

Christ In The Home – Husbands

Colossians 3:19

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One verse, Verse 19: "Husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them." When Jesus comes into a person's heart, the Bible says old things pass away. All things become what?

Brand new. So you become a new creation. Your sins are forgiven, you're taken out of Adam, you're placed into Christ, and you have a new life in Jesus. So Paul told us in Colossians 3 that we need to put off the old life with all of its deeds, not carry the sinful past into our homes and into our marriages and into our lives. And then we are to put on, using the metaphor of taking off soiled garments, putting on fresh, clean clothes, put on the new man, which is created in the image of Christ. So we take off the old, and we put on the new. Old things pass away; all things become new.

But when Jesus comes into our hearts, He wants to also come into our homes, and He wants to bring into our homes these four things we looked at them last Sunday. First of all, His presence. It's interesting from Verse 8 to Verse 25, five times you find the repeated phrase, "The Lord," "The Lord," "The Lord," "The Lord." Five times in eight verses. So, the whole focus is The Lord being the center of our relationship in the home. And then, secondly, He gives us his pattern. And that is found in Ephesians 5, where it says, "As the Church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands." So, the wife is to be submissive to her husband. And then for the husbands, "Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the Church." So we have a pattern of the Church submitting to Christ, the wife submits to her husband, and then we have the pattern of Christ loving the Church and giving Himself for it. The husband is to follow that pattern and to give himself in love to his wife.

And then he brings thirdly his purpose. And we see that in Colossians 3:17, where Paul said, "Do all things in the na..." Excuse me. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord." There's that phrase, the Lord, "the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." So, in verse 15, we have the peace of God ruling. In verse 16, we have the word of Christ dwelling. And in verse 17, we have the name of Christ glorified. Those are the three principles that we carry into our marriage and into our home that we want Jesus Christ to be glorified. When you have a husband and a wife that want nothing else but the glory of God and Jesus to be honored in their marriage and in their home, that's when we have a Christ-filled home. And then we have his purpose, the glory of God. And then, excuse me, fourthly.

And lastly, we have his power, Ephesians 5:18, where Paul tells us to be filled with the spirit. You can't be the Christian husband or the Christian wife that God wants you to be without being filled with his spirit. So, before we get down into this text and unpack it for you, I want to mention two broad principles from this whole passage on husbands, wives, parents, children, fathers, and so forth. And that is number one: the emphasis in the whole passage is on duties, not rights. This is contrary to our culture today. In our culture today, the focus is on your rights. We have women's rights, we have gay rights, we have animal rights, we have all kinds of rights, but

no one's focusing on our duties. So I find it interesting that in the Bible, when you get to the husband, wife, the parenting relationships, that the whole focus is on your duties before God and toward your spouse or toward your parents or toward your children.

And then the second overriding principle in these verses is that the duties are shown to be reciprocal. So if you have a wife who's to submit to her husband, then the counterpart is a husband is to love his wife. So the Bible doesn't just say, "Wives submit, wives submit, wives submit, wives submit." It says, wives be subject to your husbands and husbands; you have a responsibility and duty. You are to love your wives. Children are to be obedient to their parents, but the parents' responsibility is to their children not to provoke them to anger but to bring them up in the nurture and the admonition of the Lord. But now we come to what God says to husbands, verse 19. Let's look at it again. "Husbands, you are to love your wives and be not bitter against them."

Now again, I looked up the word husband, and the actual Greek word would imply a male, a man. And you say, "Well, why would you say that?" You haven't listened to culture lately? Even in our Congress, we do not know what a man is. We don't know what a woman is. But the Bible does because God made them male and female. That's pretty clear, right? And says, "For this cause shall a man leave father and mother and shall cleave to his wife. And the two become one flesh." So, marriage is between a man and a woman. So, husbands here is referring to not only a married man but a male as well. The same Greek word is used in that context. Now, there are two commands given to husbands. One positive, love your wives, and the other one negative, be not bitter against them. So, two sections, one positive, the other one negative, but both are imperatives or commands.

