

Christ In The Home – Wives
Colossians 3:18
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I'm going to read a few extra verses, starting at verse 18 and then down to verse 21 of Colossians 3.

Paul says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."

I heard the story of a seven-year-old girl, who had just seen the movie, Cinderella. She was testing her neighbor's knowledge of the story. The neighbor, anxious to impress the little girl, said, "I know what happens at the end of the story. Cinderella and the prince live happily ever after."

The little girl, with a frown on her face, said, "No, they did not. They got married!"

We don't often equate getting married with living happily ever after. Why is it that marriage is found too difficult in our age today? One reason: sin. It goes back to the book of Genesis in the Garden of Eden where God made man and woman, and they sinned and disobeyed God. Theologians call it the Fall of man. They fell into sin. And everyone born after Adam and Eve were born with a sinful nature. We're at war with God and we're at war with one another. It leads to emptiness and alienation and loneliness.

But there is hope in Jesus Christ. The central theme of this text is that Christ changes everything. When Christ is in your heart, in your home, in your marriage, everything changes. And what a blessing that is.

So there is hope found in Jesus Christ; we can be forgiven of our sin, we can be filled with the Holy Spirit and we can put off the old man with all of his evil and sinful deeds and put on the new man.

If we put on the new man, it is controlled by three things. It is controlled by "the peace of God" ruling in our hearts, verse 15. That's what we need in our marriages. It is controlled by "the word of Christ" dwelling in our hearts and in our homes, verse 16. And it is controlled by "the name of the Lord Jesus" being glorified, verse 17. These are three principles or guidelines for every believer, and especially for married couples. "Let the peace of God rule," "Let the word of Christ dwell" and let the name of Christ be glorified.

When that happens, there are certain results that follow. The results are, verse 18, "Wives, submit to your own husbands"; verse 19, "Husbands, love your wives"; and verse 20, "Children, obey your parents." What a novel thought: children actually obeying their parents! Obedient teenagers! Then, in verse 21, "Fathers..."—or "parents"—"...do not provoke your children."

And Ephesians 6:4 says, "Fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord."

So Jesus changes everything. When Christ comes into your heart and into your home, He brings four things. He brings a new presence, a new power, a new purpose and a new pattern. First, Christ brings His presence. In verse 16, notice the phrase, "to the Lord"; then in verse 17, "of the Lord Jesus"; in verse 18, "in the Lord"; and in verse 20, "to the Lord." All through this passage it's about "the Lord." So we need to bring the Lord Jesus Christ into our marriage, and we need to submit to His authority. It brings His presence. The Bible says, "A threefold cord is not quickly broken." That's a description of marriage with Christ in the center.

Then with Christ in your heart and home, second, it brings new power. Ephesians 5:18 says, "Be filled with the Spirit." This command precedes the command to obey your husband and for husbands to love their wives. So in order to be what we need to be in our marriage relationship, to function in the role that God gives us, we need the power of His Holy Spirit.

Third, Christ brings new purpose. In verse 17, it says, "Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." That means that we do everything for His glory, for His name sake. So marriage is to be committed to God's glory and magnify Jesus Christ.

Then fourth, the marriage that Christ brings today has a new pattern. Ephesians 5:24-25 says, "Just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."

When Christ came into the world, He not only came to die for our sins, but He came to give us a pattern and a picture of what marriage is all about. Prior to the coming of Christ, we didn't have this picture of Christ and the church. As the church is subject to Christ, wives are to submit to their husbands. And as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it, husbands are to love their wives and give themselves for them. So Christ brings a new picture or pattern into the marriage relationship.

If we as Christians are going to change the world, we must start with changing our homes. That starts with changing our marriages and changing our hearts. Christ must dwell in our hearts.

Now we go to verse 18, our text. "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." This is a simple, yet poignant verse. Notice Paul has one verse for the wives, one verse for the husbands, one verse for the children and one verse for the fathers or parents. First, in verse 18, he speaks to wives.

