

Holiness

Conformity to the character of God and obedience to the will of God



1 Thessalonians 4:3 states that it is God's will that Christians should be holy; that they should live lives in *conformity to the character of God and in obedience to the will of God*. Our holiness should be demonstrated in the way we treat our spouse, yet so often, it is in the marriage relationship where couples are the least holy. There is little compassion and grace, slowness to anger, or love and faithfulness (the character of God according to Exodus 34:6-7). Why do we treat total strangers better than we treat our spouses? It is a travesty and should not happen in the Christian's life.

Our holiness should be seen within our marriages - Philippians 2 exhorts us to have the same mindset as Jesus Christ; doing "nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." Yet, as James wrote, what causes fights and quarrels among us? Isn't our own selfishness? Friends, we need to conform to the character of God and live in obedience to Him. As we grow in our holiness, it needs to be seen in our marriages. We need to treat our spouses as God treats us; with compassion, grace, slowness to anger, love and faithfulness. When we do this, it *will* transform our marriages.

What will *you* do about this? As you seek to grow in the Lord, will you die to self and love your husband or wife as Jesus has loved you? By giving of yourself? With compassion and grace? Rather than criticizing and demeaning him or her when they mess up, will you seek to restore them gently as we see in Galatians 6:1? Conform to the character of God and treat your spouse as God would treat him or her.

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

The *Fortified Marriages Manual and Workbook* is a great tool to help couples grow closer together.

Article to check out:

Choosing holiness over happiness in marriage by Gary Thomas

Book to check out:

Sacred Marriage by Gary Thomas