Let's look first at the positive command, husbands love your wives. Now let me give you some things about this. Number one, this commandment or directive is radically elevating for the wife. In the culture that this was written, wives were nothing more than an object. And a man could divorce his wife for any reason, any time. The wife had no recourse or no ability to divorce her husband. She was to be seen and not heard. She couldn't go out in public without her husband. She was oppressed and suppressed. And even in the Greco-Roman world, a man could have as many concubines and other mistresses, and there was not a reproach, as well as his wife, that he could do whatever he wanted with his wife. And women were subjected to that kind of culture. Little do people realize that it was Christ and Christianity that changed the world forever for women. And the reason why you have women so highly honored in Western culture is because of Christianity, and yet we're rejecting Christianity as a culture today. It's the very thing that will bring us back into.

So Christianity is elevating. It elevates and liberates the woman. Husbands love your wives. When they heard that in Paul's letter or read it, they would've been mind-blown. "What? Love your wife?" Because a man would have a donkey and have a camel and have some sheep and have a wife or two or three. And she was just an object. So Christ actually elevated women in his coming into the world.

But secondly, I'd like to note that this directive is, in the Greek, a present active imperative. In other words, it's commanded by God to husbands, and it's in the present tense. So, it's basically saying husbands should love their wives at all times and in all situations. And we need to remember that love is not a feeling, not just a passing emotion, but love is a commitment of the will. When the Bible commands us to love, it's not talking about the emotion of love; it's talking about the willingness to obey, to show love by our treatment of that object love.

I love what Warren Wiersbe said. He said, "Love is not a passing emotion. It is a continual devotion." Now you're saying, "Well, Pastor, you're telling me that I shouldn't feel love for my wife or my husband?" No, that's not the case. But I'm telling you that even when you don't feel that love, you should love your wife or love your spouse by showing them love. Love is a verb. It's an action word. It's not a feeling or an emotion. It's not; as long as we both shall love, we'll stay together. When I officiate the wedding, I use traditional vows, "As long as we both shall live, till death do us part." And that's what God wants in a marriage relationship: a commitment. It's a covenant relationship. So it's to be a continuous action. It's to be a willing action. It's not to be just passion or emotion; it's to be devotion. It's a choice that we make. It's a covenant love in a marriage relationship. We make a decision to keep loving our wife and our husband as a commitment to obedience to God.

Let me give you the third point, and that the Greek word translated love is a unique word, it's the word *agape*. You've all heard of *agape* love. And that's because in the Greek language, which the New Testament was written in, had more than one word for love. Isn't it funny that we have one word for love? Love. And we use it from, I love to roller skate. I love to walk on the beach. I love to play tennis, I love to go swimming, and I love peanut butter and jelly, which I do, praise Jehovah. I love it. Once in a while, I'll make one super thick and gnarly jelly just dripping out, peanut butter two inches thick, so that when you take a bite, you can't open your mouth or swallow for 30 minutes just. If your phone rings, you're like. And then, on top of that, I love my wife.

And you say, "Well, wait a minute. Are you telling me that your love for peanut butter and jelly is the same as your love for your wife?" No. But I'm limited by the English language. I love my dog too. The other day, I saw a guy driving in the car; his wife was in the backseat, and his dog was riding shotgun. I thought, man, that marriage has gone to the dogs really quick.

So we are so limited to just saying I love you. And even in our culture today, we throw that word around love is love, and we don't really even know how to define it. But in the Greek, there was at least four words for love. Let me rehearse them for you. The first was *Eros*. And that is where we get the word erotic from. That's not in the Bible, by the way. That's a sensual sexual love. And then there's a word *storge*. And the word *storge* is a family affection for parents and children, siblings, brothers, and sisters. And then there's a word *phileo*; we get our word Philadelphia, it means brotherly love, and it's a love for friendship. It's a friendship, love. And then the fourth word, and it's the word here in our passage, is the word *agape*. And it is a divine, God-given, spiritual, sacrificial love. It's given in John 3:16, where it says, "For God so love the world that he gave his only-begotten son, that whoever believes in him would," What? "Never

perish but have everlasting life." But the God so agape, the world that he gave.

So here's the husband's love for his wife. It's agape love. That's the love a husband is to have for his wife. Write down 1 Corinthians 13:1-8 for one of the great definitions of this agape or agape love. And I'll read it to you from verse four down to verse eight in the New Living Translation, "Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud. It is not rude. Love does not demand its own way. Love is not irritable. Love does not keep record of when it has been wronged. It is never glad when injustices happen, but rejoices whenever truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, endures through every circumstance and love will last forever."

