

Christ In The Home – Wives
Colossians 3:18
Pastor John Miller

I'm going to read Colossians 3:18-21 because this is the section we're going to spend three weeks in. The section actually starts in verse 18 and goes into the first verse of Colossians 4. We're going to spend three weeks in this section, "Christ In The Home." Tonight, we look at the wives, verse 18. Paul says, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord,"—or fitting in the Lord. Verse 19, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. 20 Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. 21 Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

I heard the story of a seven-year-old girl who had just seen the movie Cinderella, and she was testing her neighbor's knowledge of the story. The neighbor was anxious to impress the little girl and said, "Well, I know what happened at the end," and the little girl said, "What?" And she said, "They lived happily ever after." The little girl with a frown said, "No, they got married." You know marriage today has hit hard times, and happily married couples are an oddity. Marriage is clearly under attack and has been since the Garden of Eden.

Why is marriage so challenging and difficult in our culture today? The simple answer is because of the fall. If you are a Bible-believing Christian, then you're going to believe in Genesis that when Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden that man fell. That's what we use that term, "the fall of man," and thus man became a sinner living in rebellion to God and estranged from God. That alienation from God leads to emptiness and sinful behavior. We live in an amoral and immoral society today, and because of the times we live in the darkness of the days, and I believe, by the way, we're living in the last days, marriage is challenging, marriage is difficult, so we need to keep that in mind.

There is hope in Jesus Christ. We can be forgiven, we can be born again and be regenerated and have the Holy Spirit. We can be filled with the Spirit, and we can have His power. Not only do we have His Word, which is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path, but we have His Spirit to give us the power to be what He wants us to be and to follow His Word as it explains marriage should be.

We are to put off, the Bible says in Colossians, the old life and put on the new man. We're looking at the section of Colossians 3 and 4 which is the practice or the superiority or the supremacy of Christ, so we're to put on Christ. I want to point out where we've been real quickly. In verse 15, back up there with me, we're to "let the peace of God rule in your hearts," in verse 16, we're to "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly," and verse 17, bringing us right up to verse 18, ". . . the name of the Lord Jesus," is to be glorified. When I taught that section, we talked about the living of the abundant life and the overflow of the Christian life, but this is what we need in our marriages—we need God's peace ruling, verse 15; we need Christ's Word dwelling, verse 16; we need the name of Christ glorified.

The purpose of your marriage relationship is the glory of Christ. When we have the peace of Christ ruling, we have the Word of Christ dwelling, we have the name of Christ glorified, when this happens, the result is verse 18, wives 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. This is the control of the Christian home—the peace of Christ ruling, the Word of Christ dwelling, the name of Christ glorified, wives submitting, husbands loving, children obeying...what a novel concept too to think, children actually obey their parents, and parents don't provoke your children to anger. Add to that, verse 22, servants obey their masters, and Colossians 4:1, "Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal."

I've pointed out in Ephesians 5:18, when we are filled with the Spirit, we have homes that are joyful, thankful, and submissive. He goes right into the authority and submission and headship in the home. Here in Colossians, when Christ fills our hearts and fills our homes, then we have the homes that God wants us to be—Christ in you the hope of glory and a Christ-filled home bringing glory to God.

I want to point out that Jesus changes everything. When Christ comes into your heart, Christ comes into your home. He brings...let me give you four things rapid fire: He brings His presence. I want you to notice in verse 16 we have a reference to the Lord. I want you to notice in verse 17 we have a reference to the Lord Jesus. I want you to notice in verse 18 we have the phrase, "... in the Lord," and again in verse 20, "... unto the Lord," in verse 23, "... as to the Lord," and verse 24, "... of the Lord," and "... the Lord Christ," and on and on it goes. Again, you see how it's bringing Christ into your hearts and into your home and into your marriage. What a difference Jesus makes. If you're married and you're a believer, you know that you couldn't really make it without Christ in your home, so he brings His presence.

He also brings new power, as I just mentioned. Write down Ephesians 5:18 where Paul says, "... be filled with the Spirit." He's not just saying, "Wives submit, husbands love, and good luck. Hope you can pull it off." He says, "I'm going to give you My Spirit, and My Holy Spirit's going to help you and empower you." When we surrender to the Spirit and allow Him to fill our lives, we can have the marriage that God wants us to have.