Preliminary to this verse, marriage is between a wife and a husband. A wife is a woman. Some in our culture don't know what a woman is. What happens to marriage when we don't know what a woman is? What happens to marriage when we don't know what a man is? The Bible is very clear that "Male and female He created them," in Genesis 1:27. In Ephesians 5:31, Paul quoted Genesis 2:24 and said, "For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be

joined..."—or "cleaved to," glued to permanently"—"...to his wife, and the two..."—not three or four or five or six—"...shall become one flesh." Then Paul says, "This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the church."

Since the marriage relationship reflects Christ and the church, is it any wonder why it is under attack and being destroyed by our culture today? Evil, wicked, sinful men who hate God and hate the Bible are destroying marriage, which is the foundation of society.

People ask, "Well, what does it hurt?" It hurts them, the children involved—those who are adopted into same-sex marriages—the church, the nation—everyone. It doesn't benefit anyone. And God's love is always pure; it's not sinful or disobedient to God's Word. It's God's agape love.

Jesus, quoting Genesis 1:27 and 2:24 in Matthew 19:4-5 said, "Have you not read that He who made them at the beginning made them male and female?" Even in our text where it says "wives," the Greek translation of this word and in Matthew 9:20 is translated "woman." We get our word "gynecology" from that Greek word. So it is actually referring to a female. So a wife is a woman, a female; and a husband is a man, a male.

That is the way God designed it. It was God's idea; it is a divine institution. That's why we as Christians believe in the sanctity of marriage. It's a God-ordained institution. So you can't change it or rearrange it. If you do, you're going to pay the price; "They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind."

Even when the Supreme Court legalized same-sex marriage, I knew that was the beginning of the end for America. You can't destroy marriage as God designed it and survive as a nation. It's so tragic that we've fallen away from God's design for marriage.

So Jesus made it clear that a man leaves his father and mother, cleaves to his wife, and God "made them male and female." Marriage is a heterosexual, covenantal relationship for life.

In Hebrews 13:4, it says, "Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." But some say that Paul was a male chauvinist, who hated women. Nothing could be further from the truth. The Bible says in 2 Timothy 3:16, "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable." So it's given by God, it's God's Word and it's God breathed. It's not cultural; Paul says it's creation, in Titus 2:4-5. "...that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed." So God will be glorified, as we follow God's pattern for marriage.

What is God's Word to wives? Simply to "Submit to your own husbands." The Greek literally reads, "Be submissive."

I know that this is not a popular subject today, but I believe we have a picture in God's Word of wives' submission that clearly describes what that means.

I first want to give you five things that submission is not. This is what so many people don't understand.

First, submission is not merely a concept for women. When we hear "Wives, submit," some say, "Why is it that only the wife has to submit?" Submission is taught throughout all of Scripture. Even within the Godhead, the Son submits to the Father, so there is order in the Godhead.

Submission is not only reflected in marriage but also in the culture around us. In Ephesians 5:21, Paul says, "...submitting to one another in the fear of God." This verse comes before "Wives, submit to your own husbands," and "Husbands, love your wives." And before the wife is commanded to submit to her husband, they are told to submit one to another out of reverence and respect for God. So there is a mutual submission, even in the marriage relationship.

In 1 Peter 5:5, it says, "Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility..."—why?—"...for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.'" If you don't want God to resist you, don't be proud and don't refuse to be submissive. If you want God to reward you, you have to be humble and submissive.

Second, submissive does not mean that the wife becomes a slave. The truth is that the wife is never more free than when she is submitting to her husband. Notice in verse 18, it says, "to your own husband." So it's not just to men in general, but it is to your own husband. Paul could have just put "your husband" here, but he is emphasizing it's to "your own husband."

Some people say, "Well, if Paul had known my husband, he'd never put that in the Bible." But he's your husband; you married him. (I trust it wasn't a shotgun wedding.) Your own husband belongs to you; he is yours and you submit to him.

Third, submission does not mean that the wife never opens her mouth, never has an opinion and never gives her advice. Sometimes we get the idea that the wife doesn't say anything, doesn't have any counsel or input. In Proverbs 31:26, where we have a picture of a virtuous woman, it says, "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and on her tongue is the law of kindness." So she does open her mouth, and when she does, she speaks wisdom with kindness.

