

Christ In The Home – Wives

Colossians 3:18

Pastor John Miller

I want to back up to verse 15 as I often do to get a running start on verse 18. Paul says, "Let the peace of God," literally in the Greek it's the peace of Christ, "rule in your hearts to which you are called in one body," that's the body of Christ, the church, "and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ," verse 16, "dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another, in Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your heart to the Lord. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father by him." Here's our text, "wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord." Next week we'll look at verse 19. "Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them." And then he addresses the children in verse 20. "Children, obey your parents in all things for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers or parents, provoke not your children to anger lest they be discouraged."

Heard the story of a seven-year-old girl who had seen the movie Cinderella for the first time and she was so excited about the movie that she went to her neighbor's house and she was telling her neighbor about the movie Cinderella and the Prince and the whole story, and the neighbor wanted to impress the little girl by letting her know, I know how the story ends. She goes, "I know how it ends." And the little girl goes, "You do. How?" She said, "The prince and Cinderella lived happily ever after." The little girl got a frown on her face. She said, "No they didn't. They got married."

Marriage has fallen on hard times. And the idea of a happily married couple in our culture, in our day, is indeed an oddity. So there's no doubt about it, marriage is on hard times. Happily married couples are not very often. Now why is that? Let me introduce this text. I'm going to warm up to verse 18. So bear with me, is because of what we call the fall. Bible students call it the fall, but it's basically when Adam and Eve, the first people on planet earth, the first married couple, disobeyed God and they brought on the world death and sin, or sin and death upon the whole human race and they brought emptiness. And because of the fall, man's sin, all of us are born sinful. And we live in a sinful culture, a immoral culture, and it leads to emptiness and alienation and loneliness, and we carry that into our homes and our relationships.

But I want you to note today, there is hope in Jesus Christ. There's hope for marriages, there's hope for the home. And it's found in one place, it's found in Jesus. We can be forgiven, we can be filled with his spirit. We can, as Paul said in Colossians three, put off the old and put on the new. Now Paul tells us that if we do that, three things will happen. Verse 15, "The peace of Christ will be ruling." Verse 16, "The word of Christ will be dwelling and the name of Christ will be glorified." We looked at that a few weeks ago. This describes the Christian home where the peace of Christ is ruling in your hearts. Verse 16, "The word of Christ is dwelling in your hearts." And in verse 17, "The name of the Lord, the name of Christ, is to be glorified." You might say that these three things are guiding principles for the Christian marriage in the Christian home,

letting God's peace rule, letting God's word dwell, letting the name of Christ be glorified in our marriage and in our home.

And when that happens, notice the result. Verse 18, "Wives then submit to their husbands." Verse 19, "Husbands love their wives." Verse 20, "Children obey their parents." And verse 21, "Parents don't provoke their children to anger." Now, we could just stop right here. And that's the entire series wrapped up in a nutshell, the Christian home, the word of Christ, the peace of Christ and the name of Christ, and wives submitting, husbands loving, children obeying, what a novel thought to actually have children obedient to their parents and parents not provoking their children to anger. Our new life in Christ should bring a powerful positive transformation into our homes and into our culture around us. Jesus changes everything.

Now, when Christ comes into your heart and in your home, three other things happen. I want you to write them down. We have a new presence in the home. It's the presence of the Lord. Notice that in verse 16, the reference the Lord, verse 17, the Lord Jesus, verse 18, in the Lord. And then verse 20, unto the Lord. And then you might add verse 23, as to the Lord. And verse 24, of the Lord and the Lord Christ. So all through this whole section which actually deals with children and parents, husbands, wives, servants, and masters, goes all the way to chapter four verse one. It's all about the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, the Lord. You see in a Christian marriage, it's not just two individuals, it's three. Christ is the center of your marriage. Amen.