Thirdly, Christ brings new purpose. In verse 17 it says, "... do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Jesus brings new purpose, and that number one purpose is the glory of God, that our thoughts, our actions, our attitudes, and our marriages bring honor and glory to God. Fourthly, a new pattern. We'll look at this tonight as well. In Ephesians 5:24, "Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing." In Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it."

As believers we understand that you can't separate the pattern of Christ and the Church, Christ being the head and the Church being submitted to Christ, and the home where the husband is the head of the wife and the wife is subject to her husband. This is why we can't reverse these roles in the Church because they reflect into the home and vice versa. We can't change the roles at home and expect to have God's role in the Church, so the Church is a picture or a

pattern of our relationship as husbands and wives. As Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it, so the husband is to love his wife and give himself for her; as the Church is subject unto Christ, so also the wife should be subject to her own husband. This is why we cannot play fast and loose with marriage.

When you redefine marriage, as we have sadly done in America today to include two men and two women, same-sex marriage, so called, it is not marriage. It is not God's design. It is not God's purpose. It is not God's pattern. It is not God's plan. We need to be careful what we do with marriage. As goes marriage, so goes the church; as goes the church, so goes our culture; and goes our culture, so goes the world. It's a very, very important and serious thing. It's so very important.

If we, as Christians, are going to change the world, we must start by changing our homes, and that starts with our marriages. If we're going to change the world, we better change our hearts and our marriages and our homes.

Paul's first word in this section of Colossians is to wives. There is one verse and it is packed. It's simple and to the point. Go back to verse 18 with me. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." Marriage is a wife and a husband; a wife is a female, and a husband is a male. Isn't that bizarre that I have to say that? That's just so bizarre. Fifty years ago we would have never imagined that. Twenty years ago, fifteen years ago I would have not had to say that. We would just take it for granted as we have for thousands of years, but today we don't know what a female is, we don't know really what a male is, and you can be whatever gender you want to be. You can be gender-fluid and all this stuff. It's just absolutely an affront and attack to God Himself.

Remember I just pointed out that the Church is a picture and a pattern for marriage. It's also pictured and patterned in the Trinity—God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit; the Three become One. In marriage, the two become one. In the Trinity, the Spirit seeks to glorify the Son and the Father, and the Son is submitted to the Father's purpose, so even the Godhead is reflected in marriage and reflected in the Church, and any attack against that is attack against God Himself.

Let me give you a couple of other references to back up this idea of male and female. In Genesis 2:24 the Bible says there, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother," this is actually Moses' commentary on God creating Adam and Eve and the two becoming one, ". . . a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." Jesus actually quoted Genesis 2:24 in Matthew 19:4-5. He said that God, ". . . made them at the beginning . . . male and female," —Jesus actually used the term "male and female"—"And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave,"—be glued to—"his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh,"—and added this—"What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder."

Divorce was not a part of God's original design, plan, purpose, or intention either. This is a

divine institution, and we must not compromise as believers. There's nothing unloving about standing on truth, even nature itself tells us this is true; not only that, but God's revelation in His Word, so don't let yourself be deceived.

"Marriage," as God designed it, Hebrews 13:4, "is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge." Sexually immoral people will be under the judgment and of the wrath of God.

What is it God wants wives to do? Let's go back to our text, verse 18, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands." This in the Greek would literally read: Be submissive. It speaks of the whole tenure of your whole life. Be submissive. It's not very popular today, but it's very clearly taught in the Bible in the inherent, inspired, infallible Word of God.

Let me give you a couple of other references, Titus 2:4-5, wives, " . . . be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed." Another reference, 1 Peter 3:6, "Even as Sara obeyed Abraham,"—as a model for women to follow—"calling him lord,"—it just speaks of a reverence and a respect for her headship to Abraham. It's not very popular today, but it is God's pattern.

