

More Important Than...

Do you remember the Apostles' argument about who was the most important? Jesus shamed them with a simple teaching about humility.

Have you ever been in a situation when someone else was receiving the attention and you were being left out? Perhaps they received recognition but you had also made sacrifices. Perhaps someone was promoted while you were overlooked. Yet, you were equally or better qualified. Perhaps you have been overlooked at home for mundane tasks you perform...repeatedly. You want to feel appreciated; you want to know that you are important.

What would happen if everything were reversed? Really reversed!?!

What if *you* came home and greeted your spouse as if he/she were *more important than yourself*: "You are more important than my needs. What can I do for you?"

Instead of insisting that *your* needs be met; instead of struggling to be appreciated; instead of manipulating things for *your* personal advantage; instead of forcing responsibilities onto someone else; instead of rationalizing *your* own importance...What if you literally adopted the attitude that your spouse is of greater importance than yourself?

It is a rather *expensive* prospect. By that I mean that your spouse could take advantage of you, of your time, of your energy. You might forfeit some relaxation; forfeit your favorite television show or ball game; forfeit some personal reading or computer time; forfeit a few activities with 'your' friends. You might find yourself doing some tasks that you normally leave for your spouse. You

might go on a date or attend a function/dinner/outing that you would not prefer. You might need to keep the kids or entertain your in-laws. You might have to spend 'your' money on your spouse to buy something he/she *needs* instead of what you *want*. You might have to *listen* when you think you already *know*.

It could be expensive but...what if?

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. (Phil. 2:3)

Paul did not write this specifically to married couples, but to all Christians. This is the key that unlocks contentment. It applies to all of our relationships: spouses, parent to child, child to parent; Christian to Christian; Christian/elder; singles/married couples; young/old; adults/someone else's children; Bible class teacher/student; preacher/audience; and so on.

It is natural to want to be treated as important by other people. However, I believe that most of us would feel just a little embarrassed if someone said aloud: "You are more important than I."

Jesus prayed to God asking if there was any other way than the cross. Even without a recorded answer in scripture, we know the answer was, "No." Jesus regarded you as more important than himself and he died in your place. Jesus came to your *home* (earth) and said, "You are more important than I." And **he** has turned the world upside down with that attitude!

What if, in this world, we acted just like Jesus? What IF...?

—Mark Stinnett