

A Christ-Centered Marriage

Brothers, I do not consider myself to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: forgetting what is behind and reaching forward to what is ahead, I pursue as my goal the prize promised by God's heavenly call in Christ Jesus. Therefore, all who are mature should think this way. And if you think differently about anything, God will reveal this to you also. - Philipians 3:13-15 HCSB

I spent years as a professional martial artist. I lived for my sport. I would get up early in the morning so I could get my cardio done before school (and later, work). I got to the dojo while the sun was still down to get some uninterrupted time on the gear. After school or work, I hustled to the dojo again and spent hours drilling certain moves over and over, or sparring with whoever showed up. My sport regulated what I ate. It regulated when I slept. It even impinged upon my dating life. Jiu-jitsu was not the center of my life, but it was very close.

Christ is the center of my life. Whatever skills I developed through my association with MMA, I put to His use when I worked with gangs and street kids. When fights were scheduled at the same time as church, I opted out of the fight regardless of the cost.

Christ is the center of my marriage. That means that I go to bed when He lets me and I get up when He tells me to. If I have to forgo a little sleep so that I can get some uninterrupted time with my Master, then so be it. That means that my purpose in marriage is to make my wife holy¹ so that I can present her to my Master as another useful follower. Just as my goal used to be to imitate my sensei, my goal is now to imitate my Master and He has given me a tremendous example of sacrificial love.

Putting Christ at the center of my marriage means that I love and take care of my spouse like I do my own body.² Practically becoming "one flesh"³ means that my wife and I strive to think the same way, to have the same love, to share the same feelings, and to focus on the same goals. It means that we do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility, consider each other as more important than ourselves. I cannot look only for my own interests, but also for hers. In this, I am imitating Christ and putting Him at the center.⁴

We must reject the tokenism of platitudinous piety that merely mumbles about Christian marriage but instead, seek the reality. There can be no half measures in this pursuit. Everything must be subject to Him so that God may be all in all.⁵

¹ Ephesians 5:25-27

² Ephesians 5:28-30

³ Ephesians 5:31

⁴ Philipians 2:2-8

⁵ 1 Corinthians 15:28