

"Christian living in the home"

Part 1

Colossians 3:18-21

Introduction: Tonight, in our study of Colossians Paul will now take his readers into the family to explain how the Christian family is to function. What we will look at tonight is something that has been tossed out in many families and the result is dysfunctional families. What God puts before us in these verse is the way that He has appointed the family to function and when this pattern is broken you can expect that there are going to be many problems within the family. Before we get into our text for tonight, we must keep in mind what the Bible states about the days in which we are living.

2 Timothy 3:1-5

This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come.

² *For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy,*

³ *Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,*

⁴ *Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;*

⁵ *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.*

These verses that Paul records here describe people who profess to be believers. This is not a description of what the world will be like in the last days because the world has always been this way. This is a description of what is going to happen in the church.

1 Timothy 4:1-2

Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils;

² *Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;*

Getting back to Colossians and the verses before us, what we need to understand is that in these last days the family will be the target of the enemy as we have been considering in our Sunday morning messages. Satan is busy doing all he can to destroy the testimony of

the church and one of the ways in which he does this is to cause the family to abandon the Truth of God's Word.

➤ **Words for the Wife**

Notice Colossians 3:18

This is a verse that is not well accepted within our society today among contemporary women. If you are ever looking to start a heated debate just step into a worldly crowd and mention that women are to be submissive to their husbands. It is interesting that the Bible deals directly with the submission of the wife to her husband three times. Here in Colossians 3 and also in Ephesians 5 and 1 Peter 3.

Ephesians 5:22

²² Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

1 Peter 3:

Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

Let us begin by understanding what it means to be submissive and what it does not mean as well.

First of all, we need to understand that this has nothing to do with the value of a person and as a child of God.

1 Peter 3:7

⁷ *Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.*

Peter tells us that wives are heirs together with the husband of the grace of God. A wife is equal in value to her husband. The idea of being submissive refers to the wife's function within the family. She is to see herself as subordinate to her husband just as Jesus was subordinate to the Father. The wife is to understand that God has made the husband to be the head of the family and she is to defer to his authority. She is basically to recognize that God has set her husband in authority over the family as the spiritual leader. Just as the virtues in the previous verses can only be lived out by the power of the Holy Spirit so it is also true of God honoring submission of the wife. Let us look at a few verses that will help us to see the order which God has set in the family and it will help us to understand why the wife will need to be surrendered to the Spirit to live this out.

Genesis 2:18-24

¹⁸ *And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him an help meet for him.*

¹⁹ *And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.*

²⁰ *And Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field; but for Adam there was not found an help meet for him.*

²¹ *And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh instead thereof;*

²² *And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.*

²³ *And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.*

²⁴ *Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*

When God made Eve, He made her from the side of Adam. He did not make her from the foot showing that Adam was to keep her suppressed under his authority, nor did God make her from Adam's head showing that she was to rule over him. He made her from his side to show us where the wife is to be. Right by her husband's side, close to his heart, and under the protection of his arm. Then as we read on in Genesis 3, we know that sin entered into the human race as both Adam and Eve sinned. This then changed the desire of Eve.

Genesis 3:16

¹⁶ *Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.*

The sin nature has caused many battles within the family because the sin nature has caused the wife to desire to rule over her husband. Therefore, if the wife is going to live in submission to her husband it will take her being surrendered to the Spirit of God. Let us notice again what Paul recorded in Ephesians 5.

Ephesians 5:22-24

²² *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

²³ **For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.**

²⁴ *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

Notice the words of Warren Wiersbe.

"Headship is not dictatorship or lordship. It is loving leadership. In fact, both the husband and the wife must be submitted to the Lord and to each other. It is a mutual respect under the lordship of Jesus Christ. True spiritual submission is the secret of growth and fulfillment. When a Christian woman is submitted to the Lord and to her own husband, she experiences a release and fulfillment that she can have in no other way. This mutual love and submission creates an atmosphere of growth in the home that enables both the husband and the wife to become all that God wants them to be."

Notice Colossians 3:18 again.

The statement "as it is fit in the Lord" has been misapplied in two main ways.

