

Idol: Putting something before God.

Have you made your marriage an idol?

In many years of working with marriages, I cannot think of a person who would say their marriage is an idol - that it is something they would put above God. But honestly consider this thought for a moment. How often do we look to our spouse to meet our needs or expect our spouse to take care of us? Do we make demands of our spouse? Expect him or her to make us happy or complete us? Who do we depend on? Is it our spouse or God? Who do we think of more often? Our God? Or our spouse?

Yes, we do need to work on our marriage and we need to focus on our spouse, but there is only one God - One who can heal us and make us whole. I think we all would say that we put God first in our lives and then spouse, family, work, ministry, etc, etc. Francis Chan suggests that our priorities should be God first, second, third, fourth and then spouse and the rest. Again, I am *not* promoting spousal neglect here - to focus on the Lord to the *exclusion* of our spouse. Paul wrote that husbands and wives *are* concerned about the things of this world, how to please their spouses (1Corinthians 7:33-34). I am proposing that we evaluate our priorities; is God really first in our lives? The first and greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, and mind (Matthew 22:37). Do we do that? And then love our spouse from that focus on the Lord?

Gary Thomas wrote that marriage is *not* to make us happy, but to make us *holy*. Timothy Keller wrote that marriage is meant for spouses to help each other become their "future glory-selves" - the new creations God desires for us. Yet, so often today; couples are arguing and fighting - about what? Unmet needs, finances, the way they speak to each other - and on, and on, and on! They are not focused on God, they are focused on each other and what each does or doesn't do. They are sucking the life out of each other attempting to find their significance in the world. We need to STOP IT and live for God rather than for self!

Have you made *your* marriage into idol? Do you put your marriage or you spouse before God - looking to him or her to care for you, heal you, strengthen you, make your life worthwhile? They cannot do it! They weren't created for that purpose - a purpose only God can fulfill. Yes, cultivate a healthy, growing marriage; but focus on the Lord your God and live for Him, loving your spouse as the Lord would want you to love him or her.

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

Articles to check out: *Killing the Idol of Marriage* by Betsy St. Amant Haddox - www.crosswalk.com
Has Marriage Become My Idol? by John Piper - www.desiringgod.org

Book to check out: *You and Me Forever: Marriage in Light of Eternity* by Francis & Lisa Chan