

LOVING GOD'S WAY



Most people (I'm included in this) marry to be loved. We *fell* in love with another person and decided we wanted to spend our life with him or her. Friends, this is *not* God's way—not God's plan! Jesus gave Himself for us (demonstrating love), while we were still sinners (see Romans 5:8). Loving God's way means giving of ourselves. We talk about this and most of us would say that we *do* love God's way—that we do die to self, but really? Who truly dies to self and follows Christ's example of giving their very life?

We hear about dying to self and giving of ourselves regularly in Christian circles, but practically, what does it really mean? Like Christ, are we to be crucified on a cross? Often, when we try to get serious about this, people take things to the extreme. Dying to self is very simple, yet very difficult and it seems that the change in attitude is the most difficult part—to have a truly Christ-like attitude (see Philippians 2:1-11). People are so stuck on themselves. We have to quit thinking life is about us! The world does not exist to make you happy and fulfilled and worth-while, you exist to be used of God to make others happy, fulfilled and worth-while. So many people have told me in essence, 'if I die to self and just give, my spouse will take everything.' So what? What *if* they took "everything." Wouldn't your life be better without all that stuff? Yes, you need to have boundaries, it is not ok for a spouse to be abusive or treat you badly, but, when one spouse begins giving freely, without holding back, the other will also begin giving.

Christians have to stop being so self-righteous - so pharisaical - so hypocritical! Jesus said "if you love me, you will obey me." Obeying Christ means that we must love God with all of our heart, mind, and strength and love others as ourselves. This love is a selfless, sacrificing, unconditional love. When was the last time, you sacrificed *anything* for your spouse? Just did what he or she wanted to do, without complaining or a bad attitude. Love God's way; loving your spouse completely, without reservation—giving everything, even though they don't deserve it. Christ died for you when you were a sinner, love your spouse unconditionally.

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page: www.fortifiedmarriages.com*

Articles to check out:

Unconditional Love Is Uncommon, Not Impossible by Ben Stroup

Books to check out: *A Lifelong Love* by Gary Thomas

The Blessing: Giving the Gift of Unconditional Love and Acceptance by John Trent and Gary Smalley