

## You may now Kiss your Wife!

There is a significant point of specific connection with one's premarital covenant and wedding ceremony for those who have chosen to save their first kiss for marriage. It is at the place where the Preacher usually proclaims, you may now kiss your wife, after the pronouncement. Let's Consider that Point in your wedding ceremony now.

The pronouncement is considered the official point in time at which the couple is considered married/hitched. So, it is only reasonable that a kiss which is saved for marriage to be shared between the husband and wife immediately following this pronounced, "I now pronounce you Man & Wife." This is the very moment they envisioned so many years ago when they chose to wait saving even their first kiss for marriage. The kiss represents self-control, self-sacrifice, patience to wait for God's best in God's time. There is more, much more than this but to understand this moment we must walk through a few pages of Scripture.

What a thing is between people really depends on those people. Some can take the most sacred and holy of items and turn them to dung by their contemptible or common place use of them. For these, their use of such items becomes condemnation and judgment for them. Such is the case with a Kiss.

A kiss can be an act of worship, holy before the Lord or condemnation for those who would kiss the Baal. Consider this passage in *1 Kings 19:18 Yet I reserve seven thousand in Israel-all whose knees have not bowed down to Baal and all whose mouths have not kissed him.* NIV For these seven thousand and all who would follow in their steps a holy distinction has been made. Those who refuse to bow the knee to the Baals of this world, or kiss that which is idolatrous, are set apart as those reserved for God; as surely as, those who kiss Baal are set apart for destruction.

Consider this Worship encounter Jesus Experienced at Simon's house. *Luke 7:37 When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, 38 and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.* NIV Here the kiss of worship stirs the heart of every believer saved by grace as each of us vicariously enters into this sacred moment and wishes we could have been the one to caress and hold those calloused sandal worn feet.

Often, I hear people refer to a kiss as something entirely insignificant. "It is just a Kiss," they say; and yet, I would give my entire fortune to be able to offer one such kiss in worship to my Savior and Lord such as this woman gave to Jesus at Simon's house.

Because the Kiss has such extreme "power to embrace", the misuses of the Kiss reel with tremendous anxiety to the soul. Consider Judas *Luke 22:47 He approached Jesus to kiss him, 48 but Jesus asked him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"* NIV I wonder if Judas would say, it is just a kiss, ...nothing, .....insignificant. I think maybe he would say he would have well been served to have saved at least this one kiss from unholy use and reserve it for worship.

As a greeting the kiss was to be holy, full of strong affection and love between the parties sharing the greeting. As such it was a greeting that Paul encouraged the Family of God to use as an expression of love when greeting the family of God. Paul referred to this greeting as a "Holy" kiss. *The use of the word "holy" here serves to denote that Paul intended it as an expression of "Christian" affection; and to guard against all improper familiarity and scandal.* (Rom 16:16

*from Barnes' Notes, Electronic Database. Copyright (c) 1997 by BibleSoft) I fear that far too many uses of the kiss today are for selfish, lustful, and sinister purposes. Consider the Following misuses of a kiss noted in Scripture. Joab uses the Kiss to murder his companion at arms. 2 Sam 20:9 Joab said to Amasa, "How are you, my brother?" Then Joab took Amasa by the beard with his right hand to kiss him. 10 Amasa was not on his guard against the dagger in Joab's hand, and Joab plunged it into his belly, and his intestines spilled out on the ground. Without being stabbed again, Amasa died. NIV*

Absalom used the kiss to undermine, his Father, King David's kingdom. 2 Sam 15:5 Also, whenever anyone approached him to bow down before him, Absalom would reach out his hand, take hold of him and kiss him. 6 Absalom behaved in this way toward all the Israelites who came to the king asking for justice, and so he stole the hearts of the men of Israel. NIV

The Harlot uses the kiss to seduce her victims Prov 7:10 Then out came a woman to meet him, dressed like a prostitute and with crafty intent. 11 (She is loud and defiant, her feet never stay at home; 12 now in the street, now in the squares, at every corner she lurks.) 13 She took hold of him and kissed him and with a brazen face she said: 14 "I have fellowship offerings at home; today I fulfilled my vows. 15 So I came out to meet you; I looked for you and have found you! 16 I have covered my bed with colored linens from Egypt. 17 I have perfumed my bed with myrrh, aloes and cinnamon. 18 Come, let's drink deep of love till morning; let's enjoy ourselves with love! 19 My husband is not at home; he has gone on a long journey. 20 He took his purse filled with money and will not be home till full moon." NIV

