

# DISCIPLINE FOR GODLINESS

## DISCIPLINE OF MARRIAGE

### SANCTIFYING LOVE

Marriage under the Lordship of Christ is a mutually sanctifying relationship — it moves us toward holiness. Most of us, by the time we get married, are like a well-furnished home — and a lot of furniture needs to be tossed out to make room for the other person. Marriage helps empty those rooms. Genuine marital love reveals rooms full of selfishness. As these rooms are cleared, one finds other rooms of self-centeredness.

Beyond these are autonomy and self-will — an ongoing house cleaning. Marriage certainly did that for me. I had no idea how self-centered I was until I married! **George Gilder**, in his much-discussed book *Men and Marriage*, even argues that marriage is the one institution which tames the inveterate barbarianism of man. Over the years a good marriage can change us for the better — almost beyond recognition. There is indeed a mutual sanctification in marriage.

But the emphasis in the Scriptures is on the responsibility of a husband's love for his wife: **“to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless”** ([Ephesians 5:26-27](#)). This is what Christ will do through our divine marriage to Him, for at His return the washed and regenerated Church will be presented to Him in absolute perfection. This is the sealing of the romance of the ages.

Meanwhile, these divine nuptials are a parable of what ought to be the loving husband's elevating effect on his wife. He is to be a man of the Word who lives a godly life, praying and sacrificing for his wife. His authentic spirituality is meant to buoy her onward and upward toward the image of Christ. The man who sanctifies his wife understands that this is his divinely ordained responsibility.

Men (ignoring for the moment our wives' spiritual responsibility to us), do you realize it is your responsibility to seek your wife's sanctification? Even more, honestly, do you accept it? Marriage will reveal something about her which you already know about yourself — that she is a sinner. Marriage reveals everything: her weaknesses, her worst inconsistencies, the things others never see.

**Bible Study: Discipline for Godliness**

**Discipleship Series:**

**Pastor Eddie Idefonso**

Loving your spouse is not to love her as a saint, but as a sinner. **“If we love her for her saintliness, we do not love her at all,”** says **Mason**. You see your wife as you see yourself, and you love her as yourself. You realize your mutual need, and you delve into God’s Word, to listen to it with your heart and try, by His grace, to live it out so that she will be encouraged by your life — and thus become an even more beautiful bride for Christ.

This brings up some hard questions: Is my wife more like Christ because she is married to me? Or is she like Christ in spite of me? Has she shrunk from His likeness because of me? Do I sanctify her or hold her back? Is she a better woman because she is married to me? Is she a better friend? A better mother?

**Men, our call is clear: sanctifying love.**