Bible says, a threefold court is not easily broken, so it's you and your wife or your husband and Jesus Christ in the center of that relationship, we have a new presence, but it brings a new power in the Christian home. Ephesians five, 18. Now I want you to write down these references I'm giving you. This is a real note-taking sermon, so I'm going to emphasize that. Write down Ephesians five, 18. It says, "Be ye filled with the spirit." That's a command. Before he says wife submit, husbands love, children obey. He says, "Be filled with the spirit." I am absolutely convinced that the most important ingredient in a Christian home is the Holy Spirit filling our hearts and filling our lives. Then we have submissive wives, loving husbands, obedient children and committed parents in the home. And then thirdly, we have this purpose now as believers in the home, notice verse 17 of our text, Colossians three, "You do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus." You do it for his glory, you do it for his namesake, his honor, his character.

So a Christian home is a home where we live for the glory of God, we have a new purpose. And then fourthly, we have a new pattern. Write down Ephesians four or Ephesians five, verse 24, Ephesians five, verse 24. "As the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." So as the church submits to Christ, so the wives should submit to their husband. That's the new pattern. And then for the husband, Ephesians five, 25, "Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it." Now I want to be clear, next Sunday is all about the husband. So ladies, don't let your husband miss church next Sunday. Okay? I don't care what's going on the football scene on TV, he's got to be here in church. We're going to look at verse 19, but we have his, Christian homes, we have his presence, we have his power, we have his purpose, and we have his pattern.

As the church is subject to Christ, so the wife is subject to her husband and the Lord takes care of the church, so the husband takes care and loves his wife. Now, if we as Christians are going to change the world, we must start by changing our homes, and that starts with our marriages. Now I want you to look at our text. Verse 18. Paul's first word is to wives. So in the first couplet is wives first, then husbands. The second couplet is children and then fathers. And then the third couplet is servants and masters. So he starts with the wives. Verse 18, "Submit yourselves to your own husbands as it is fit," or fitting or pleasing, "to the Lord or in the Lord." Now I want to, again, still lay down some foundational truth. Marriage is one man, male, married to one woman, a female. I never thought I'd see the day where I have to be that specific. But we don't know what are men or women anymore, and we certainly don't know what marriage is anymore.

Now, I don't say that with anger. I don't say that with hostility. I don't say that with any anger in my heart about people who believe in same-sex marriage. I believe that God created marriage. It is a divine institution. You can't change it in the Supreme Court. It's a divine institution, and it transcends culture, transcends time. So marriage is one man and one woman. And God's ideal, God's purpose and plan, is one mate for life. You don't get married to try it out, see if it works. If it doesn't make me feel good, I'm going to divorce and get someone else. You make a commitment till death do us part. Amen. Sickness and health, rich or poor, till death do us part or the Lord comes to take us home. Marriage is a lifetime commitment. One man and one woman, you say, well, the Bible here doesn't really say that the wife is a female, can't in the same sex marriage someone take the role of the wife and the other one take the role of the husband or vice versa?

The word wife in verse 18, we actually from that Greek word, we get a word gynecology from it. So it's implying a female, the word husband there, Jesus actually used it in Matthew 19, he said, "He, which made them at the beginning made them male and female." So he's quoting from the book of Genesis, "A man leaves his father and mother, cleaves to his wife and the two become one flesh." Jesus in Matthew 19 said, "A man leaves his father and mother, cleaves to his wife," but he calls a male and female there. So marriage is a divine institution. God designed it, God created it and God has blessed it. Hebrews chapter 13, verse four, "Marriage is honorable in all and the bed is undefiled, but whore mongers and adulterers, God will judge." Now, what is God's word to wives? Simple, verse 18, "Submit yourselves unto your own husbands."

