



Casually Elegant Weddings

individualized service for quality results in Las Vegas

Bible Readings that can be used in your wedding

[Optional: any of these may be read by a family member or friend; additional readings apart from, but consistent with, the Bible are available upon request]

We recommend the New International Version (NIV) translation, which will be clearly understood by all of your guests. Other well-respected translations may also be used. Each will have its own “flavor” of poetry or literary style while being a faithful rendition of the original ancient text. Please keep in mind (and in study) that each verse is a single element within the context of a larger chapter. You may find the verse appealing but the context (therefore the primary meaning of the verse) inappropriate for your wedding. Choose only what is fully representative of what you want included.

1 Corinthians, chapter 13 (abbreviated, and may be shortened further)

(Paraphrase for weddings by Rev. Ed Bruning; faithful to the original Greek text)

Whether I speak like men or angels, if I have not love, I am only making noise. If I can fathom all mysteries and knowledge, have a faith that can move mountains, and have the courage to live generously but have not love, I am worthless and gain nothing.

Love is patient, constructive, kind. Love does not envy, it does not parade itself, it is not puffed up. Love is never rude. Love does not insist on its own way, it is not easily angered; it keeps no record of wrongs. Love takes no pleasure in other people’s stumbling but rejoices in what is upright. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, and always perseveres.

Life brings change, but love goes on forever. When perfection comes, the imperfect disappears. Then these three remain: faith, hope and love. The greatest of these is love.

Ruth 1:16-17

Do not entreat me to leave you, or return from following after you: for whither you go, there I will go; 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 I shall be buried; the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part you and me.

Blessings used in Jewish weddings, adaptable to Christian weddings as well

May the values which each of you cherish, and the prophetic ideals of justice and righteous, be strengthened by your love, so that by your lives together, all



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humanity will be nearer the presence of God. We pray that this covenant will be blessed, and that this bond of marriage will be sealed with love, as we say:

Praised be Thou, Lord our God, creator of the fruit of the vine.

Praised be Thou, Lord our God, who hast created all things to thy glory.

Praised be Thou, Lord our God, creator of man and woman.

Praised be Thou, Lord our God, who has created man and woman in thy likeness, and out of themselves hast Thou prepared a structure forever.

Praised be Thou, Lord our God, creator of man and woman. Mayest Thou gladden the beloved who stand before thee this day as Thou did Thy creatures in Paradise in the days of yore.

Praised be Thou, Lord our God, who gladdenest the bridegroom and the bride.

Praised be Thou, Lord our God, who hast created joy and gladness, bridegroom and the bride, rejoicing, song, pleasure and delight, love and brotherhood, peace and fellowship. Always may there be heard the voice of gladness, the voice of the bridegroom and the bride, the jubilant voice of bridegrooms from their nuptial celebrations and of youths from their feasts of song.

Praised be Thou, Lord, who gladdenest the bridegroom together with the bride.

Now you will feel no rain, for each of you will be a shelter for the other. Now you will feel no cold, for each of your will be warmth to the other. Now there is no loneliness for you; now there is no more loneliness. Now you are two bodies, but there is only one life before you. Go now to your dwelling place, to enter the days of your togetherness. And may your days be good and long upon the earth.

AARONIC BLESSING / BENEDICTION

God bless you and keep you.

God lift up his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you.

God lift up his smile upon you and grant you peace.

Verses less often found in weddings

An important aspect of planning your wedding is selecting Scriptures to be read at the ceremony. Many clergy encourage the couple to look through the Bible and choose some appropriate verses. This provides an excellent way for the bride and groom to personalize their service by choosing passages that have a special meaning for them or speak to their particular situation. For many couples this is both exciting and daunting. After all, the Bible is a pretty big book! Where to begin? How to choose? Which to choose?



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The list we've provided for you below is an easy place to begin and comes as a result of years of working with wedding couples from Episcopal, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Presbyterian, Baptist and non-denominational churches, and from education at both the undergraduate and graduate levels. Following the list are some closing thoughts which may be helpful to you. Direct quotes from the Bible are taken from the King James Version, which is in the public domain. The interpretations or paraphrases of these verses are strictly our own. However, they do reflect mainstream thought and are non-denominational in perspective.

Verses from the Old Testament

Genesis 1:27-28^a, 31^a God's good and gracious work in creating man and woman for each other

Song of Solomon 2:10-14, 16^a The lover arrives in spring to call for his bride

Song of Solomon 8:6-7 A bride beseeches her lover to be faithful

Isaiah 26:3-4 Trust in God

Isaiah 43:1-7 Our redemption by God, and God's presence and love in our lives

Isaiah 55:10-13 God's word feeds and nurtures us

Isaiah 61:10-62:3 Our certain salvation and a new status

Psalms 19 A Psalm praising God as creator

Psalms 34:8 A Psalm of Thanksgiving. Verse 8 is particularly nice for weddings which include the Eucharist, Holy Communion.

Psalms 98:1^a, 4-6 A Psalm of praise

Psalms 100 A Psalm of praise

Psalms 119 The longest in the Bible, the entire Psalm is a reflection on God's laws, with verses 1-16 reflecting on walking always in God's way.



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Psalm 127 A home built by God

Psalm 128 The blessings of lives led by God

Psalm 148 Praise the Lord

Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 The values of human companionship

Tobit 8:5-9 Tobias and Sarah praise God and acknowledge Him as the creator who ordained marriage. Tobias prays for mercy and that God allow him and Sarah to grow old together. (from the Apocrypha, recognized by the Roman Catholic Church as Scripture)

NOTE: Readings from the Old Testament, also called The Hebrew Bible, are appropriate for both Christian and Jewish Weddings.

