

“Will God Ruin My Life?”

Making a Total Gift of Self

Viewed from the outside, marriage can seem limiting.

A young man, for example, might perceive marriage as a tremendous restraint on his freedom. If he marries, he will no longer be able to date whomever he wishes. He won't be able to go wherever he wants or to do whatever he'd like. He worries that he will be a shadow of his former self.

A healthy marriage actually brings more freedom.

When this man finds the woman God is calling him to marry, he joyfully makes a total gift of himself to her in marriage. He then discovers that his earlier fears were unfounded. In a happy marriage, where both seek to build each other up and lead each other to Christ, he actually finds himself more free than ever before. By the daily gift of self in his marriage, he is becoming the man he was always meant to be.

This is the paradox of the Christian life.

Our hearts were created for perfect, infinite love. In life, we only find purpose and meaning to the extent that we are giving of ourselves in a total gift of self. In order to give of ourselves totally to one person, we inevitably have to let go of other persons or things that could have a claim on our hearts. But in such a total gift of self, we free ourselves for a new and deeper love than was possible before. This is true in marriage, as well as our own journey with God.

From the outside, the Christian life can also seem limiting.

With its high moral expectations, we can imagine the Christian life as a drag or a burden. We think that if we make a total gift of our heart to God, we will be limiting our freedom; we will no longer be free to do whatever we feel like doing. We worry that we would become unhappy, a lesser version of ourselves.

But God desires to bring us joy and true freedom.

God is not a grim taskmaster, intent on making our lives miserable with a lot of rules and burdens. Rather, like a loving husband who cares for his wife, the Lord desires our happiness and our well-being. As we grow closer to him, we naturally want to do those things which help us grow in our relationship with him and in our love for others. We will still enjoy many of the things that we thought were so important, but in a proper manner and in a way that builds us up.

Drawing closer to God, you will become more fully yourself.

We have nothing to fear. A relationship with God will not take away our freedom; we will find a new, deeper freedom. Our lives will not become boring; we will experience life as an adventure with even higher stakes than before. We will not become a lesser version of ourselves, but the person we were always meant to be.