The word submit yourselves could be translated, be submissive. Now, this is not a popular subject, whenever I do weddings here in the church, we always get unbelievers, non-Christians, family members, and you should see how they freak out when I read from Ephesians, "wives submit to your husbands." You can see the hair stand up on the back of their neck. You can see them grinding their teeth. They're looking at me, what cave did this preacher just crawl out of? So I usually have my car running backstage so I can make a quick exit. I'm serious. I've been preaching a long time and I can tell by looking at people whether they're with me or not. So some of you are busted right now. But when I read those words I've gotten to where I'm like, okay, watch people freak out. Wives submit to your husband. What? Just freak out time. Don't shoot me. I'm just a messenger. Okay. I'm just reading from the Bible. What did he say? I read it

from the Bible. The B-I-B-L-E.

God's word is given by inspiration of God. I don't think this is just Paul, a male chauvinist, a rabbi who hates women. This is given by inspiration of God, II Timothy three, 16, all scriptures given by what? Inspiration of God, and it is profitable. So it's not cultural any more than verse 19, husbands love your wives is cultural. And men no longer should be loving their wives, as we would argue that women should be still submissive to their husbands. So be submissive. Now, I believe that we have false picture of what submission is, the reason why we freak out, we get so upset when the preacher says, wives submit, that we don't understand. So I'm going to give you five things submission is not. Then I'm going to give you seven things submission is. That's why I said it's a note-taking sermon.

Number one, submission is not merely a concept for women. Everyone needs to submit in some form or fashion. Ephesians five, verse 21 says, "We should submit ourselves one to another in the reverence or fear for God." This is just before the verse where Paul says, "Wives submit to your husbands." Actually in the Greek, it's unto your husbands. So it says, "submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." Then it just reads wives unto your husbands. So a husband is to submit to his wife, loving her, serving her, committed to her, protecting her, and the wife is to submit to her husband, serving him, blessing him, being a partner that makes him complete. Write down I Peter five, five. It says, "Likewise, you younger, submit yourselves to the older person. All of you be subject one to another. Be clothed with humility for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

So humility and submission is something we all have to do, even Jesus submitted to the father's purpose and plan. Number two, submission does not mean that the wife becomes a slave. The truth is the wife is never more free than when she is submitting to her husband. Now, I want you to note the insertion of a word in verse 18, unto your own husband. So it isn't a blanket statement that when a woman goes out in the culture that she has to submit to all men, it's your very own husband and you are one, the two become one flesh. So you're submitting to your husband. And I think that a wife ought to take pleasure in knowing that this is the husband that God has given to her that she submits to.

And then notice thirdly, submission does not mean that the wife never opens her mouth or never has an opinion or never gives advice. It's not like you submit, don't talk, don't say anything. Just do what I'm telling you. That's not submission. Proverbs 31 verse 26, "She opens her mouth with wisdom and in her tongue is the law of kindness." And we all know about the Proverbs 31 women, "And she opens her mouth with wisdom and her mouth is the law of kindness." So ladies, you can speak, you can give your opinion, you can do it lovingly and submissively to your husband. When Albert Einstein, the great scientist and his wife were celebrating their 50th anniversary, they asked Dr. Einstein say, how do you attribute your success of 50 years of marriage? And Einstein said, well, when we got married, we made a decision. I would take all the major decisions and make them, she would make all the minor decisions. And he said, it's funny, after 50 years of marriage, there's never been a major decision.

Some wives say, my husband wears the pants in the family, but I tell him which ones to put on. But we see here that submission is not that she never gives her advice, never counsels her husband. I thank God for my wife's wisdom and godly counsel. Fourthly, submission does not mean that the wife must obey ungodly counsel. If the husband says, let's rob a bank, we want to become Bonnie and Clyde. No, I'm not going to do that. If he asks you to lie, you don't lie. If you ask you to steal, you don't steal. If you ask you to violate God's word or your conscience, you don't do that. You have a higher authority in God. So it's not absolute. And then fifthly submission is, or submission does not mean that the wife is inferior to the husband. That's so important. In I Peter chapter three, verse seven, it says, "Husbands and wives are heirs together of the grace of life." In other words, in your standing before God, you're on equal ground.

