

JESUS AND HIS WIFE: THE PRE-NUP

April 11, 2014

1. Since I shall be thy husband as well as the Lord thy God, I shall have no strange icon before me. Thou shalt make no graven image of me or of thyself: no single selfies, no group selfies, no etch-a-sketch, no photoshopped instagrams. As the golden calf of Aaron was to Moses coming down from the mountain shall thy Nikon Coolpix P600 Compact be to me: I will smash it to atoms.
2. Thou shalt not taketh the name of thy lord in vain, and if thou thinkest that I know not how to distinguish the sweet treble of a mere vocative (“Christ . . . ?”) from the thunderblast of the kind of expletive that you habitually splutter whenever I happen to step on your bare toes (“Christ!”), thou hadst better think again.
3. Look thou keep holy the Lord’s day. No gadding about, no ladies lunches, no riding on elevators—even if they stop of their own accord at every other floor.
4. Honor thy father and mother by having them to dinner once a year. *Not once a week, thank you.*
5. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s condo.
6. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s wife—nor complain if I do.
7. If thou breakest an arm or leg, thou must not imagine that I shall suddenly make thee whole. I will be too busy healing the lame and sick elsewhere. Sign up for Obamacare—*right now.*
8. If thou runnest out of white wine while playing bridge with your friends, do not ask me to turn tap water into Chardonnay. I do that sort of thing only for Mom--at wedding feasts.

9. If a sheep wanders away from the flock, *let it go*. Why careth about one lousy sheep?

10. Hast thou heard the parable of the prodigal wife? Hear it now, my dear, and heed it well.

There was a man who had two wives. Martha was old, withered, and dutiful. Mary was young, beautiful, and self-indulgent. While Martha spent almost every waking hour of her life working in the fields or in the house, Mary spent her days bathing, polishing her nails, and playing video games. Yet their husband loved them both.

One day Mary decided that she wished to launch a non-profit in the city for the benefit of bored young wives like herself who needed something to do. So she asked her husband for a thousand sesterces. Though his heart misgave him often, he loved her dearly, so he gave her the money and wished her well. But when she got to the city, she fell in with evil companions, spent all her money, and wound up begging on the streets. When she came to her senses, she said to herself, “How many of my husband’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my husband and say to him: ‘Husband, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your wife; make me like one of your hired servants.’ ” So she got up and went to her husband.

But while she was still a long way off, her husband saw her and was filled with compassion for her; he ran to his young wife, threw his arms around her and kissed her. She said to him, “Husband, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your wife.” But the father said to his servants, “Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on her. Put a ring on her finger and sandals on her feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this young wife of mine was dead and is alive again; she was lost and is found.” So they began to celebrate.

Meanwhile, Martha was in the field. When she came near the house, she heard music and dancing. So she called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. “Mary has come back,” he replied, “and your husband has killed the fattened calf because he has her back safe and sound.” When Martha grew angry and refused to go in, her husband went out and pleaded with her. But she answered him, “Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this worthless young wife of yours who has squandered your property comes home, you kill the fattened calf for her!”

“Martha,” he said. “You’re absolutely right. You deserve the fattened calf. I’m kicking Mary out right now.”