

Sacred Marriage

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After reading the Sacred Marriage book, I've noticed a lot of things that we need to improve in our marriage. For instance, I had never thought of marriage as being designed to make us holier, but now having this insight everything makes more sense. I've realized that most things I've been struggling with in my marriage are actually opportunities for me to be more like Christ. My husband had always mentioned to me that marriages are hard and that is a fact we should embrace. I would always think he was being too cold and radical about it, or maybe not romantic. It was not until I started reading this book that I realized it talks about the same matter my husband has been telling me, but with a little bit more grace and bible verses. We both really like how realistic this book is.

One thing I learned throughout the book is about marriage being designed to love what is radically different from me. Marriage shows that we are not all there is. It is made to help us not to be selfish, to put the other one first. This was such a reinforcement and encouragement. I've been trying to not be selfish lately by doing things at the house with excellence. I do not like doing house chores and/or cooking but I've been doing it for the past 3 years with the mentality that I need to serve my family. As mentioned in the book, I've been trying to use my daily unpleasant realities of life to shape my stubborn nature toward having the heart of a servant. It has been very hard, but reading this book brought me such encouragement. As in chapter eleven, I've been asking the lord to make me a servant. Interestingly enough, my husband's love language is acts of service. He loves to see me doing stuff. He feels loved when I serve him, and I struggle to serve him. However, when thinking that when I'm serving my husband I'm serving the Lord and pleasing him, serving becomes a spiritual activity.

Like the author mentioned about himself, I believe I've been absent minded ever since I got married about honoring my husband. I've been challenged a lot in the honoring part of the book. Gary Thomas mentions that "Honor not expressed is not honor" (p.61). I've always known the bible verse about the husband being the authority and the importance to submit to your husband. However, I've never thought of practical ways of doing that. Actually, I've searched for ways of submitting myself and honoring him, and only found vain things or unachievable tasks that did not make a lot of sense to me. Now, after reading the Holy Honor chapter, I've realized that I need to honor my husband in practical ways. I need to implement daily things to honor him. After all, he was created by God, and he is God's son. How dare I not treat him with respect and actively honor him on a daily basis. By making honoring my husband a spiritual discipline, it reminds me of its great importance. I'm not exactly sure, but I've never realized how important this is. I've always known that we are all God's creation. However, reading that "My Husband" is his son was a completely aha moment for me. I can't resent God's son. I can't emotionally neglect God's son. I cannot stonewall God's creation. Now, I'm creating a list with practical things I can do to honor him daily. We also had a conversation about practical things that could be implemented in our routines as an attempt to honor each other. For instance, he asked me if I can make myself available for sex more often, that way he will feel more honored. I put that in my list as a practical way of honoring him. We still need to add more things to our lists and strategies to implement it. Reading the book has been a great way to implement change in our relationship. We've decided we need to honor each other more frequently. On my list, I asked him if he can show more affection towards me throughout the day by touch.

On the other hand, one chapter that we both agreed we've been good about is chapter nine. We've both been "seasoned" with suffering so many times, and we decided to take the

experience as a learning experience and as a maturing process. We literally have been embracing our difficulties in order to build character. We've had so many trials in the years that we are married that we always look back in wonder on how much growth and learning we've acquired. And I was referring to our lives in general, but actually in our marriage we've had quite difficult times as well. Like the author says "all of us experience things about our spouses that may be difficult for us to accept". We've been through my mother-in-law's cancer, a close family member being falsely prosecuted and incarcerated, not enough money for the rent (a couple times), losing a job, tragic death of a friend, fights and disagreements between us, and the list goes on. Today when we look back we can certainly see how we were able to put God first, trust that he was in the midst of all, and above all meaning and growth. We are a different couple today. We are more resilient as a couple, more mature, more understanding to each other, and above all a lot more spiritual growth.

I believe the main take away from reading this book together was for us to acknowledge how far we've come; how far God has actually taken us in our marriage. When we married ten years ago, we were so immature and we had completely different expectations on our marriage. A lot of times we both thought our marriage would not last another month but decided to put God first and honor our commitment. Today, when we look back we can actually see that it was worth deciding to honor God. It was worth having perseverance in one another, and in his purpose for our family. Also, how it is much more satisfying to look at our marriage difficulties as opportunities to honor God and to be more like him. My husband says that he has always thought of marriage as a spiritual entity, but after reading this he actually has practical tools on how to be more holy in his marriage.