In Galatians chapter three, verse 28, Paul said, "In the church, there's neither male nor female." Now there are male and female in the church, but not in our relationship to God. God doesn't love men more than women, or women more than men. We're all one in the family of God. And in our marriages we are heirs together of the grace of life. But what does submission itself mean? The word submit is used there in verse 18, is actually a military word. Now some of you ladies go, I knew it, I knew it, I knew it. He's going to ask me to salute him. No, it's a military word, but this is what it means. It means literally to arrange under. The literal word means to arrange or put yourself under. So in the military, there's ranking. Now the function, the purpose is for function and order. It conveys the idea of function and order.

Now, let me point out in light of this, seven facts about submission. Seven facts about submission. Number one, wives submission to her husband is to be voluntary. When he says in verse 18, submit yourselves, the Greek is literally be in subjection. So you willingly, voluntarily submit yourself to your husband. He's not forcing you. And then secondly, the wife's submission to her husband is an imperative or command in the Greek. Wives submit yourselves is an imperative. It means there's no other option. You say, well, how does he command us but he wants us to voluntarily do it? He commands us and we respond willingly, voluntarily, and obediently. And here's a point. Whatever God commands us to do, he gives us the ability to do it. You say, but yeah, that was before my husband was born. If my husband had been alive when this was written, it wouldn't be in the Bible. I don't think so.

I know that sometimes it's hard to submit to your husband. Men need all the help they can get and they need your support. But here are the ideas that they voluntarily submit themselves even though God commands, God does enable. Let me give you my third positive teaching on the woman's submission. The wife's submission is to be continuous. And again, this is in the grammar of the Greek. In verse 18, submit yourselves is in what's called the present tense. Present tense. That means ongoingly, continually, habitually, you are to be submitting to your husband. It's to be a continual lifestyle. What happens is, is that a wife will submit when she agrees with her husband. When she doesn't agree, she doesn't submit. And you become picking and choosing what you want to submit. If your husband says, let's go out to dinner, let's go buy you a new dress. Yes sweetheart, I will submit. If the husband says, can you make some mashed potatoes for dinner? You say, get behind me Satan.

So you just pick and choose what you want to submit. And well, I don't have to. And it's to be continuous and it's to be prompt and obedient. Submission to your husband, submission is continuous. Number four, a wife's submission to her husband is to be a positive concept. It's a positive concept. The command is what she is to do. Notice he's not telling the wife what not to do. He's telling the wife what to do. And the husbands, he says, do not be bitter against them, but he just says to the wife, submit to them, it's fitting to the Lord. Now wife's submission to her husband has been described as, let me quote one author, "The freedom to be creative under divinely appointed authority." I love that. "The freedom to be creative under," put yourself under, "divinely ordained authority." She takes all of her talents, abilities, resources, energies. She puts them at her husband's disposal.

Submission means the wife yields and uses all her abilities under the management of her husband for the good of her husband and family. Remember Genesis chapter two, verse 18, when the Lord God had created the man first and he looked at the man after all the days of creation, it is good, it is good, it is good, it is good. What did God say when he saw man? It is not good. Poor guy. We need help. So he says, I better get him a helper. I'll make a helper suitable for him. So guys, you need your wife's help. I know some young guys that need to get married so bad because they so need to be domesticated. God have mercy on you. Get married, dude. So God says, I'm going to make a helper that is suitable for him. So man by himself is not a totality, he needs a helper.

I don't know if it's just because I've been married a long time or what, I'm getting old, but I so appreciate my wife. I so appreciate my wife. What a blessing. What a helper. What a prayer warrior. What a support and wise counselor she is. Let me give you number five, wives' submission to her husbands enable his leadership. Ladies, your submission allows your husband to demonstrate loving leadership in the home. It opens doors. A lot of men aren't leaders because their wives aren't submitters. Now a good thing to do, by the way, when I do pre-marriage counseling, is make sure that you look at your verses. Husbands, look at the husband verse. Wives, look at the wives verses. Usually when there's quarreling in the home, the husband's quoting the wife's verse and the wife's quoting the husband's verse and they're shooting them at each other.