In the King James, it says, "Faith, hope and love. And the greatest of these is," What? "Love." That's agape, agape. So all these qualities found in 1 Corinthians 13, patient, kind, not boastful or proud or rude, doesn't demand its own way, doesn't give up, is a quality of the husband's love for his wife. Now, this kind of love transforms and controls the exercise of authority in the home. It makes tyranny and unkindness and selfishness and cruelty absolutely impossible. It removes from the submission expected of a wife all that is distasteful and difficult. And Galatians 5:22 says that this love that a husband should have for his wife is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. So the more a husband is yielded to the Holy Spirit, filled or controlled by the Holy Spirit, the more he will have agape love for his wife.

Ephesians 5:25-30. And I want you to turn there in your Bible real quickly. Ephesians chapter five, and I want to give you the qualities of agape love. Four qualities of agape love that a husband is to have for his wife. In verse 25 of Ephesians 5, it's to be sacrificial. "Husbands love your wives even as Christ loved the Church." And what did he do? "Gave himself for it." So Jesus sacrificed himself for the Church. So, a husband is to sacrifice for his wife. This is the pattern of Jesus in our marriage. How did Jesus love the Church? He gave himself for it sacrificially. He gave up his desire in the garden to have the cup pass and said, "Not as I will, Father, but your will be done." And he went willingly and voluntarily to the cross and died. So, husbands are to give themselves sacrificially for their wives. They are to love their wives by giving of themselves time, energy, effort, sacrificing what you want to do for what your wife wants. And maybe she wants to actually go shopping with you.

You know when a husband enters the mall, the wife sees all the excitement and the glamour, the husband sees the sign that says, "Abandon all hope, you who enter here." It's like, "No, no, please. Don't torture me." But maybe your wife wants you to go shopping with her spend time with her, and you're showing that sacrificial love by giving of yourself or doing projects around the house that she wants you to do.

Secondly, it's to be a sanctifying love, not only a sacrificial love. Notice verse 26 of Ephesians five. We had to compare this passage. It says, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." So He sacrificed Himself verse 25, and He sanctifies the Church, verse 26. So the husband, with the word, is to be the spiritual leader in the home, and he's to wash his wife with the word.

Husbands, your wife, is she more like Jesus because of you or in spite of you? Is your wife spiritual because of your commitment to Christ, your prayer for her, and your discipling her in the word? So, set your wife apart have a sanctifying effect by the word. Jesus said, "Sanctify them in thy word. Thy word is truth." So I really encourage men; I probably went longer for service than I should have; you get that unedited version first service, but I'm really encouraging men be committed to the word, be a man of the word. Again, not only in Church on Sunday but so often guys don't read their Bibles. They don't participate in Bible study. You need to be an example to your wife to your children. Children growing up in a Christian home need to see that Dad is committed to the Bible. He loves God; he loves mom. He loves the word. He loves us. He's a committed man and committed to the word so that you can disciple and mentor, encourage, talk about scriptures with your wife. Read the scriptures together. So very, very important.

So, the husband is to have, through the Bible, a sanctifying effect. And the word sanctify means to set her apart, to set apart and be made holy. Love helps his wife to become more spiritual. And that's important.

Thirdly, write it down. A husband's love for his wife is to be affectionate love. Agape love is a love that's affectionate. And look at verses 28 and 29 of Ephesians five. We're still in that section. Paul says, "So ought men," and here's our word again, agape, "agape their wives as their own bodies. He that loves his wife loves himself. No man ever hated his own flesh. But," two keywords, "he nourishes it, and he cherishes it even as the Lord, the Church."

So again, here's the pattern: Jesus and the Church. He nourishes the Church. He cherishes the Church. Now, years ago, I discovered that the word nourish and cherish literally mean to warm with body heat. It was used of a mother bird putting her wings over her little chicklings and warming them in the nest. So when a husband is told to nourish and cherish his wife, it not only conveys the idea of valuing her and appreciating her but to warm her and to keep her with affection and body heat. You could actually do a free translation paraphrase of this passage. Husbands, you are to hug your wives. And all the women say amen. And show her affection and, kiss her and say, "I love you." "Well, she knows I love her. I come home, don't I? I married her, I eat her food. She knows I love her." Well, have you ever said, I love you? We just blast through life and don't take the time to just say, "You know what, I love you." And then show it by your actions and show it by your affection. Warm her with body heat. Give her love.