I believe that we have a false picture of what wives' submission is, so I want to first of all give you five things submission is not. Now, I've taught this before. We have a little booklet called, Christ In The Home based on this teaching in addition to the book we just talked about on marriage right now. Let me give you five things that submission is not. Submission is not merely a concept for women. That's a given. It's not only women that are to have submissive hearts, it's men as well. Let me point this out in Ephesians 5:21. Paul in the same parallel passage says, before he says, "Wives . . . unto your own husbands," he says, "Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God." There's a submission, " . . . one to another in the,"—reverential—"fear of God." By the way, the foundation for your marriage is the fear of the Lord. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom—the husband fearing the Lord and wanting to please and obey Him, a wife fearing the Lord and wanting to please Him and obey Him and not disappoint Him.

Write down 1 Peter 5:5. It says, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." Submission is not just for women, so don't think we're beating up on you, ladies. Whenever I'm doing a wedding and the church is full with people there for the wedding, there's always unbelievers there. I always read from Ephesians, "Wives, submit to your husbands." If looks could kill, I would've been dead a hundred times over. "What did he just say? What cave did this guy just crawl out of? Did he just say submit?" You can see the hairs standing up on the back of their neck. It's unbelievable the look I get on people's faces when I read those verses. I've got to where now I just really read them loud and clear and I look right at them. I just love to see their response. Don't shoot me, I'm just the errand boy. I'm just the delivery boy. All I'm doing is reading the Bible.

You know, you can just read the Bible and people freak out. You just quote the Scriptures and they say, "That's your interpretation." I didn't interpret anything. I've quoted Scriptures and had people say, "That's just your interpretation!" I just quoted the Scripture verbatim. I didn't give any interpretation. They don't like what they hear. This is what the Bible says, "Wives, submit . . . unto your own husbands."

Let me give you the second. Submission does not mean the wife becomes a slave. You know, by word association the minute you hear the word "submit," what do you think of? Slavery, right? "I'm the boss. I'm the king. Do what I say." That's not at all what's conveyed in this concept of submission. It does not convey the idea of slavery. The truth is the wife is never more free than when she is in submission to her husband. Notice in verse 18 of our text he uses the phrase, " . . . unto your own husbands," and Ephesians mentions that as well. It just says, "your own husband," so think of this that your husband is yours. He's your very own. He belongs to no one else. The husband-wife relationship is the closest, most intimate relationship on planet earth, second only to your relationship to God.

You say, "What about my children?" Children are wonderful, children are great, but they are to leave father and mother and cleave to their own husband and wife, Lord willing. The Bible says they're like arrows in the hand of a mighty man. What do you do with arrows? You put them in the bow and shoot them...as far as you can shoot them. I'm kidding. I like to have my kids close, but not too close. We get this all twisted around and we let kids get in between us and our spouse or we make our kids the priority over our husband or over our wife, and that's a bad and dangerous thing to do. The wife does not become a slave, she's submitting to her very own husband.

Thirdly, submission does not mean that the wife never opens her mouth, never has an opinion, and never gives her advice. It doesn't mean that she's to be seen and not heard. It doesn't mean that she's not to speak her mind, to give her views, or give her opinions. Here's your verse, Proverbs 31:26, the virtuous woman, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness." I like that, "She openeth her mouth with wisdom; and in her tongue is the law of kindness."

The story is told of Albert Einstein and his wife. They were celebrating their 50th wedding anniversary and someone asked Professor Einstein, "What was the secret of fifty years of marriage?" He said, "Well, when we first got married we decided that I would make the major decisions and she would make all the minor decisions." He stopped and said, "It's interesting. After fifty years of marriage, there's never been a major decision." I've had women say, "Well, if he wears the pants, I tell him which ones to put on." You can give your opinion, but ultimately, you are to follow your husband's lead. He is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church.

Let me give you number four. Submission does not mean that the wife must obey ungodly counsel. Notice in verse 18 of our text, " . . . as it is fit in the Lord," so only that which will please the Lord, is consistent with God's Word. If your husband asks you to go rob a bank, and "We're

going to be Bonnie and Clyde,” tell him, “No, get behind me, Satan. I’m not going to do that.” If he asks you to do something that’s unscriptural or unbiblical or ungodly, you don’t have to obey. Men, you should obey God.