I heard the story of Albert Einstein and his wife celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary. Dr. Einstein was asked, "How did you do it? How did you survive 50 years of marriage? What is the secret of your marriage?" He said, "Well, we decided when we got married that I would make all the important decisions, and my wife would make all the minor decisions. But it's funny that after 50 years of marriage, there's never been an important decision." To say that the wife has no input or counsel has nothing to do with a wife's submission.

Fourth, submission does not mean the wife must obey ungodly counsel. If your husband says, "We're going to rob a bank. You wanna be Bonnie and Clyde?" you say, "No way, José!" We must "obey God rather than men," and our text says, "as is fitting in the Lord." It's not "fitting in the Lord" to be disobedient to His Word.

And fifth, submission does not mean that the wife is inferior to her husband. There are so many people who think this. If the wife has to submit to the husband, that means he's better or more important or has a better position. No; it has nothing to do with superiority or inferiority. 1 Peter 3:7 says that in the marriage relationship, you are "heirs together of the grace of life." In Galatians 3:28, it says, "There is neither male nor female" in the body of Christ." So in your relationship to God, you are one in the body of Christ; there is no distinction.

But in our function in the home, the Bible says in Ephesians 5:23, "The husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church." So Paul naturally says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands."

What, then, does "submit" mean? The word "submit" is a military term that means "to arrange under." It conveys the purpose of order and function. It doesn't convey superiority, dominance or control. It conveys the idea of order for the sake of function.

Now I want to convey seven facts about submission, what submission is. These are drawn from our text, verse 18. Number one, the wife's submission to her husband is to be voluntary. In the Greek, the verse actually reads, "Submit yourselves" or literally, "Be subject to." It's a command in the present tense in the passive voice to continually do this. So it has the idea of the will, the voluntary choice. "I choose to submit myself out of respect for God, out of the fear of the Lord, in obedience to God and to my husband.

Number two, the wife's submission to her husband is a command. When Paul says, "Wives, submit to your own husbands," it is an imperative in the Greek, which means it's a command. The cool thing about that is that when God commands us, God enables us. Whatever God commands us to do, God gives us the strength and the ability to do just that. So "Wives, submit." It's for our good and for His glory. We must obey and trust God, and He will take care of us. So submission involves trust and faith in God.

Sometimes women say, "Well, my husband is making a really foolish decision. What do I do?" You have to trust the Lord. You speak in wisdom, speaking kindly and respectfully, and then you put it in God's hands. But women sometimes want to manipulate their husbands. They want to know how to work this out themselves. "If the husband is the head, and I'm the neck, I can turn his head wherever I want him to go." No. You have to trust the Lord; it takes faith. It takes faith in Christ and in God to be submissive to your husband.

Number three, the wife's submission to her husband is to be continuous. The phrase "Submit to" is in the present tense. So it means continuously and habitually be submissive. It's a lifestyle.

Number four, the wife's submission to her husband is a positive concept. I like this thought, and I think it's true. This is telling the wife what she's supposed to do; not what she's not supposed to do. So it's a positive command. A wife's submission to her husband has been described as being free to be creative under divinely appointed authority. I like that. So the submission isn't

hindering her from being creative; it's actually freeing her under the authority of the Lord.

After each day of creation, God had said that "it was good." And then He created Adam. After creating Adam, paraphrasing, God said, "The dude needs help!" In Genesis 2:18, He actually said, "It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper comparable to him." What a blessing!

I don't know what I'd do without my wife. The older I get, the more I realize how much I need my wife. She's suitable and fitting for me.

Man by himself is not a totality. I see guys around the church, and I tell them, "Dude, you need to get married big time! You need to be domesticated. You need help! You need a wife!" So God gives the wife to be the helper for man. Under His divine authority, ordained by God, the wife is free to use her gifts, her talents and her abilities. This is all functional.