I love what Martin Luther, the protestant reformer, said. He said, "Let the wife make the husband glad to come home." What a novel thought. "And that the husband make her sorry to see him leave." So the wife is to live in such a way the husband says, "I can't wait to get home." A lot of guys want to go to The Fuzzy Frog and drink a bit before they go home, which doesn't exist. I just made that up, by the way. But it is a great name for a bar if you ever want to start one, I guess. The Fuzzy Frog. Forgive me. But I love being with Christian men that love their wives, and "I want to get home. I'll see you later. Okay, bye." And they get home, and the wife makes the husband glad to be home. And then, the husband makes the wife sad to see him leave. So many times, she's like, "Don't you have something better to do?" Or "Why don't you

go somewhere?"

I sometimes counsel people who are empty nesters; my wife and I are empty... And the wife will say, "All he does is stare at me all day. Can't you do something?" But we need to really enjoy each other's company and time together, whether it's a drive or walk on the beach or a time to just go shopping together again. So husbands, show them affection. That's agape love.

And then fourthly, and lastly, in Ephesians 5:31, it's to be unbreakable love. Agape love is unbreakable. "For this cause, a man shall leave his father and mother, shall be joined unto his wife." Genesis 2:24 has "cleave to his wife. And they too shall become one flesh." Now, he's quoting from Genesis 2:24, which is the foundation for marriage. It's carried all the way through the New Testament. So there are three elements there: leave, cleave, and one flesh. So you must leave your father and your mother, the Bible says. Never let your parents get in the way of your marriage. Never let your commitment to your parents, which you should honor, your father and mother. But the priority is your wife or your husband, your spouse. Not your mom and not your dad. You leave home, and you commit to your spouse. And by the way, it is a good idea when you get married to leave home, in case you didn't know that, and establish your own home. Sometimes, I'm counseling a young couple, "We just got married and it's so awesome. We get to live with my parents." Oh, that's awesome, all right.

I mean, sometimes that has to happen, but only for a limited time until you can be launched out as far as you can launch because you now have your own wife and your own husband, and you're starting your own family. So very important. And then you're joined or cleaved, that word means glued together from that Genesis passage. It's a permanent relationship. And then you become one flesh. It's an intimate relationship. So it's an exclusive relationship, it's a permanent relationship, it's an intimate relationship. And every married couple should study and read 1 Corinthians chapter seven about what God says on your conjugal rights and requirements in a marriage relationship. Jesus actually said in Matthew 19:6 that they are no more two but one flesh. "What therefore God has joined together, let no man put asunder." That was the Lord Jesus commenting on the Genesis passage; Jesus gave us his commentary, "What God has joined together, let no man put asunder." So agape love is unbreakable in its bond.

Now, go back with me to Colossians chapter three, and let's look at the second half of verse 19. Not only are husbands told or commanded to love their wives, but they're also told, and this is a command, it's an imperative, "Be not bitter against them." Don't be bitter against them. J.B. Phillips renders this, "Don't let bitterness or resentment spoil your marriage." That's a great paraphrase. Don't let bitterness or resentment spoil your marriage. It's an imperative in the Greek, and it stresses the constant prevention of a sour attitude. Literally, it is; stop being bitter. When love weakens, bitterness sets in. A root of bitterness can poison a marriage. The word bitter here is also used in Revelation chapter eight when the star called Wormwood falls from heaven, and judgment on this Christ-rejecting world in the tribulation and all the fresh waters are turned bitter and cannot be drunk.

So don't let your marriage become bitter or poisoned. It's used in Revelation chapter 10 when

John the apostle took the book, the scroll, out of the right hand of him who said on the throne and he ate the book. Remember when he ate it was sweet, but when he swallowed it became what? Bitter to his stomach. Same word is used. So many times, our marriages can turn sour or bitter when our hearts become hardened.

