

## Ministry vs. Manipulation

By Harold & Bette Gillogly

Ministry is our commitment to **love in shoe leather**. When we minister to our mate, we are focusing on them and their needs. This is not an easy calling. It's much easier to focus on our own needs and try to manipulate our partner into meeting them. But every Christian spouse has been **called to the ministry**...ministry to our mate. The following are not easy concepts. But they are essential to our understanding the full measure of commitment.

Romans 5:8 — *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

**Because only Christ can meet our DEEPEST NEEDS, we must turn to Him, not our SPOUSE, for the satisfaction of our personal needs for SECURITY (love) and SIGNIFICANCE (meaning/purpose).** Romans 5:8 — *But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*

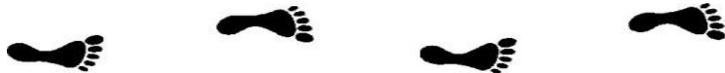
Physically, we all as human beings, need food and shelter. But there are two emotional needs which are just as necessary for us to live: the needs for **security** and for **significance**. We all have a deep need for security. We aren't talking about financial security here, but the **security of being loved** no matter what...unconditionally loved. This is the kind of love 1 Corinthians 13 speaks of. Unconditional love means we are loved, not because of what we do or don't do, but simply because we are. God sets 1 Corinthians' kind of love as the standard for the way we are to love, but, let's face it, only God can love this way all the time. That's why we must look to Him to meet this deep need of ours.

Psalms 138:8 — *The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me....*

Our second greatest emotional need is for **significance**. We need to know we have meaning, that our lives have purpose. We all need to know we are valuable and make a difference in this world just by being alive. Jesus Christ alone can meet this great need. He made us with a purpose in mind. Psalm 138:8 says, *The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me....* He has a purpose for you and me being here. That makes us significant.

When we marry, somewhere deep inside, we say, "O.K., you promised to 'love, honor and cherish' me. Now, do it. Show me you love me all the time. Never get angry with me, yell or disagree, or I will feel unloved. Oh, yes, one more thing. Always make me feel valuable. Show me how much you appreciate me, or I will feel unneeded." We set ourselves up for failure and disappointment when we expect our mate to meet all our needs for love and significance. They can't do it! But we will never be disappointed in Jesus' love and purpose for us. He loves us unconditionally. We may not always understand His love, but it's there, just the same. We may sometimes have trouble receiving His love, but He never withholds it. We must remind ourselves daily how much God loves and values us. We can't afford to listen to Satan's doubts. God loves us and considers us infinitely valuable! We have absolute proof in the cross of Christ!

In the book, every time you see four little feet walking across the page like this, [you know they will be followed by something for you to do.](#)



**Do you agree that your mate cannot meet your deepest needs for love and meaning/purpose?**

Wife: \_\_\_\_\_ Husband: \_\_\_\_\_

**Who is the only one who can?** \_\_\_\_\_

Galatians 5:13 — *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.*

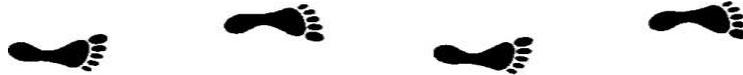
**Because Christ satisfies our needs, we are FREE to minister to the needs of our mate, instead of MANIPULATING our mate to meet our needs.** Galatians 5:13 — *You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.*

When we stop expecting our mate to meet our deep emotional needs for security and significance, and start expecting Jesus Christ to meet those needs, we will have great freedom. We're not asking you to believe what we *think*. We are asking you to believe and act upon absolute truth: Jesus Christ meets our every need! When we truly believe that, we are free from the bondage of trying to make our mate meet our needs. We can stop manipulating. ("If you loved me, you would...") We can stop pushing. ("Aren't you going to...?") We can stop making them feel guilty. ("Why don't you ever...?") We are free to love our mate unconditionally, whether they act like they love us or not. Our love is not held captive by the way our mate behaves. We are free to *serve in love*. Free to be ministers instead of manipulators.

"If you loved me, you would..."

"Aren't you going to...?"

"Why don't you ever...?"



Since Christ meets our needs and frees us to \_\_\_\_\_ we no longer need to \_\_\_\_\_ our mates to meet them or to focus our attention on our own needs.

Identify a few phrases (like "If you loved me, you would..."; "Aren't you going to...?"; "Why don't you ever...?") you have used to manipulate your mate in the past.

Wife: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband: \_\_\_\_\_

Write at least one personal application from today's study.

Wife: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband: \_\_\_\_\_

What does God want you to do to work out this application?

Wife: \_\_\_\_\_

Husband: \_\_\_\_\_

There is an opportunity at the end of each day's study for both of you to write your personal application from the study for that day. These **daily application sections** are bound by an intertwined rope symbolizing couples jointly "tying together" the significance of the study.

The **REFLECT TOGETHER** and **PRAY TOGETHER** sections, found at the end of each day's study, are identified with the cross and anchor symbol, signifying the lasting relationship bond that reading God's Word and praying together can fortify.



**REFLECT TOGETHER:** Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8. How many characteristics of love does Paul list?

**PRAY TOGETHER:** Father, free us from using destructive manipulation. We know You are the only One who can really meet our needs — help us look to You and You alone to meet them.

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