Number five, the wife's submission to her husband enables his leadership. It frees her husband to fulfill his role as a leader. Ladies, your submission to your husband enables your husband to demonstrate loving leadership in the home.

The story is told of Prince Albert and Queen Victoria. Shortly after they were married, they got in a quarrel. Albert went into his own apartment in the palace and shut the door. The Queen started pounding on the door and said, "Open up, Albert."

He said, "Who's there?"

She said, "The Queen of England!" There was silence. So she pounded again and said, "Open the door, Albert!"

He said, "Who's there?"

Again she said, "The Queen of England!" Silence.

She did it a third time: she pounded on the door and said, "Albert, open the door! It's the Queen of England!" Silence.

Finally, she tapped very lightly and said, "Albert, it's your wife." The door opened.

Submission opens doors. It allows your husband to be the leader that God has called him to be.

Number six, submission involves the attitude as well as the action. This is a challenge, because the tendency is, "I'll submit, but I don't like it. I'll submit, but I don't want to. I'll submit, but he's a bozo!" But the wife needs to trust God to take care of her in the marriage. Ephesians 5:33 says, "Let the wife see that she respects her husband." And let the husband see that he loves his wife and is not bitter against her. Titus 2:4-5 tells the wives that they should also love their husbands, as well as respect them. It speaks of their submission with their attitude in

alignment.

Number seven, the wife's submission to her husband is a spiritual matter. Verse 18, our text, says, "as is fitting in the Lord." I already pointed out in verse 16, "to the Lord"; in verse 17, "of the Lord"; in verse 18, "in the Lord"; and in verse 20, "to the Lord." So it's all about the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's all about you making him Lord of your life, submitting to His Lordship and doing it unto the Lord.

In Ephesians 5:23-24, the parallel account to Colossians, Paul says in verse 23, "The husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything." And in 1 Timothy 2:13, it says, "Adam was formed first, then Eve." So creation order dictates, in God's economy, that the husband is the head of the wife.

But the wife submitting to her husband is her mission of obeying the Lord. It's called "the mission of submission." So the wife submits out of obedience to God, out of love for God, wanting to please God and to glorify God. Our marriage relationships should reflect the glory of God. The love, the submission and the oneness in our marriage relationships should also reflect God's glory in our churches. Jesus said, in John 14:15, "If you love Me, keep My commandments." So if you love Jesus, you're going to want to obey His Word and keep His commandments, including those about marriage.

A story is told of a captain of a ship who was out at sea on a dark night and saw a faint light in the distance. Immediately he told the signalman to send a message that said, "Alter your course 10- south." Promptly a return message was received that said, "Alter your course 10- north." The captain was angered; his command had been ignored. So he sent a second message: "Alter your course 10- south; I'm the captain." Soon another message was received that said, "Alter your course 10- north; I'm a seaman, third class." Immediately the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear it would evoke, that said, "Alter your course 10- south; I'm a battleship." And the reply came, "Alter your course 10- ð æ ð ð th; I'm a lighthouse." I like that.

The Bible is a lighthouse. And the darker the world around us gets, family of God, the brighter the Word shines. We must stand, resolutely, on the Word of God. It transcends culture. Marriage is a divine institution. It cannot be restructured, redefined or reworked without devastating consequences. The Bible says, "He who sows to his flesh, will of the flesh reap corruption."

And what's happening in the church today is we're letting the world press us into its mold. That's what the Bible warned us of. We're being conformed rather than being transformed. So Paul said, in Romans 12:1-2, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God....And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

So for us to be salt and light in this very dark, dark world—it's dark and it's going to get darker

and darker—I'd love to see revival. I'd love to see people back in church. I'd love to see churches back to preaching God's Word. But the Bible predicts that in the last days, "Evil men and imposters will grow worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." The world will get darker and darker until Christ returns. So we must be standing firm on God's Word. We must not compromise. We must be loving and gracious, but we must be unmoved by the truth of God's Word.

When Christ comes into our hearts, into our marriages, He brings His presence, His power, new purpose, His glory and a new pattern. "As the church is subject to Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her."