

Reconciling Relational Rivalry God's Way

"I hear what you're saying, but do you hear what I'm saying?"

"Yes, but I don't think you understand."

"What don't I understand? How can you say that? It's you that doesn't understand."

"That's not fair."

"Oh, now I'm the one not being fair? I've told you so many times, I don't want you to load the dishwasher."

It's funny when it's someone else. And yes, the story above really is one of the milder disagreements I had with my wife. Unfortunately, that's how it often goes. Two people discussing who is more right, or at least defending themselves to the death that they are not the one in the wrong. Like a bus, our marriages seem to stop at these familiar places on a regular basis. And all too often, when one of us is getting off the bus, the other is getting on.

There is always far more going on in any conversation between two people than just their opinions. All of it is intensified in marriage. Look at all the stuff a couple bring down the aisle with them on that special day, their wedding day. It is an extensive list of "his" and "hers" baggage. There is his personal history and her personal history; his parents' marriage and her parents' marriage; where he finds his worth, value and acceptance and where she finds hers. Not to mention his views on intimacy and hers. Bringing these two image bearers into alignment? Good luck.

But what if the one person you married was actually two?—a true self and a false self. The true self is that part of us

that is on the side of God, who is the Christ follower and who is on a journey of becoming more and more like Him. The false is more of an “it” than a “me.” And yet it will impersonate me at every turn. The false self is that part of me that is self-reliant, self-sufficient, self-promoting and, above all else, self-protecting. That’s a lot of “self,” and that is exactly what the false self has to work with: a lot of false stuff. It has been formed over the years in both the masculine and feminine journeys. It takes notes on how to live and implements strategies through a collection of false beliefs that have been accumulated over time. These false beliefs, lies, invite a person to live in the center of the story, and therefore, they live in a very small story. In a word, the only good thing good about the false self is just that: it’s false!

For more on how these false and true versions of self affect relationships, and how you can combat it with the Spirit’s help, read the entire article [here](#) and for additional Spirit-filled content, listen to *Exploring More* on the Charisma Podcast Network. {eoa}

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