

Chapter 20

The next morning dawned with typical Hawaiian beauty. The clouds over the Koolaus brought early mauka showers and the mountain mist refracted the sun's rays, painting a vivid rainbow against the incredibly blue western sky. The merry-makers in both houses saw the rainbow.

"I feel like God's smiling down on us," Heather sighed, "giving his seal of approval to our marriage."

"You know," Beth said a little hesitantly, "the rainbow really has nothing —"

"To do with marriage," Heather finished for her, fingering the charm that hung from the delicate chain around her neck. "Yes, I do know that Beth. Neither does the Mizpah but they both remind me that God believes in covenants. He makes them. He witnesses them. He takes them seriously, much more seriously than I took my vow to Steve with the Mizpah."

"What do you mean?" Beth asked.

"Well, when I gave Steve the Mizpah, we both acknowledged that we were making a commitment to each other before God. Neither of us could break it because God witnessed it."

"Are you talking about when Steve walked away because he was afraid?" Jenni asked with a frown. "He broke your Mizpah vow, you didn't."

"But just because he broke it didn't give me the right to," Heather said sadly. "I made a vow before God, not just a promise to Steve. God never said our promises were based upon someone else's behavior. We should keep our promises even when others don't."

"And you should have kept your promise even when Steve didn't," Gloria agreed.

"Yes I should have," Heather nodded firmly. "I should have made a serious attempt to restore our relationship instead of giving it a feeble effort. I would have if I had really understood what a covenant is. It isn't just a matter of 'I'll keep my promise if I can,' like we tend to do these days. In the biblical days covenants were very serious. There were blessings attached to keeping the covenant and very serious curses when covenants were violated. You literally put your life, and the life of your family, at risk when you violated a covenant."

It was seriously ‘ ‘til death us do part.’ It was pretty much unthinkable to break a covenant.”

“So you see your marriage as a covenant?” Jenni asked, smiling softly. “That’s pretty cool.”

“I really don’t understand the difference,” Beth said.

“How can you not understand?” Heather looked at Beth strangely.

“Why? Because I’m in bible college? There’s a lot I don’t understand Heather,” Beth sighed.

“But Greg told me how God as covenant keeper is central to the bible,” Heather frowned. “How do you not get that after almost two years in bible college?”

“Some things Greg picks up much better than I do,” Beth sighed heavily, “but this is your covenant day. You tell me what you think a covenant will do for your marriage.”

“I’m not going to just promise to love Steve in sickness and in health and all that,” Heather leaned both arms on the lanai rail and sighed dreamily. “I’m going to say, ‘I will love you no matter what because God is the source, the center of our love. You will change and I will change, but because God remains constant our love will remain too. Rooted in God, it has permanence. I am confident that even when I am weak, God is still strong. With this covenant the strength of God backs my feeble promise to love you. It gives it eagle’s wings, makes it strong and true.’”

“That’s beautiful,” Jenni said in awe.

“Is that what you’re really going to say?” Gloria asked.

“Yes it is,” Heather smiled happily.