Why are these misuses so striking to our heart and spirit? Perhaps without even being told, but simply as a matter of conscience we understand the kiss to be holy, reserved for worship, a deep expression of affection and love. As such does it not rightly belong in a Wedding Ceremony, is it not proclaimed holy through abstinence as it is set apart and reserved for this day? Is it not offered to God in Worship this day as an expression of gratitude, praise and honor for the sacred hand that has brought forth this union in the fulness of time? You think not then consider this:

In Scripture the Kiss was used as a part of a Holy Ceremony to set someone apart for a special calling and service, such as at the anointing of a King. 1 Sam 10:1 Then Samuel took a flask of oil and poured it on Saul's head and kissed him, saying, "Has not the LORD anointed you leader over his inheritance? NIV Do we not this day set apart two individuals to become one with a special calling and service before the Lord in marriage.

The kiss in Scripture also has a place as an expression of the strong passionate emotional love that exist between a husband and wife. Song 1:2 Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth - for your love is more delightful than wine. NIV Thus it rightly belongs at the marriage altar not on the steps of the house of the immoral. In fact, I contend that this particular kiss belongs only at marriage altar a gift from God to be shared from this day forward. It represents the hope for a blessed fountain, a relationship in which to rejoice, a satisfied passion, and a captivated love. (Prov. 5:18-19) Thus is this kiss that is "more delightful than wine" rightly saved for this moment and all moments this couple will share in the holy estate of marriage from this day forward.

The kiss was often used in celebrations (personal & public) that involved restoration, repentance and new beginnings. The prodigal received such a kiss when he returned to his father's house. Luke 15:20 "But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. NIV

Joseph's brothers received such a kiss when once his identity was revealed in Egypt. *Gen 45:15 And he kissed all his brothers and wept over them. Afterward his brothers talked with him. NIV*

Absalom received such a kiss from his father after he had brought much turmoil to David's household. Unfortunately, Absalom failed to use it as a new beginning and eventually was destroyed. *2 Sam 14:33 So Joab went to the king and told him this. Then the king summoned Absalom, and he came in and bowed down with his face to the ground before the king. And the king kissed Absalom. NIV* Many come to the marriage altar with a need for restoration and a new beginning. They have squandered all that is precious to make their marriage union holy and their marriage bed undefiled. The good news of the scripture is that through repentance what was lost can be restored. Even though the inheritance is lost, the prodigal can return home. For some this may be the most important kiss of their life as it reflects the hope of a new beginning.

Finally, I share with you that the Kiss is found in scripture at times of Departure. When Paul departed for Jerusalem and all knew he would not return there was shared an embrace and kiss beyond words laced with love and grief. *Acts 20:36 When he had said this, he knelt down with all of them and prayed. 37 They all wept as they embraced him and kissed him. 38 What grieved them most was his statement that they would never see his face again. Then they accompanied him to the ship. NIV*

The same sort of kiss was shared between Naomi and Orpah in the midst of great calamity and distress at their separation. *Ruth 1:14 At this they wept again. Then Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye, but Ruth clung to her. NIV*

Joseph when facing the departure of his father through death found expression for his grieving heart with a kiss. *Gen 50:1 Joseph threw himself upon his father and wept over him and kissed him. 2 Then Joseph directed the physicians in his service to embalm his father Israel. So the physicians embalmed him, 3 taking a full forty days, for that was the time required for embalming. And the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days. NIV* This is a Kiss that none can really describe, but it is a kiss that every compassionate heart that has risked loving another understands. The kiss shared at the marriage altar today, in this new union that is to be separated only in death, contains in its loins this coming kiss when death truly does you part.

If you can see it, every kiss we have described is contained in this kiss, this day, at this marriage altar. It is a holy kiss, sacred full of worship as if at the feet of Jesus, it is a kiss that separates and sets apart to a consecrated service and union, it is a not scandalous, lustful or selfish, but full of the passionate love that is more delightful than wine, it is a kiss that is trusted not treacherous, it embraces a single person and a single covenant for life, it reaches from the present to the end of our days, it restores and brings fresh beginnings, in its seed is found the kiss of a mother and child, the kiss that greets a trusted friend, a kiss that buries the love of a lifetime. For those who can embrace it, it is not "Just a Kiss."

“You may now Kiss your Wife.”