- 1. A wife is to submit to her husband as if he were God himself. (This teaching favors the man.)**

It is taught by some that a wife should submit to her husband in absolutely everything with no questions asked just as we are to be in submission to our Lord. They teach that submission is to go to this extent. This is clearly not taught in the Scriptures. There are limits on the submission of the wife to her husband. She does not have to submit if it is his desire to lead her down the path of sin. Just as there are limits on our submission to government so there are limits on the wife's submission to her husband. The only absolute submission we are to exercise is to the Lord as the Bible teaches. Absolute submission to a husband or to anything other than the Lord is idolatry.

- 2. A wife only needs to submit if her husband does what the Lord desires. (This teaching favors the woman.)**

When this is accepted by the wife then it is her responsibility to determine what it is that the Lord wants. This teaching places limits on the wife's submission. This teaching then causes the wife to say, "I will submit to my husband so long as I agree with him." When he makes decisions that she does not agree with then she refuses to be submissive. Everyone submits to others when they are in agreement. It is only when there is a disagreement that submission is tested.

The phrase "as it is fit in the Lord" does not define the extent of a wife's submission. It does not define the limit of a wife's submission. It defines the motive of a wife's submission. It means, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands because it is a part of your duty to the Lord, because it is an expression of your submission to the Lord." They submit simply because it is fitting in the Lord to do it. It honors God's Word and His order of authority in the family. It is part of the wife's Christian duty and discipleship.

This is exactly why the unsaved world around us cannot understand this teaching. They know only how to live to please the flesh. As believers we are to live to please the Lord.

Notice Colossians 3:19

I want to begin to explain this verse with some Jewish history. Notice the words of Barclay.

"Under Jewish law a woman was a thing; she was the possession of her husband, just as much as his house or his flocks or his material goods were. She had no legal right whatever. For instance, under Jewish law, a husband could divorce his wife for any cause, while a wife had no rights whatever in the initiation of divorce. In Greek society a respectable woman lived a life of entire seclusion. She never appeared on the streets alone, not even to go marketing. She lived in the women's apartments and did not join her menfolk even for meals. From her there was demanded a complete servitude and chastity; but her husband could go out as much as he chose, and could enter into as many relationships outside marriage as he liked and incur no stigma. Both under Jewish and under Greek laws and custom, all the privileges belonged to the husband, and all the duties to the wife."

We get a glimpse of how the men viewed the woman in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:31-32

³¹ *It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:*

³² *But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.*

The religious leaders taught that husbands could divorce their wives for anything so long as they gave them a writing of divorcement. Jesus was correcting this teaching here to show them the seriousness of what they were doing. What they were doing was all because of the view of women in that day. When Christianity came on the scene this was all

brought to light and life for women improved greatly. Now it was taught that a man was to love his wife and then there was the example given.

Ephesians 5:22-25

²² *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.*

²³ *For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*

²⁴ *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.*

²⁵ **Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it:**

This helps us to understand that when a wife submits to her husband, she is not submitting to a tyrant but to someone who is to love her with a sacrificial love and he is to be someone who cares deeply for her. He is also to be someone who desires the very best for her. Notice what the Pulpit Commentary says about the husband's love for his wife.

THE DUTY OF LOVE. This love, which is consistent with his headship over her, implies:

- 1. That he is to delight in her (Pr 5:18, 19), and please her (1Co 7:33).*
- 2. That he is to cherish her as Christ the Church (Eph 5:29), providing for her support and comfort (1Ti 5:3).*
- 3. That he is to protect her as the weaker vessel.*
- 4. That he is not to be bitter against her, using bitter words or sour looks, acting rigorously or imperiously, as if she were a slave and not a companion.*
- 5. That he is to seek her spiritual good, for she is to be an heir with him of the grace of life. (1Peter 3:7.)*

Conclusion:

As husbands we are to love our wives with sacrificial love. I want to leave you with something to meditate on. There are a lot of men who would stand between their wives and an intruder to offer protection. But those same men, that offer this protection, would not think of changing their schedule or career or personal interests for their wives. Sacrifice comes in many areas. Protection of one's wife is certainly included, but it also involves the sacrifice of our energies, goals, time, and interests in our wife's best interest.