Verses from the New Testament

Matthew 5:1-10 The famous Beatitudes, which proclaim God's favor to those who try to live by God's counsel. (See Luke 6:17-49 for a shorter account of The Sermon on the Mount which also includes a few other verses found elsewhere in Matthew.)

Matthew 7:24-27 A metaphor on establishing your home on a foundation in God.

Matthew 22:35-40 The great commandment of love, and the many ways it applies to life.

Mark 2:18-22 Christ as the bridegroom and His followers as the bride.

Mark 10: 42-45 It is better to serve than to be served.

John 2:1-11 The wedding at Cana where Christ performs his first miracle of turning water to wine.

John 3:16 The famous "For God so loved the world" verse.

John 14:6 "I am the way, the truth, and the life..."

John 15:9-17 An admonition to love one another. Christ's sacrificial love for us.



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Romans 12:9-18 The Christian's duty to love and all that is encompassed by that duty: hope, patience, prayer, compassion, and more. Be sure to compare this passage to the 13th chapter of First Corinthians, perhaps the most famous of all wedding Bible verses, which you'll find abbreviated on the front page of this planning document.

I Corinthians 14:1 "Make love your aim" in all that you do. (Verses 2-5 go on to discuss the superior gift of prophecy rather than speaking in tongues.)

I Corinthians 16:14 Be certain that everything you do is motivated by love.

2 Corinthians 5:14-17 Through Christ's sacrificial love, we have become new creations.

Ephesians 2:4-10 God's gracious love for us saves us through faith.

Ephesians 4:25-5:2 Be loving and forgiving, speaking only good and imitating Christ. "...let not the sun go down upon your wrath..." (King James – Check on more modern translations for a better reading).

Ephesians 5:21-33 This passage depicting the Christian home is difficult for some because it deals with "submission theology." However, the general thought is mutual submission. Understand it from an early church point of view.

Philippians 2:1-5 Guard against selfishness. Be humble and serve others.

Philippians 4:4-9 Rejoice and don't be anxious. Live honorably and justly, and God's peace will be a part of your lives.

Colossians 3:12-17 The Christian life lived in love and harmony. Do all in Christ's name.

Colossians 3:18-20 More submission theology, with the admonition to husbands to love their wives

I John 3:1 "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us..." (KJV)

I John 3:16 Christ's example of sacrificial love.



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I John 3:18-24 Believe in Christ, and keep His commandments by loving one another.

I John 4:7 Love each other because love comes from God.

I John 4:16-19 God loves us. If we live in love, it serves as a sign that God lives in us. We are capable of love only because God loved us first.

Revelation 19:1; 5-9 A glorious celebration in heaven for the marriage of the Lamb of God. The church is depicted as the Bride.

In reading these selections, you may find yourself reading beyond the verses. This is an excellent idea because the context may surprise you in some cases. For example, Ruth 1:16 is a popular verse and is often used in weddings. (There are endless vocal music settings of this text as well, so don't rule this possibility out for your soloist.) While many people think of this passage as being spoken by a man to a woman, or visa versa, as an affirmation of marital love, it is actually spoken by Ruth to her mother-in-law, Naomi! The story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz is certainly an uplifting testimony of love. If you have time to read the whole saga, we encourage you to do so! It's quite a story! So, again, try to take the time to read a few verses before and after the main verses listed. This could influence your decision.

How does one begin to narrow down the choices?

One thing to bear in mind is that many of these popular wedding Bible verses have been set to music. If you narrow your choices down to 5, but you only plan to read 2 or 3 in your ceremony, find out if any of your choices are set to music. You could then use those as vocal selections and the problem is solved. You can have them all!

And as for which ones to choose, you have some work ahead of you. Read the verses as a couple. Ask each other, "Does it speak to our situation? Does this sum up an important belief that we hold? Does this make us feel good or special when we read it?" And sometimes it's simply a matter of what grabs you!

A word about translations and paraphrases:

While many prefer the King James Version for the sheer poetry or familiarity of its language, the verses above may read quite differently in other translations. The Bible



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was first written in the Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament) languages. Furthermore, it was written to reconcile us to God – it was not specifically written for events such as weddings or denominations within God’s church. Neither was it written for linguistic stasis. It was written to reveal the heart and mind of God.

Certainly God is pleased when the essence of his love – and his design for marriage – are echoed in your wedding. The translation you use is less important than what is being revealed: God’s love and your response.

The King James Version and The New International Version are the two most widely recognized English translations. You may also want to look up your chosen verses in The English Standard Version, the New American Standard Bible, the New Century Version (also called The Everyday Bible), and the God’s Word Translation. While we don’t favor the New Living Translation, you may want to compare the standard translations with an excellent paraphrase like The Message. The most appropriate version of the Bible for a Jewish Wedding is the Masoretic Text.

Again, the Bible doesn’t have a chapter or even a theme devoted specifically to weddings. So you are essentially “borrowing” or adapting a broadly applicable text in order to narrow it to your celebration. God is pleased with that. He is pleased with you choosing the best way to express his love and your response as you marry.

Your wedding is one of the most important events in your life. Take the time to set the perfect tone for your married years by starting your ceremony preparations with the Bible.