Fifthly, submission doesn’t mean that the wife is inferior to the husband. This is very important. Submission does not mean the wife is inferior to the husband. Write down 1 Peter 3:7. It tells us that we in marriage are, “. . . heirs together of the grace of life.” In spiritual things, in our souls, in our relationship to Christ, we are one. Galatians 3:28, in Christ, “. . . there is neither male nor female.” God doesn’t love men more than women. God doesn’t prefer men over women. It has nothing to do with that, it has to do with function and role. It’s so very, very important.

What does submission mean? The word “submit” means to arrange under. It is a military word. When Paul says, “submit,” verse 18, he’s using the word from the military world, and it means to arrange under. It’s for the purpose of order and function. It’s the purpose of order and function, and that’s a very important point.

Now, let me point out seven facts about submission. I gave you five things submission is not, let me give you seven things submission is. First, the wife’s submission to her husband is to be voluntary. In verse 18, when Paul says, “Wives, submit yourselves,” it’s literally in the Greek, be submissive. It’s conveying a voluntary act. You can never force your wife to submit or command her to submit, she does it voluntarily, and we’re going to see it’s done as unto the Lord. This is a matter of the will—be in subjection.

Here’s the second. The wife’s submission to her husband is an imperative, that means it’s a command, not an option. When Paul says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands,” verse 18, it is an imperative in the Greek language. That means it’s a command, “Wives, submit yourselves,” is God’s command for your good and for God’s glory. Remember, too, that whatever God commands, God enables us to do. Amen? God commands you to submit. God will give you the ability to do that. God will give you the strength to do that. It involves trusting in God and being obedient to God and His Word. You say, “Well, what if my husband wants to do something that’s stupid? He’s kind of a knucklehead.”

By the way, some women think, “Well, if my husband had been living when Paul wrote Colossians, this verse wouldn’t be in the Bible.” Not so. God knew all the time. It may be that there’d be times that you submit to things that you don’t think are right. You share your views, you share your opinions, but then you humbly submit. Who are you trusting? God. You’re obeying God. You’re going to answer to God. You’re trusting God. You’re trusting God to be bigger than your husband. You’re trusting God to providentially take care of you and the family and your husband. It’s so very important. So, wives’ submission is an imperative. God wants us to obey, so we must trust Him.

Here’s the third. The wife’s submission is to be continuous. When it says, “Wives, submit yourselves,” it is in the present tense. It doesn’t mean that you can just choose and pick when

to submit. The husband says, "Let's go shopping and buy you a new wardrobe." "I submit." The husband says, "Can you make some mashed potatoes for dinner this week?" You say, "Get behind me, devil." You pick and choose what you want to submit to, but what you don't want to submit to, it doesn't work that way. Submission is to be constantly, continually, habitually...it's basically to be a lifestyle.

Here's the fourth. The wife's submission to her husband is a positive concept. The very text itself is what she's to do, it's not what she is not to do. It's not negative, it is positive. God is giving you instruction as to what you should do. A wife's submission to her husband has been described as the freedom to be creative under divinely-appointed authority. You're never more free, you're never more fulfilled than when you're pleasing God and obeying His Word. Genesis 2:18 says, "And the LORD God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make,"—(what?)—"an help meet,"—or helper, suitable—"for him." It's interesting when God made Adam after all the things He created in Genesis, and said, ". . . it was good . . . it was good . . . it was good . . . it was good." And He made Adam before Eve and looked at Adam and said, "It is not good that the man should be alone." Man, by himself, is not a totality.

You know, guys just need to be domesticated, too, by the way. That's why God brings marriage into our lives, to domesticate men and to give them purpose—someone to protect and to provide for and take care of. Headship...by the way, don't miss next Wednesday night, okay? Ladies, make sure your husband is here. Headship is not dictatorship. It's protection, care, and provision. You protect your wife. You care for your wife. You provide for your wife. It's something that God has laid out in His Word that we will benefit by and we will be blessed. It's a positive truth. It's for functional purposes—a helper suitable for him. This may not win me brownie points, but I do believe that the wife's focus is to be, "How can I help my husband be a better man, be a better Christian, be a better father, be a better worker? How can I help him succeed by supporting him."