Write down Matthew 19:8. Jesus was challenged by the religious leaders of His day about divorce. "What do you say about divorce?" They asked Jesus. And they were trying to get him in a controversy, a trap. They were trying to get Him to commit to a position that would actually turn people against Him. So Jesus said, "Have you not read," we always get into trouble when we don't read the Bible, "that He, which made them at the beginning, male and female, this cause man leaves father and mother, cleaves to his wife, the two become one flesh. When God has joined together, let no man put asunder." And they thought, "We've got him."

"Why did Moses then give us," and they used the word, command us, "to give us a writing of divorcement and to send her away?" They were quoting from Deuteronomy. They thought, "We've got him." And you know what Jesus said? Jesus said, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, didn't command you but allowed you to put away your wives." Then, immediately, He said these words. "But from the beginning, it wasn't God's plan; it wasn't so." Jesus warned that divorce could happen when a heart becomes hardened. But when the Holy Spirit is reigning in a heart, there's tenderness, there's compassion, there's forgiveness, there's love. There's a desire for the glory of God and the word of God to rule in our lives. This is why I often warn young couples: don't let your hearts become hardened to the Holy Spirit's voice. Don't let your heart become hardened or bitter toward your spouse. Listen to the Holy Spirit, be kind, tenderhearted, forgiving one another even as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven you.

Now, I just want to give you another verse, and I'm going to read it that the husbands need to write down. Wives, hand them the pencil, give them the paper. Write this down. 1 Peter 3:7, 1 Peter 3:7. It says, "Likewise, you husbands dwell with them," that's your wife, "according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel and being heirs together of the grace of life." And he gives us the reason. "That your prayers be not hindered." So, husbands are told to dwell with their wives. And it's not only a good idea to leave father and mother, but it's a good idea to live together when you're married, dwell together, settle down and be in a home together. A lot of times, husbands are home, but they're not home. Their minds are somewhere else, or they're busy doing other things. They're not focusing on the family or, their wife or their children. So dwell with them according to knowledge. Get to know them.

And then, secondly, honor your wife. It means to esteem her, to value her, and to hold her as precious. The Bible says, "He who finds a wife finds a good thing and obtains favor of the Lord." Today, we're disregarding marriage. People aren't even getting married; they're just living together. And marriage is a divine institution that God ordained and God created. And we are to value our spouse and value our wives and hold them in highest esteem and regard. And then he closes with a warning. If not, your prayers will be hindered. This is one of the places in the Bible where it actually tells you why God will not answer your prayers. And you know why God

won't answer your prayers? Because of the way you're treating your wife.

So my theory is, and I think it's a good one, is that if a husband isn't right with his wife, he can't be right with God. And if he is right with God, then he will be right with his wife. You can't be right with God and wrong with your spouse. It doesn't work. If you want to be reconciled, then you have to be right and obedient with God. If you want God to hear your prayers, you want God to answer your prayers, then you need to dwell with them according to knowledge. You need to give honor to your wife, or else your prayers can be hindered. The Bible says your sins separate you from God.

How many times we'd come to church, and we're not getting along in our homes, but we want to sing and lift our hands to God, but we're not loving our wife as Christ loved the Church? Won't work, doesn't work. Jesus even said at one place, He said, before you go to church and you worship God, leave your gift at the altar and go make it right with someone. How much more your spouse, your husband, or your wife? So if you're not right with your wife, you cannot be right with your father in heaven. It's so very important. Husbands need to be kind and, tenderhearted and forgiving. Now, God has forgiven you, men, so you should forgive your wife. Ask yourself, am I become bitter toward my wife? Has our marriage soured because I'm bitter and I'm angry toward my wife, and you're going other places other than focusing on your marriage?

So, God needs to fill you with this Holy Spirit. You need to repent and ask God to forgive you, and you need to do two things. You need to love your wife as Christ loved the Church. And then, secondly, you need to guard against a hardened heart. Be not bitter against her. You need to let the peace of Christ rule, verse 15, the word of Christ dwell in your heart, controlling your life in your home, and the name of the Lord Jesus Christ glorify.

I heard about a dry cleaning establishment that had a sign in the window that read, "If your clothes aren't becoming to you, they should be coming to us." Well, that perfect. And I think God says the same thing to us in our marriages. If your marriage is not becoming to God, then you should be coming to God. Amen. Let's pray.