

## The Contract-Covenant Continuum

© Bill Strom, Ph.D.

**Directions:** Please indicate the degree to which you Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2) are Unsure (3) Agree (4), or Strongly Agree, (5) with the following statements. Answer honestly and try not to second guess your first response.

### **SD D U A SA (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Unsure, Agree, Strongly Agree)**

- 1 2 3 4 5 1. My friends and I identify strongly with others at a place of worship.
- 1 2 3 4 5 2. Relationships are give-and-take arrangements in which one ought to keep the ledger about even.
- 1 2 3 4 5 3. Sometimes you have to threaten to move out in order to get another person's attention.
- 1 2 3 4 5 4. Relationships work best God's way.
- 1 2 3 4 5 5. My relationships have benefited from people in a small group fellowship at a place of worship.
- 1 2 3 4 5 6. If my sexual needs were not being met in a romantic relationship, I would be justified to look elsewhere to meet those needs.
- 1 2 3 4 5 7. The basic unit of my social world is me.
- 1 2 3 4 5 8. Fantasizing about other people can hurt your romantic relationship.
- 1 2 3 4 5 9. The scriptures of my faith provide me with valuable relationship advice.
- 1 2 3 4 5 10. More than anything else, being truly happy depends on finding one's ideal soul mate.
- 1 2 3 4 5 11. In close relationships it is best to look out for your own personal interests.
- 1 2 3 4 5 12. Praying for relational guidance is a good thing to do.
- 1 2 3 4 5 13. It's smart to make prenuptial agreements before you get married.
- 1 2 3 4 5 14. My goal in my current relationship is to be happy.

More...

**SD D U A SA (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Unsure, Agree, Strongly Agree)**

- 1 2 3 4 5 15. Sometimes you have to deceive people close to you in order to get what you want.
- 1 2 3 4 5 16. I make a lot of decisions together with those closest to me.
- 1 2 3 4 5 17. "Til death do us part" is still achievable these days.
- 1 2 3 4 5 18. Close relationship are like sacred bonds authored by God.
- 1 2 3 4 5 19. The primary purpose of marriage is to meet personal needs for love and sex.
- 1 2 3 4 5 20. Asking for forgiveness and extending forgiveness are important in close relationships.
- 1 2 3 4 5 21. I identify with the saying, "it's hard to belong to someone else when the right one comes along."
- 1 2 3 4 5 22. Living together to try out a relationship without long-term commitment is a good idea.

**Calculation & Interpretation:**

Reverse score the following items: 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 21, 22. (This means a 1 = 5, a 2 = 4, a 3 stays the same, a 4 = 2, and a 5 = 1) Score the remaining items as you circled them: 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20. The total should range somewhere between 22 and 110. (Among 217 other subjects, the lowest score was 50, the highest 105). The average score was 81.27. Most people (70%) will fall between 69 and 93.

The higher your score, the more you tend to hold covenantal beliefs and assumptions. The lower your score, the more you tend to hold contractual beliefs and assumptions.

*Contractual beliefs and assumptions:* to see yourself as an individual seeking personal happiness and fulfillment from your close relational partners. Tending to see relationships as give-and-take where the goal is to keep costs and rewards even. Believing that lack of happiness is reason to leave the relationship or blame partner for failure in meeting your needs. May include the idea that finding 'the one' is key to life-long relational success and joy.

*Covenantal beliefs and assumptions:* to see oneself and partner as members of a community where the goal is moral development. Tending to see relationships as sacred trusts that require sacrifice and service to the other with resulting mutual rewards. Lack of relational health is deemed solvable through mutual accountability of partner and one's faith community to live by religious wisdom. Views hardship in relationships as opportunity to grow together and show love and concern along the journey.