



Loving God By Loving Your Spouse

Reflecting Divine Love in Marriage

Loving God is intrinsically linked to loving your spouse. It is an act of profound selflessness, reflecting the divine love that God extends to humanity. As fleshly beings, we often lean towards self-preservation, instinctively seeking to protect ourselves when faced with threats, whether they be physical or emotional. This instinct, however, can hinder the development of intimacy between spouses, as true intimacy necessitates a willingness to be vulnerable from both partners.

PERFECT LOVE CASTS OUT FEAR

“There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.” - 1 John 4:18

In marriage, fostering a secure and nurturing environment free from threats—emotional or physical—is crucial. This involves cultivating trust, addressing unsafe behaviors, and setting appropriate boundaries, guided by the principle of “speaking truth in love” (Eph 4:15). By doing so, couples can work towards a harmonious relationship in which fear is replaced by love.

SELFLESSNESS: THE ESSENCE OF LOVING GOD

Loving God means setting aside our self-interested impulses to prioritize the well-being of others, especially our spouse. It is through this selfless love that we emulate the teachings of Jesus, who commanded us to love even our enemies—a profound testament to the boundless nature of God’s love.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven.” - Matthew 5:43-45

THE GREATEST COMMANDMENTS

The essence of loving God and others is beautifully encapsulated in the greatest commandments:

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” - Mark 12:30-31

To claim to love God while behaving in an unloving manner towards others, especially your spouse, is contradictory. As stated in 1 John 4:20, “If we say we love God, but hate others, we are liars. For we cannot love God, whom we have not seen, if we do not love others, whom we have seen.”

LOVE BEGINS WITH SELF-LOVE

“In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself.” - Ephesians 5:28

Loving others, particularly your spouse, begins with loving yourself—a reflection of the faith that God has forgiven you. This belief in divine forgiveness is best demonstrated through the love you extend to others. Forgiveness is a cornerstone of this love, as illustrated in Matthew 6:14: “For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”

Ultimately, we give love because we recognize that He first loved us (1 Jn 4:19), even while we were still sinners (Rom 5:8). It is from this humble place that we demonstrate our love and gratitude for God by obediently giving love to others. In turn, this divine love nurtures loving relationships with our spouses and others around us.