

Idolatry is me-shaped

Idolatry is the Bible's way of describing when we put something else in the place of God; a person, a relationship, a goal, a possession, a preference, etc. Idolatry means we worship and serve created things rather than the Creator God.

Think back to the conclusions you reached on your homework sheet "Taking a Look at Ourselves." What are some blind-spots where your marriage will be affected by your idolatry?

In these situations, how could your spouse help you see things rightly?

What practical steps could you and your spouse put in place to grow together in your understanding of God and his love?

Marriage is a gospel thing

The Apostle Paul tells us that marriage points us to the relationship between Christ and the church.

Read Ephesians 5:21 – 33.

What greater truths is marriage designed to convey?

What gets in the way of our marriage communicating these things?

What steps can you take to ensure that your marriage is able to declare these gospel truths?

Keep these ideas in the background of your thinking as you work through the rest of this discussion.

Winston Smith helpfully says in his book *Marriage Matters*, "To admit that you can be manipulative is simply to say you're a sinner."

In what ways are you most tempted to manipulate your spouse?

What are you trying to accomplish when you relate to them in this way?

What are you not seeing or remembering about your spouse when you act this way towards them?

How can we diagnose whether we're using gifts, time, words, etc, as means of manipulation or a genuine expression of love?

What do you want your spouse to understand when you feel manipulated or not valued?

How can you work out what is best for each of you in any given situation?

What gets in the way of you seeing this and acting accordingly?

Personal reflection:

Perhaps share one or two of your responses with your spouse.

Do you think you see your spouse as they would like to be treated?

How would you like your spouse to see you?

What are some unexpected ways in which you can honour your spouse?

What gets in the way of doing this?

What two or three things do you need to be reminded of in order to continually honour your spouse?

Before Next Time: