

Six Guiding Principles – Men: Your Marriage Matters... to God

- 1. You are called to be Christ-like.**
Who wouldn't want to become more Christ-like? Doing so allows us to grow closer to God, would mean He is in greater control of our lives, and glorifies God in the process. It brings to life the concept of Christ living in and through us (Gal 2: 20) and allows us to experience the fruit that we are promised as He increases and we decrease - love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5: 22-23). What's not to like about these attributes? And yet, easier said than done for most of us.
- 2. God designed your marriage to help show you how you're doing on the journey to Christ-likeness.**
Think about it: what other relationship in our life, other than our wife, gives us an accurate picture of how well we love and serve others? Most people in your life will tell you what you want to hear. Your wife, on the other hand, is likely the best measure of how Christ-like you are because she may be the only person in your life that knows the true you. You can fool most people most of the time but it's impossible to fool your wife because we're so buck-naked in marriage (figuratively and literally).
- 3. As a Christian man, you can transform your marriage, even if your wife is less interested.**
This principle is simple and liberating – a Christian man can transform his marriage, even if his wife is not apparent in her desire to invest in doing so. This was a breakthrough in my paradigm because I had always assumed that a couple had to make the joint commitment to really make a difference. I'm now convinced that God's design for marriage and our role in it allows us to have a profound impact on our wives and on the relationship based on the only thing we can control in the first place – ourselves.
- 4. God designed your wife to profoundly respond to your progress.**
The reason a man can have this impact on the marriage relationship is that God designed our wives to profoundly respond to our ability to be Christ-like in loving, serving, and supporting them. When we struggle in being Christ-like towards her, her response (God's 'mirror' to show us how we're doing) will reflect such. On the other hand, when we get it right, she will reflect that in significant, often striking ways.
- 5. You, as the husband, are responsible for the health of your marriage.**
I, as the husband, am responsible for the health and condition of my marriage. You may not be to blame for the state of your marriage today, but as the spiritual leader, God has chartered you to be responsible for the health of your marriage relationship. And the best, most effective way you can step up to this role is by making the investment of time and energy to create a more abundant marriage by being the Christ-like servant-leader that God calls you to be.
- 6. When you draw closer to God, you will also draw closer to your wife in the process.**
If our primary focus as a husband (as the spiritual leader) is on drawing closer to God, we will automatically be drawn closer to our wife in the process. In the triangle illustration in the book, when you and your wife move vertically along the lines pointing towards God, what invariably happens to the proximity of the two boxes you occupy? They come closer together – naturally, not because we force them together. This may be best summarized by Gary Thomas author of, *Sacred Marriage*, when he said, "A great marriage doesn't come from knowing each other, it comes from knowing God."