So look at what God wants you to do and do it. And don't worry about what your wife has been called to do as well as what your husband has been called to do. But your submission does enable your husband to take leadership. And then here's number six, write it down. Submission involves the attitude as well as the action. Did you know that God looks at your attitude as well as your action? It's not enough to just say, okay, I'll submit, but I ain't going to like it. I may be submitting on the outside, but I'm not on the inside. Write down Ephesians five, verse 33. "Let the wife see that she respects her husband." So in this parallel passage of Ephesians, Paul actually says, not only should the wife submit to her husband, but that she should do it respectfully with an attitude of respect for her husband.

Now, I know there's a lot of issues that come into marriage. We're not going to deal with marriage and divorce and all of those other issues, but divorce is a divine concession to human

sin. And the Bible is very clear. I haven't shared this all morning. This is one of the third service bonuses that you guys get. The only biblical allowance for divorce is infidelity or completely being abandoned. Two things. If the wife has been unfaithful or the husband, the innocent party is free to divorce and remarry. If a partner abandons you or forsakes you or leaves you, you are free to divorce. You're not under bondage. Now, some Christians will differ for those two biblical reasons for divorce, but we need to be careful that we follow the scriptures very, very closely in this area.

It was in the year 1969 that in California we actually passed the law of no-fault divorce, was not good. Swept across all the states in the United States. You could divorce for any reason and people didn't really keep their vows or make a commitment until death do us part. But the wife sees that she respects her husband. Here's number seven, the wife's submission to her husband is a spiritual matter. Now, I could have skipped over all the first six and just gone to number seven, and I believe that this number seven, if you're a Christian woman and you want to glorify God and honor God and obey God that this should be enough motivation for submission, that she should do it, in verse 18, look at our texts, "as it is fit or fitting in the Lord." So you do it as unto the Lord, Ephesians five, 22, or you do it, Colossians three, 18, "as it is fitting to the Lord."

Paul tells us in Ephesians five that the wife should submit because the husband is the head of the wife just as Christ is the head of the church. And let me point out some things. This is what I call the mission of submission. God's given you a calling. So if you choose voluntarily to marry that man, God's calling, God's will for your life is that you submit to his headship. And headship is not dictatorship. Headship is protection and provision and care. That's what headship is. It's not barking out orders that you have to obey. It's loving, sacrificial service and we'll get to that next Sunday. But you should submit out of obedience to God. Secondly, you should submit out of a love for God. Thirdly, you should submit because you want to please God. And fourthly, you submit because you want to glorify God. So the wife's submission to her husband is all done for the glory of God, obedience to God, the love of God, and to be pleasing to the Lord. This is the submissive's motive.

Now, Jesus said in John 14, 15, and I'll close, he said, if you love me, you'll what? Keep my commandments. I'm not trying to beat any women over the head, but one of the most, if not the most important institution in the world is the family. And you know where it starts? The marriage, a husband and wife. Leave your father and mother, cleave to your wife and the two become one. You know what that word cleave is, in Genesis? It means glued together. You're glued together. And if you try to pull something that's glued apart, something's going to rip, something's going to tear. So we need to be obedient to God's word. Now the culture is saying something else, but we are citizens of heaven. So we obey heaven's Lord, and we follow heaven's rules. Amen.

We're not of this world. I don't care what Hollywood's saying or the world is saying, I don't care what the culture is saying. We want the presence, the power, and the purpose and the pattern of God to be our guidelines. If we reject God's clear commands, his word, we are headed for

disaster. As goes the home, so goes the nation. The church is a blessing to the home and needs the home. And the home needs the church. Not only do you need the church individually, but the family needs the church, married couples need the church, and the church needs healthy families. So the church should encourage marriage and family. And the marriage is that are encouraged, come and be a blessing to the church. And then guess what? We go out into a very dark world. We become salt and light, that very dark and corrupt world. Amen.