

Legal Separation in a Covenant Marriage

In order to obtain a legal separation (which is not a divorce and therefore does not end the marriage), a party to a Covenant Marriage must first obtain counseling and then must prove:

1. Adultery by the other spouse; or
2. Commission of a felony by the other spouse and a sentence of imprisonment at hard labor or death; or
3. Abandonment by the other spouse for one year; or
4. Physical or sexual abuse of the spouse or of a child of either spouse; or
5. The spouses have lived separate and apart for two years; or
6. Habitual intemperance (for example, alcohol or drug abuse), cruel treatment, or severe ill treatment by the other spouse.

Divorce in a Covenant Marriage

A marriage that is not a Covenant Marriage may be ended by divorce more easily than a Covenant Marriage. In a marriage that is not a Covenant Marriage, a spouse may, pursuant to Civil Code Article 102, file for a divorce and receive a judgment upon proof that the spouses have lived separate and apart for six months since the service of the petition for divorce. They may also, pursuant to Civil Code Article 103, get an immediate divorce for adultery by the other spouse, conviction of a felony by the other spouse and a sentence of hard labor or death, or by proof that the spouses have lived separate and apart continuously for six months before filing for divorce.

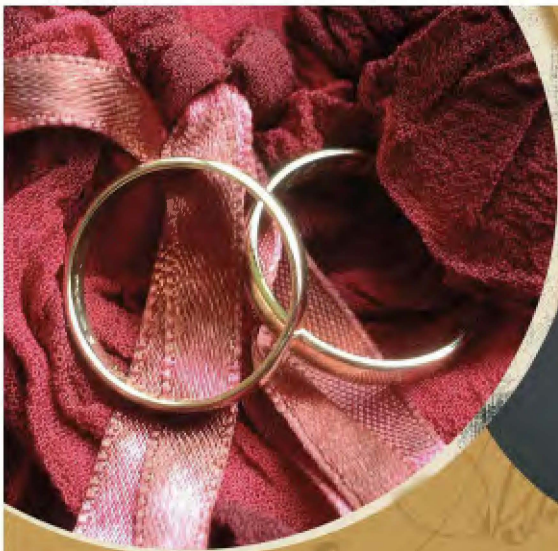
In a Covenant Marriage a spouse may get a divorce only after receiving counseling which shall occur once the spouses experience marital difficulties and shall continue until the divorce, unless the other spouse has physically or sexually abused the spouse or a child of the parties. A covenant spouse may only get a divorce for one of the following reasons:

1. Adultery by the other spouse; or
2. Commission of a felony by the other spouse and a sentence of imprisonment at hard labor or death; or
3. Abandonment by the other spouse for one year; or
4. Physical or sexual abuse of the spouse or of a child of either spouse or
5. The spouses have lived separate and apart for two years; or
6. The spouses are judicially or legally separated and have lived separate and apart since the legal separation for:
 - a. One year and six months if there is a minor child or children of the marriage.
 - b. One year if the separation was granted for abuse of a child of either spouse.
 - c. One year in all other cases.



655 St. Ferdinand St. - Baton Rouge, LA - 70802
www.lafamilyforum.org - 1.800.606.6470





Our mission is to restore churches and society to an understanding and practice of marriage as covenant by applying the timeless principles of God's Word.

What is a Covenant Marriage?

A covenant marriage is a marriage entered into by one male and one female who understand and agree that the marriage between them is a lifelong relationship. Parties to a covenant marriage have received counseling emphasizing the nature and purposes of marriage and of its responsibilities. Only when there has been a complete and total breach of the marital covenant commitment may the non-breaching party seek a declaration that the marriage is no longer legally recognized.

A man and a woman may contract a covenant marriage by declaring their intent to do so on their application for a marriage license, and by executing a declaration of intent to contract a covenant marriage. The application for a marriage license and a declaration of intent shall be filed with the official who issues the marriage license (www.la4marriage.org).

What is the Declaration of Intent?

In order to enter into a Covenant Marriage, the couple must sign a recitation that provides:

1. A marriage is an agreement to live together as husband and wife forever.
2. The parties have chosen each other carefully and disclosed to each other "everything which could adversely affect" the decision to marry.
3. The parties have received premarital counseling.
4. A commitment that if the parties experience marital difficulties they commit to take all responsible efforts to preserve their marriage, including marital counseling.
5. The couple must obtain premarital counseling from a priest, minister, rabbi or similar clergyman of any religious sect, or a professional marriage counselor.

After discussing the meaning of a Covenant Marriage with a counselor, the couple must also sign, together with an attestation by the counselor, a notarized affidavit to the effect that the counselor has discussed with them:

1. The serious of a Covenant Marriage.
2. That the commitment to the marriage is for life.
3. The obligation of the couple to seek marital counseling if problems arise in their marriage.

(www.ag.state.la.us/Resources)

"Behold, I myself do establish My covenant with you and your descendent after you." Genesis 9:9

"Believing that marriage is a covenant intended by God to be lifelong, fruitful relationship between a man and a woman we vow to God each other our families and our community to remain steadfast in unconditional love reconciliation and sexual purity while purposefully growing in our covenant marriage relationship."



Believing that marriage is a covenant... What are we asking of you?

1. Learn and administer covenant marriage laws.
2. Create a Covenant Marriage Congregation.
3. Designate one Sunday a year as a Covenant Marriage Sunday.

As Congregations

We are also asking you to raise the standards for couples who want to be married in your congregation.

We are asking you to offer ministries to couples in your congregation and community to help insure their success in marriage.

We are asking each congregation to prayerfully consider becoming a Covenant Marriage Congregation. These congregations will be asked to lift up and stand by God's standards for marriage as a covenant.

We are asking you to consider joining other congregations in your respective communities to offer a unified commitment to strengthen marriages and families.

Covenant:
a solemn, binding
agreement made
before God.