

Esteem:



Value and respect placed on an individual

Our culture today places a lot of emphasis on *self-esteem*; to the point of research regarding esteem in marriage only brings up building one's spouse's self-esteem. Culture puts so much emphasis on self when the Word of God emphasizes God and others. As Christians we are to be *other* focused, not *self* focused. Paul wrote in Philippians that in humility we are to *esteem* others above ourselves. We are to value and respect others; especially our spouse. Please do not go to the, "*but you don't know my spouse*" excuse for not esteeming your spouse. Friends, the Word of God even tells us to love our enemies and Jesus gave many examples of loving others when they are not lovable. He gave His life for those who hated Him! Respecting your spouse is not conditional on how respectable they are.

Yes, there must be healthy boundaries; not one should remain in the situation when a spouse is verbally or physically abusing them. You may need to remove yourself from an abusive situation; but, according to the Word of God; even if your spouse is abusive or disrespectful, you are not to react in the same way. You can, in the power of the Holy Spirit, be respectful even when they are not. Friends, we *never* have a *right* to react in sinful ways, even if the other person is in sin! Peter wrote that we not repay evil with evil or insult with insult (1Peter 3:9). In Romans 12, Paul wrote to treat our enemies well! Yet, so many Christians treat their spouse worse than an enemy.

Do you *esteem* your spouse? Do value him or her? Show respect even when they do not act in ways that deserve respect? Esteeming your spouse means to really listen to him or her, to respect their opinions, honoring their boundaries, seeking to understand, rather than judging their motives. Valuing and respecting your spouse in spite of their shortfalls can change your marriage. Even as I write this, I am convicted to esteem my wife more - to better value and respect her for who she is. I pray that where-ever your marriage that you also feel that conviction. *Esteem* your spouse - value and respect him or her...

Helpful Resources:

Fortified Marriages Resource page: www.fortifiedmarriages.com - The Fortified Marriages Manual & Workbook is a great resource to help you and your spouse know and esteem each other.