

DISCIPLINE FOR GODLINESS

DISCIPLINE OF MARRIAGE

ELEVATION

Next, I strongly recommend the discipline of elevation. **Winston Churchill** once attended a formal banquet in London, where the dignitaries were asked the question, “If you could not be who you are, who would you like to be?” Naturally, everyone was curious as to what **Churchill**, who was seated next to his beloved **Clemmie**, would say. After all, **Churchill** could not be expected to say **Julius Caesar** or **Napoleon**. When it finally came **Churchill’s** turn, the old man, the last respondent to the question, rose and gave his answer. “If I could not be who I am, I would most like to be” — and here he paused to take his wife’s hand — “Lady Churchill’s second husband.” The old boy made some points that night. But he also said it for everyone who has a good marriage.

A commitment to building up your wife is of greatest importance. Men, if you think what your wife does is less important than what you do, you are wrong, and you have big problems. Compliments on her kindness and her daily provisions should be commonplace, as should show her respect by observing common courtesies.

DEFERENCE

Along with this, the discipline of deference must be carefully practiced. Many men never forego a planned pleasure for the sake of their wives. For some men, golf is synonymous to **Dante’s *Paradiso***, but the entrance to a department store is like the gates of **Dante’s Hell**, bearing the inscription: “Abandon all hope all ye who enter here.” But if you love your wife, there must be times when you forsake the heavenly greens because you value her interests and simply love her.

TIME/ROMANCE

Lastly, I must mention the discipline of time and romance. Years ago, in the Midwest, a farmer and his wife were lying in bed during a storm when the funnel of a tornado suddenly lifted the roof right off the house and sucked their bed away with them still in it. The wife began to cry, and the farmer called to her that it was no time to cry. She called back that she was so happy, she could not help it — it was the first time they had been out together in twenty years!

Bible Study: Discipline for Godliness

Discipleship Series:

Pastor Eddie Idefonso

In **1986 *Psychology Today*** did a survey of 300 couples, asking them what keeps them together. One of the major “staying” factors was time spent together. Make sure you maintain this priority. Your calendar reveals what is important to you, so write her calendar into yours. Schedule weekly times together that do not just “happen.” Be creative. Date! Surprise her. Be extravagant.

Men, when was the last time you opened the door for her ... said “I love you” ... complimented her ... wrote her a loving note ... sent her flowers ... “dated” her ... gave her extra special attention?

*'Tis not love's going hurts my days,
But that it went in little ways.*

— Edna St. Vincent Millay

Many other “disciplines” could be named, most of which are implicit in what we have said — for example, tenderness, sensitivity, patience — but the bottom line is to work at it. In the fire of new love, marriage seems as easy as falling off a log. Actually, it is as easy as *staying* on a log. It requires careful attention, developed skill, and work.

Men, are you working on the second most important relationship of your life (God is first)? Sweat any lately? No perspiration, no progress. No pain, no gain.

Let us bow to God's Word: “[A]ct like men, be strong. Let all that you do be done in love” ([1 Corinthians 16:13-14](#), NASB) Discipline yourself for the purpose of godliness.

Food for Thought

Do you agree with Mike Mason's analogy between marital love and death? Why or why not? What does your love for your wife demand of you? Are you willing to pay the price?

Do you generally feel what your wife is feeling — her joys and sorrows, her mountain peaks and deep valleys? What can you do to let her know that you want to “connect” with her emotionally and spiritually?

“Praying is the marital work of a Christian husband.” Do you agree? How often do you pray for your wife? With her? What can you do to make this more of a habit?

What are you doing currently to help your wife draw closer to Christ? List at least six specific things you will do within the next two weeks to help your wife grow spiritually.

What happens to a marriage if a husband doesn't love himself? What does it really mean to love oneself, biblically? How will such an attitude show itself practically?

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How do [Colossians 3:14](#) and [1 Corinthians 16:13-14](#) apply to your marriage? Be specific.

Application/Response

What did God speak to you about most specifically, most powerfully in this teaching? Talk to Him about it right now!

Think About It!

Read [Ephesians 5:22-33](#), then write a few paragraphs on the spiritual meaning of Christian marriage. What do the wife's submission and the husband's love have to do with one another? What does the relationship of Christ and His Church teach you about your marriage?