

## Re-Modeling

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Falling in love requires a pulse. Staying in love requires a plan.

The Bible has much to say to us about how to make love a verb, especially in the approach to relationships that Jesus modeled for us.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,<sup>4</sup> not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

<sup>5</sup> In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

<sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;<sup>7</sup> rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.<sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!<sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Philippians 2:3-11 (NIV2011)

Mutual submission in marriage means getting rid of competitiveness and not demanding our own way. It means valuing the other person as more important than ourselves. You defer to them (respect).

If we try to hold on to our “rights” and what we think we deserve, we put our relationships at risk. We can’t pursue our rights at the same time we pursue a deeper love in our relationships. We have to choose one or the other. You’ll have to die to yourself. We must opt for relationship rather than our rights. Jesus modeled this for us and it’s going to require we do no less.

### ***Illustration: Valued Possessions & Heirlooms***

Based on Christ’s model of humility in Philippians 2:3-8, there should be a “sense of awe” in our relationships, especially toward our spouses. **What factors about your spouse are truly awe-inspiring?**

Staying in love requires an intentionality to pursuing the things that interest your spouse versus the things that interest you. You go beyond putting up with their interest. You discover what he/she is interested in ... embrace it ... move in that direction ... and do what you can to further that passion in their life and in your relationship. This will require you to get out of your comfort zone! (You did this when you were dating.)

### ***Illustration: Kitchen, Running, Tennis, Biking***

Be specifically conscious of these things (about yourself) as you consider practical ways to demonstrate a new commitment to value your spouse. **What can you do immediately as a genuine expression of your decision to treat your spouse as more important than yourself?**

### **Exercise: Value & Honor**

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. As you think about the marriages of people you know, in what ways have you seen “selfish ambition” or competitiveness occur between the husbands and wives? What seems to be the cause of this?
2. In Philippians 2, we’re told to humbly value others above ourselves – to actually see them as being more important than we are. Why is that so hard to actually practice? How can we get over the difficulty of it?
3. How important is mutual *respect* in a marriage, and what are some practical ways it should be demonstrated?
4. In your opinion, what kind of sharing of interests is best and healthiest for a marriage? What is the practical meaning of the relational guideline in Philippians 2:4 that we’re to look not only to our own interests but also to the other person’s interests?
5. Why is a 50/50 “contract” approach to marriage so detrimental to a lasting love relationship?
6. In a marriage, why is it impossible to pursue *both* an enduring love relationship *and* one’s own rights and preferences? Why won’t this work?