

## *The 100-0 Marriage* by Chris Garner

One of the biggest myths in today's society is the idea that a fifty-fifty marriage is a normal and good marriage. It may be normal in society, but it is not God's plan for marriage. Yet, this myth also flourishes within the Christian church and it is a huge problem. For many couples, it is a matter of, 'you do your part and I will do my part.' They make marriage into a contractual relationship. The focus is on the other person and what he or she is or is not doing. The behavior of their spouse drives their reactions and responses rather than Christ and the Holy Spirit controlling what they do and how they respond to each other.

The marriage relationship should be a 100-0 relationship. It is a matter of giving everything and expecting nothing in return. Jesus gave everything for mankind without any expectation and Christians are also to give everything for their spouse. Ephesians 5:1-2, John 15:12-14 and other Scriptures bear this truth out. Yes, if one person gives all and the other never gives anything in return, that is a problem. And no, we are not talking about allowing abuse or sin or inappropriate behavior. But what would happen if I just stopped focusing on all those things about my spouse that bother me and focus on meeting his or her needs and making them happy? What if I just dropped the expectations and sought only the best for my spouse? What if husbands and wives sought to win their spouse without a word (1Peter 3:1-2) - to serve and love their spouse unconditionally? What a concept! To love each other as Christ would want us to - yet, too often, in counseling, I have to try to persuade people to die to self and just love their spouse without expectations.

The Christian marriage is a covenantal relationship. A relationship in which each spouse fulfills his or her responsibilities even if the other does not. The Christian life is about giving, dying to self, and serving. Jesus admonished His disciples that anyone who would want to be great, must serve others. Paul followed up in his letter to Philippians that we ought to consider others better than ourselves. Yet, how often do people get stuck on the *I deserve better or happiness or something more*. Friends, we deserve death and damnation; it is only by God's grace that we don't get what we truly deserve. Deciding to die to self and live for your spouse will transform your marriage. Loving the Biblical way of giving of yourself will change your relationship - in fact, that kind of life will change all of your relationships! Do you want happiness, fulfillment, and contentment? Give! Seek to make your spouse happy, fulfilled, and content. It is a matter to putting off the old self and putting on Christ. It's not hard - it's impossible! Therefore, you must surrender your life to Christ and live by the Holy Spirit.