

HELEN SANDERS

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COVENANT RELATIONSHIPS

In the Old Testament God covenanted with Abraham and the sign of the covenant was circumcision. Thereafter any male child born into Abraham's family and the offspring of that family were also circumcised. It was the sign of God's promise to Abraham. It was a reminder that God and Abraham were connected where all life begins. God would bless Abraham and his seed. He still does this for the Jews through this covenant.

Covenants are not taken lightly with God whether it be the covenant of the Jews, or a covenant in marriage, or a covenant with between individuals. It is a binding together where two become one. What belonged to one now belongs to both. There is no ours or theirs. God used this analogy with marriage where the two become one. (Mark 10:8-9; Matthew 19:5.) It is not that they each lose their identity, but they come together in covenant sharing everything equally. It could be looked on as a partnership.

Paul reminded us of this when he had an issue with a "thorn in the flesh." It was causing him considerable problems. He asked God to remove this problem but God said that ***"his grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness..."*** You see, when one member of the covenant is weak, the other is strong for them. They are no longer dependent upon themselves. They work together to be strong.

This is why God said not to be yoked together with an unbeliever. Whether this is in a business venture, or marriage, or even in a church, this is the case. If one believes in the Lord as Savior and the other doesn't then they are unequally yoked. It can destroy relationships when covenants are not based on equal belief. Even as Christians, one may be strong in the Word and the other not in the Word at all, and that causes an unequally yoked relationship.

We should be very careful who we covenant with because if God is not in the covenant, it will not endure. There will be much heartache, and the covenant can ultimately be broken. God warned the Hebrews not to intermarry, knowing that those of pagan backgrounds would influence those of Jehovah. The same goes for a Christian. We must be careful not to settle for second best when God wants us to have the best. God desires peace in our lives, and that comes from him, not others. When we place him first in any relationship, whether it is marriage, business, or being part of a church family, we can be assured that we will see his grace through any storms, for his strength is with us.