

# DISCIPLINE FOR GODLINESS

## DISCIPLINE OF MARRIAGE

### COMMITMENT

We must begin with the discipline of commitment. I have grown tougher with the years in my demands on couples who want me to perform their wedding ceremonies. I tell them that wedding vows are a volitional commitment to love despite how one feels. I explain that it is nonsense to think one can break one's vows because one does not **"feel"** in love. I point out that the Scriptures call us to **"put on love"** ([Colossians 3:14](#)) — and despite the canard about such love being hypocritical, it is never hypocrisy to put on a Christian grace. I tell them that if there is the tiniest thought in the back of their minds that they can get out of the marriage if the other person is not all they expected, I will not perform the ceremony. The truth is marriages which depend on being **"in love"** fall apart. Those which look back to the wild promises they vowed in the marriage ceremony are the ones who make it. **There is no substitute for *covenant plus commitment*.**

### FIDELITY

When a man commits himself to love his wife **"as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,"** he will ever be faithful to her. One thing the Church can count on is the fidelity of the Bridegroom. And this is the one thing a wife whose husband loves like Christ can rest on. **Jeremy Taylor**, the great seventeenth-century preacher, in his sermon **"The Marriage Ring or the Mysteriousness and Duties of Marriage,"** gave this charge regarding fidelity:

"Above all ... let him [the groom] preserve towards her an inviolable faith, and an unspotted chastity, for this is the marriage ring, it ties two hearts by an eternal band; it is like the cherubim's flaming sword set for the guard of paradise.... Chastity is the security of love, and preserves all the mysteriousness like the secrets of a temple. Under this lock is deposited security of families, the union of affections, the repairer of accidental breaches."

Men, our wives must be able to rest in the fact of our fidelity. Everything about us: **our eyes ... our language ... our schedules ... our passion must say to her, "I am, and will always be, faithful to you."**

## **COMMUNICATION**

Next is the discipline of communication. Recently the readers of a popular women's magazine were asked the question, "If you could change your husband, what would you change?" The overwhelming consensus was they would like them to communicate better. They indicated that even more, they would like their husbands to *listen*.

**Eugene Peterson** remarks:

"The stereotype is the husband buried in the morning newspaper at breakfast, preferring to read a news agency report of the latest scandal in a European government, the scores of yesterday's athletic contests, and the opinions of a couple of columnists whom he will never meet rather than listen to the voice of the person who has just shared his bed, poured his coffee, and fried his eggs, even though listening to that live voice promises love and hope, emotional depth and intellectual exploration far in excess of what he can gather informationally from *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The Christian Science Monitor* put together."

Men, the discipline of communication demands that you set aside regular time to talk — and that you really do talk, and that you communicate more than facts, that you communicate feelings — that you learn to talk in metaphors and similes with phrases that begin, "**I feel like ...**" And it **means that you listen**.

The *Harvard Business Review* recommends that 65 percent of an executive's time should be spent listening. **How much more so the wise husband?**