

Wedding Scriptures: Bible Passages for Weddings and Vow Renewals

Bible passages for weddings and vow renewals — covenant, love, and faithfulness texts — with pastoral notes on placement in the ceremony and when each passage fits the couple.

On the Nature of Love

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4-8 (ESV)

“Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends.”

The most-read wedding scripture for a reason. Read slowly — every clause is a specific commitment the couple is making. Consider pausing briefly between 'love bears all things' and the ones that follow.

COLOSSIANS 3:12-14 (ESV)

“Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”

For a couple who understand that marriage will require forgiveness. Names the practical clothing of love — humility, patience, forgiveness — with love as the binding thread.

1 JOHN 4:7-12 (ESV)

“Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love... No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.”

Grounds the couple's love in the character of God himself. Especially powerful when read early in the ceremony as the framing text for everything that follows.

Marriage as Covenant

GENESIS 2:18-24 (ESV)

“Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him.'... Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.”

The founding marriage text — God's own institution of marriage in creation. Read as the passage that names what is actually happening at the ceremony: two becoming one.

EPHESIANS 5:25-33 (ESV)

“Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her... In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies... For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church.”

The passage that lifts marriage into a picture of Christ and the church. For couples who want the ceremony to name what marriage is at its deepest — a mystery pointing beyond itself.

MARK 10:6-9 (ESV)

“From the beginning of creation, God made them male and female. Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate.”

Jesus' own words on marriage. The closing line — 'let not man separate' — is often spoken as part of the pronouncement itself.

Faithfulness and Companionship

ECCLESIASTES 4:9-12 (ESV)

“Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their toil. For if they fall, one will lift up his fellow. But woe to him who is alone when he falls and has not another to lift him up... And though a man might prevail against one who is alone, two will withstand him — a threefold cord is not quickly broken.”

The classic wisdom text on partnership. The 'threefold cord' — the couple plus God — is a common motif in unity ceremonies.

RUTH 1:16-17 (ESV)

“Where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.”

Originally spoken by Ruth to Naomi, but its covenant language has become one of the most beloved wedding passages. Especially fitting when the couple has already walked through significant life together.

SONG OF SOLOMON 8:6-7 (ESV)

“Set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm, for love is strong as death, jealousy is fierce as the grave. Its flashes are flashes of fire, the very flame of the Lord. Many waters cannot quench love, neither can floods drown it.”

The Bible's own poetry of romantic love. Weighty, beautiful, and appropriate — names love as strong as death and unquenchable. Read as a shorter passage in the middle of the ceremony.

Blessing and Benediction

NUMBERS 6:24-26 (ESV)

“The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.”

The traditional wedding benediction. Spoken over the couple after the pronouncement, it sends them out under the same blessing Aaron spoke over Israel. Ancient, weighty, and hard to improve on.

PHILIPPIANS 4:6-7 (ESV)

“Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.”

A benediction of peace over the marriage — practical, tender, and a promise the couple can return to on hard days.

PSALM 128:1-4 (ESV)

“Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord, who walks in his ways! You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you. Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. Behold, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the Lord.”

A domestic blessing over the home the couple is beginning. Especially fitting for a couple entering marriage with a shared desire for children and family life.

How to Use These in a Ceremony

Two to three passages, not five. A wedding ceremony reads best with one foundational text on the nature of love (usually 1 Corinthians 13), one on marriage as covenant (Genesis 2, Ephesians 5, or Mark 10), and optionally a shorter passage at the vows or a benediction at the end. Overloading the readings dilutes each one.

Match the passage to the couple. Ruth 1:16–17 fits a couple who has already walked through significant life together; Song of Solomon 8:6–7 fits a couple whose relationship has been marked by strong romantic love; Ecclesiastes 4:9–12 fits a couple whose friendship has been the foundation. Ask the couple what they hope their marriage will be known for and choose passages that name that.

Placement matters. Longer passages (1 Corinthians 13, Ephesians 5) work as sit-down readings early in the ceremony. Shorter passages (Ecclesiastes 4:12, Song of Solomon 8:6) work as the couple joins hands or lights a unity candle. The benediction (Numbers 6:24–26) comes after the pronouncement, spoken over the couple as they turn to face the congregation.

Consider the guests. A wedding is often the one time non-churched family and friends will hear scripture read publicly. Choose passages that let the beauty of the text do its own work — 1 Corinthians 13, Song of Solomon 8, and Numbers 6 all land with people who have never opened a Bible. Save the more theologically dense passages (Ephesians 5:22–33) for couples and congregations where they will be received rather than resisted.

Vow renewals. Lean toward passages that speak to covenant already tested — Ruth 1:16–17, Ecclesiastes 4:9–12, Psalm 128. Frame the reading as marking what the couple has been practicing for years, not just what they are beginning today.

Frequently Asked

What is the most popular Bible verse read at weddings?

1 Corinthians 13:4-8 — 'Love is patient, love is kind...' — is the most-read wedding scripture in English-speaking churches. Its power is that it defines love as action rather than feeling, which is exactly the vow the couple is about to make. Read slowly; every line lands.

What scriptures should be read at a Christian wedding?

A standard Christian ceremony reads two to three passages: one on the nature of love (usually 1 Corinthians 13:4-8), one on covenant or marriage as God's design (Genesis 2:18-24 or Ephesians 5:22-33), and often a shorter passage at the vows or benediction (Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 or Ruth 1:16-17).

What is a short Bible verse for a wedding?

Ecclesiastes 4:12 — 'A threefold cord is not quickly broken' — is the classic short wedding verse, often read as the couple lights a unity candle or joins hands. Song of Solomon 8:6-7 is a shorter, weightier alternative if the ceremony calls for it.

Is Song of Solomon appropriate for a wedding?

Yes — Song of Solomon 8:6-7 ('Set me as a seal upon your heart... many waters cannot quench love') is one of the most fitting wedding passages in the Bible. It names love as strong as death and as unquenchable as a flame. Skip the more explicitly erotic chapters; the closing chapter is where the wedding-appropriate material sits.

What scripture do you use for a vow renewal?

Ruth 1:16-17 ('Where you go, I will go') or Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 both work well for a vow renewal, because they speak to a covenant already tested rather than one just beginning. 1 Corinthians 13 still fits, but read it as a marker of what the couple has been practicing, not just what they hope to.

What is a good scripture for the wedding benediction?

Numbers 6:24-26 ('The Lord bless you and keep you') is the traditional wedding benediction. Read over the couple after the pronouncement, it sends them out under God's blessing in the same words Aaron blessed Israel. Philippians 4:7 works as a shorter alternative.

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