



# CONSIDER IT

## LEADER DEVO

**“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”**

—1 Corinthians 11:26

*Too good to be true.* That’s what some people think of the new covenant.

You mean Jesus was paying the price for my sins on the cross, even though I didn’t ask Him to do so? That I get to live forever in Heaven even though I’m far less than perfect?

Yes, it seems too good to be true, but it is true. It’s true because God’s love stretches all the way to saving us even if we don’t deserve it. *Especially* if we don’t deserve it.

This week don’t brush past what the new covenant means in your own life. It means this promise from God is made to you too. That no matter what pressures you’re feeling—strained relationships, faltering finances, a schedule too busy to survive—your future is certain. You have a promise from God that eternity is a place you’ll be delighted to be. Heaven is waiting for you over the horizon, and you can have joy today.

All God asks in return is that you give to Him what you can’t hang onto forever anyway. That in exchange for a new life, you live for Him.



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## BIBLE BACKGROUND

### JESUS BRINGS THE NEW COVENANT

Christians sometimes view the Old Testament as a dusty, irrelevant rule book. But Jesus didn't see it that way. The first covenant was a launchpad toward holiness, a plan for God's people to know how to live in a way that pleased Him. Viewed through that lens, all those rules and regulations are markers pointing toward a loving God.

**Read Exodus 19:3-6.** When God comes down to Mount Sinai to give His people the law, scholars say we're seeing something similar to a wedding ceremony. The terms of the marriage include: (1) the Israelites recognize God has brought them salvation by rescuing them from Egypt and (2) in a loving response to God, they promise to walk in His way. Promises are exchanged, the vows being the Ten Commandments. This is what's called the old covenant.

**Read Deuteronomy 30:15-18.** In Deuteronomy, Moses reminds the Israelites of their covenant vows (like wedding vows). He reminds them of the consequences of breaking their commitment to God. As we continue along in the biblical story, we see that the Israelites cheat on God often, and without remorse. The language throughout Scripture continues to remind us that God and Israel are wed, but the adulterous hearts of the people break the covenant over and over again.

**Read Jeremiah 31:31-33.** Part of the Israelites' covenant vows included obeying God's law so, when passing through Israel, foreigners would see what God was like. The Israelites were to live differently than the cultures around them, thus drawing others into wanting a relationship with the One True God. Israel never does this well, never faithfully walks in God's way. But instead of abandoning His adulterous wife, God promises a new covenant: one that will imprint His way on their hearts.

**Read Matthew 26:17-35.** At a Passover meal, Jesus chooses to reveal that His impending death will initiate the new covenant. Passover is when the Israelites remembered their exodus from Egypt. It was a reminder of God's rescue, of all the reasons they loved and trusted God and agreed to obey Him that day at Mt. Sinai. During the Passover, the Israelites were reminded of their wedding vows, their covenant with God, and their failures to keep their vows.

It's at this Passover meal, in the upper room in Jerusalem, that Jesus lifts His cup and announces it represents the new covenant, His blood shed for their failures. The Passover meal had specific foods served in a specific order. Each food was a symbol, and the cup that Jesus



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takes after supper to institute the new covenant was the cup traditionally used to signify God's salvation and redemption (Luke 22:20).

When Jesus chose to pour out His blood for our sins, He redeemed everything. Although we break promises, fail, and wander, the new covenant does what we could never do for ourselves. Whenever we celebrate the Lord's Supper, we're recognizing all God has done to bring us salvation. We're invited to remember and thank Jesus that His blood is sufficient for all our sins.

Think about being with Jesus' disciples at that table in the upper room. What do you think they were feeling?

When you celebrate the Lord's Supper, how do you feel? Pause now to thank Jesus for His sacrifice and His invitation to join Him at His table.