

## Couples In Bloom - **Guilt & Value**

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**Married Christians might NOT have a Christian marriage.** Christians are sinners saved by grace: undeserved **subtraction of guilt** plus undeserved **addition of value**. Christian spouses who live in the hypocrisy of receiving God's grace themselves yet who do not live it / give it to each other do **not** have a Christian marriage (in some aspects).

Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us ⇒ Matthew 6:12. What is **our response to the worst thing our spouse does to us?** Ask two important questions: **1) What does this guilty sinner deserve?** and **2) What does this guilty sinner need?** God converts sins from death sentences into learning opportunities for those of us who love Him because He first loved us. This produces two things: **1) Humility** and **2) Praise**.

Christian spouses need to maintain the **same** spirit of humility and praise with each other that they maintain with God as the Bride of Christ: I am a sinner saved by grace. **Christian marriages value the spouse more than the spouse's mistakes** just as **God** values the Bride of Christ more than her sins (which **He** agreed to redeem with His **life**).

Nehemiah 8:1-12 ⇒ God's people valued God and His Word, were humbled by it, and even felt guilty. Nehemiah told them that their humility was valuable to God, and that the **joy between them and God was their strength**. Learning how God valued their presence over their guilt changed their gloom to praise (referencing the Feast of Tabernacles).

Prioritizing value over guilt heals relationships by **propitiation: giving the guilty grace**. This is what Jesus Christ did for us, His Bride, and is also how God says to love our wives ⇒ Ephesians 5:25-30. Spouses who choose to value each other this way have a **Christian** marriage. The joy created by valuing each other strengthens relationships, heals wounds, and prompts intense celebration and intimacy in marriage and with God.

What if our marriage is scarred with negativity? Learn from Jesus' scars from **our** sins: **scars remind us to love. Do we yet understand how vital Christianity is to marriage?!** Marriage in its entirety is an earthly manifestation of an eternal reality, following Jesus Christ and His love for the Bride of Christ. **This revelation revolutionizes marriages.**

How do we recover from a terrible marriage? Revelation 2:2-7 ⇒ describes recovery: 1) acknowledge good **deeds** that were done, 2) repent from stopping loving **the person**. This means spouses need to love each other and NOT STOP THIS TIME, but increase. THIS separates those who **want** an intimate relationship from those who **have** it growing.

**No one else** can give **God's love** to us. **No one else** can give **our love** to God, or to our spouse. **Our love** is the most powerful thing we have to give just as God's love was the most powerful thing He had to give, and He gave it... to sinners He paid dearly to redeem.

**Let us follow through and line up our marriage with this same love that saved us.**

God designed relationships so that valuing people over their guilt builds intimacy. **Criticism kills intimacy by the opposite: prioritizing guilt over value**. This is particularly vile because our value as Christians is found in Jesus Christ, who paid for **our** guilt.

**Celebrate your intimate relationship!** This is the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and is also how Christian marriage works: **by choosing value over guilt.** ♥ Loren & Kathy Falzone