Here's number five, write it down. The wife's submission to her husband enables leadership. If you're complaining, "My husband is not a leader," maybe you're not a follower. Maybe you're not submitting. If you expect him to lead, then you must submit. Ladies, your submission allows your husband to demonstrate loving leadership in the home. I heard of Prince Albert, married to Queen Victoria, that they had a quarrel with one another. Albert went into his own private apartment and locked the door. Victoria came knocking on the door and said, "Open the door, Albert, it's the Queen of England." Nothing. She knocked again, "Open, Albert, it's the Queen of England." There was no response. Again she said, "Open the door, Albert, this is the Queen of England." Nothing. Again she knocked on the door and said, "Albert, open the door, it's your wife." He opened the door. You see, it freed her to be able to be the wife that God wanted her to be.

Here's number six, if you're taking notes. We're almost there. Submission involves the attitude as well as the action. Like the little boy that was told to sit down by his mom and dad. When he didn't sit down, his dad shoved him down in a chair and he said, "I may be sitting on the outside, but I'm standing on the inside." You see, God looks at the heart, right? It's not enough

to say (clenched teeth), “Okay! I’ll submit to this guy. I don’t want to. He’s a dodo bird, but I’ll do it anyway! Praise God.” That’s a great attitude.

Ephesians 5:33. Write it down. “. . . let . . . the wife see that she reverence,”—respects—“her husband.” Let the wife see that she respects her husband. In Titus 2:4-5, wives are, “. . . to love their husbands,” so it’s not a matter of just outward actions, it’s an inner attitude that God gives you the ability to do that. This whole section that we’re going to study for these three weeks and even beyond servants and masters in Colossians 4, has two themes, authority and submission—husband-wife, parents-children, masters-servants—authority and submission for the sake of order in the world.

Here’s number seven. What is submission? The wife’s submission to her husband is a spiritual matter. It’s a spiritual matter. Look at verse 18 of our text. It says, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands,”—and then notice this closing grace—“as it is fit,”—or fitting, and I pointed it out already—“in the Lord.” In verse 20, “Children, obey your parents . . . for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.” Do you see how the Lord is brought into this whole thing? So, it brings it into the realm of that which is spiritual. The more spiritual you are, whether a husband or a wife, the more submissive and humble you do become. Again, verses 16, 17, 18, 20, all make reference to the Lord. This is what I call “the mission of submission.” Again, Ephesians 5:23-24 says, “For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church,” so it’s a spiritual issue. It’s “the mission of submission.”

Listen to me carefully. Ladies, you submit out of obedience to God. You submit out of a love for God. You submit because you are wanting to please God, and then you submit because you want to glorify God. Let me repeat that. You submit because you want to obey God. You submit because you want to love God. You submit because you want to please God. You submit because you want to glorify God; not to mention, you want to be a good example to your children just as the husband wants to be a good example to his children of his sacrificial love and care for his wife. It’s so very, very important. This is the motive of submission.

Jesus said it like this in John 14:15. He said, “If ye love me, keep my commandments,” so it’s a spiritual activity. If you love God, you want to glorify God, you will keep His commandments. Remember, as Christians we have His presence, we have His power, we have His purpose, we have His pattern in the Word of God.

The story is told of a captain of a ship who looked into the dark night and saw faint lights at a distance. Immediately he told his signalman to send a message, “Alter your course ten degrees south.” Promptly a return message was received, “Alter your course ten degrees north.” The captain was angered that his command had been ignored, so he sent a second message, “Alter your course ten degrees south. I’m the captain.” Soon another message was received, “Alter your course ten degrees north. I’m a seaman, third class.” Immediately, the captain sent a third message, knowing the fear that it would invoke, “Alter your course ten degrees south. I’m a battleship.” Then the reply came, “Alter your course ten degrees north. I’m a lighthouse.”

This book (holding up Bible) is the lighthouse. Amen? No matter what is going on in this dark world we live in, this is our lighthouse. Let's pray.