

Sacred Marriage Session 3 The God-Centered Spouse

Think about a time in your marriage when you both discovered that your needs, interests, or desires were dramatically different. How did you respond to this discovery? How could these differences create bumps along the road of marriage if you are not sensitive to them?

Video Session Notes

Sometimes legitimate needs can conflict: Need to rest / Need to have fun, explore.
The problem with needs is that though it can be helpful to know how to love someone, they can also become demands – if you don't need my needs I won't meet yours.

2 Cor. 7:1, *“dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.”*

- “perfecting holiness...” it is a process (the selfishness, the pettiness, the resentments).
- “out of reverence for God” that is why we do all these things.

God Centered Spouse or Spouse Centered Spouse? A spouse-centered spouse will treat their spouse the way their spouse has treated them in the last 48 to 72 hours. Kindness with kindness, attitude with attitude. Won't go out of the way to bless the offending spouse. A God-centered spouse will act out of reverence for God – regardless of how my spouse acts. This is how we maintain a spiritually mature marriage. A spouse-centered spouse will use the spouse's sin as an excuse not to love.

Your wife isn't just your wife, she is God's daughter. When someone is good to your kids, you appreciate them. If someone messes with one of your kids, just the mention of their name makes your blood pressure go up.

- God feels about your spouse the way you feel about your kids. God wants his children to be loved – even though they are not perfect.
- If you want to revolutionize your marriage, think of God as your father-in-law.
- One of the best ways you can love God is to love his son or daughter.

Luke 6:32 – *“If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ love those who love them. And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ do that. And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even ‘sinners’ lend to ‘sinners,’ expecting to be repaid in full.”*

If you love to get love, that's not love – that's trading.

Luke 6:35, *“But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.”*

The definition of Christian love is when we can love those who take us for granted and hurt us – if we can love them then we know Jesus' spirit resides in us.

“In the soul-mate line of thinking if you don't find the one right person to complete you, well, your life is meaningless – you've lost your chance for happiness. Jesus says there's another person who will reward you, there's another person who will appreciate you, and that's your heavenly father-in-law.”

Discussion Questions:

Think about a time in your marriage when your needs were not met and you responded by withholding something (communication, romance, intimacy, finances, affirmation, etc.) from your spouse. How did this “withholding” impact your marriage?

How accurately does this describe your relationship? The way I respond to my spouse is generally based on how I have been treated in the past 48 hours.

- What challenges does this present?
- What truth does Luke 6:32 shed on this?

How does Jesus blow up our conventional understanding of love being about what we get and how we feel? (See also Matthew 5:43-44).

What are some of the world’s messages to men that keep them from serving their wives? What are some of the world’s messages to women that keep them from serving their husbands? How can we counteract these messages in our marriages?

If the primary motivation to love and serve our spouse is not based on how we have been treated, what is it based on?

How would you fill in the following table:

Area of Marriage	Self-Centered Response	Spouse-Centered Response	God-Centered Response
How finances are handled			
How forgiveness is extended			
How communication is maintained			
How free time is used			
How family of origin issues are navigated			

What does it mean that God is our father-in-law and how might this impact our marriage?

- What does a father want for his son/daughter?
- How do you get on a father-in-law’s “good side”?

Towards the end of the video, Gary spoke about how you can find fulfillment even if your husband or wife never appreciates who you are. What was it he was talking about?

In your own marital experience, are you motivated more by what makes you happy or by what pleases God? How can churches support and encourage this latter motivation?

Between the Sessions:

Think about it:

When was the last time you loved your spouse in such a way as it cost you something? What can you do for your spouse in the next few days that will fulfill this level of love?

What do you think would be the greatest benefit for your marriage if you and your spouse became better servants of each other?

Is your attitude toward the sexual relationship marked more by service or by the exercise of power? What can you do to grow in this area?

What patterns or behaviours can you infuse into your marriage that will show the Father that you love his son or daughter (your spouse)?

Pray About It:

Pray together for a marriage that is not based on the needs of the other as much as it is based on reverence for God. Ask God to help you see that you will both be more loved and more satisfied in your marriage if each of you is God-centered even more than spouse-centered. Thank your heavenly Father-in-Law for his child (your spouse).

Read and Reflect:

Read Isaiah 62:5; Hosea 2:16-20; Matthew 22:1-2, and Revelation 19:7. Over and over God uses the husband and wife as a picture of his relationship with his people. Why do you think God does this? What are some of the parallels you see between a marriage of a man and a woman and God's relationship with his children?

Exercise!

Identify an area in your marriage where you are withholding love, care, or something else because your spouse is not meeting your need or doing what you want. Now look at this same area through the lens of loving your spouse out of reverence for Christ.

- How might you adjust the way you are treating your wife/husband if your primary motivation is to bring glory to God?

Read Philippians 2:1-8. Write out some of the ways your attitude and actions might change if you followed the example of Jesus Christ.

Reading:

In preparation for the next session, read chapter 7 of Sacred Marriage.