is the essential bond in marriage."? But there are people without God who can remain committed in marriage. However, God has shown us the ultimate and unwavering commitment, a commitment that he wants for you and wants you to be filled with as you start your married life together.

From start to finish, the entire Bible is about God's commitment to people. In the beginning, he committed to us by making a whole planet, everything in it, a whole universe and every star in it all for us, for us to live in, for us to enjoy. Then we, humankind, decided we'd rather do things our way and God behind because we thought that we knew better, could do things better. We rebelled. We sinned. We hid from God. We wrecked our once perfect relationship with him.

Immediately in a world and a relationship now ruined, we saw God's level of commitment to us. Before any punishments or ramifications are announced for us rebelling against God, rejecting him and distancing ourselves from him, he promised us that he was going to protect and rescue us from the mess we created. He would do this by sending Jesus, the offspring of the woman, to crush and destroy Satan and all evil. The rest of the Bible is God living out his commitment to us by keeping that promise.

The promise reached its pinnacle and culmination when God himself took on human flesh and was born of a virgin named Mary. Immediately from conception he lived perfectly. He didn't do this for himself or to show us how we're supposed to live. He did this for us in our place as our substitute because we couldn't do it. We lacked not only the commitment, but also the ability to follow through on being perfect. Instead, he committed to that perfect life for every second of every day - not just for a month, not for a year, but for the entirety of 33 years. He lived a completely perfect life for us.

Then he sacrificed that perfect life and took on himself everything we have ever done wrong – every imperfection, every mistake, every indiscretion, every purposefully hateful word said, every act that went against what we knew was right. He suffered for us in our place for all of it. He took the punishment we deserved, paid the total price for us - a gift never to be repaid.

God did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all. Jesus both lived an entire life for us and died a death for us. God did this for the people who would believe these truths and for the people who want nothing to do with him. He didn't do it begrudgingly or halfheartedly. He gave all of himself for us so that we would be rescued from our sins, from this broken world, from broken relationships. He did this so that he would bring us to him, that we would live with him forever in heaven. That was his level of commitment. God is all for us.

What other conclusion can we then reach but the one the Apostle Paul did in our reading from Romans? "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?" (verse 32) God has proven that he is on your side, committed to you. And now he wants to give you two something else great and grand. He wants to give you a married life together.

God has given you his commitment and shown it to you not only to be a blessing to you but to be a blessing for your spouse. When you're filled with God's commitment for you, then you can reflect that commitment back into your marriage. As you think about those vows that you're about to make - that you will love, be faithful, cherish, support, and help each other - you do that by drawing from God being for you, committed to you, Christ loving you, putting you first, being faithful to you, cherishing you, supporting you in the good times as well as the bad, and helping you through every single day on this earth. Being filled with the forgiveness he won for you, you can and will forgive each other when you break your vows, when you sin against each other. When outside forces try to tear you apart, you will stay together with the strength Christ has given you because he did not leave you or turn his back on you. As he put you ahead of himself, so you will follow that same pattern and love one another by serving the other person.

Christ gave 100% commitment regardless of what we would do. God is for you. Take that with you in your marriage so that you give 100% to your spouse. And when you fail to do so, point each other back to the cross, back to God's commitment to you and be forgiven and renewed for the commitments you make here today.

God has filled you with his love, with his commitment. "What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?" (verse 31) God wants this marriage to be a blessing to you both, no matter the opposition, hardships, or drama you will face. As you are filled with God and his commitment to you, be committed to each other. With God, you will have a beautiful marriage filled with the kind of commitment that we only find with God. And he will be with you until the very end of the age and graciously give you all things, especially what you need for your marriage. Amen.

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