

Christ in the Home – Husbands

Colossians 3:19

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We're going to read Colossians 3, from verses 18-21; even though we're going to look at verse 19, we're going to read this whole little section every week until we finish this section that we're calling, "Christ In The Home-Husbands." Verse 18, "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord,"—or pleasing in the Lord. Here's 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,"—or parents—"provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged."

This little section of Colossians is "Christ In The Home." Colossians, remember, has as its main theme the preeminence of Christ. The word "preeminence" by the way means the highest place, not prominence, that's an important place, preeminence means the greatest place. No one is to be above Christ in your life, in your heart, and in your home. When Christ comes into our hearts and we're born again by the Spirit, the Bible tells us, ". . . old things are passed away; behold all things are become new," in Christ. Paul, in Colossians 3, has called us to put off the old life using the image of a garment that is soiled—you take off the old when you come to Christ, and you put on the new life. Jesus comes not only to come into our hearts but also comes into our homes.

If you've been born again, I guarantee you Christ will change your marriage. If you've got marriage problems tonight and you were to come to me for counseling, the very first thing I want to know is what's your relationship to Jesus Christ? Do you know Him? Have you been born again? Have you trusted Him? Until you make that commitment to the Lord, there's not a lot that I can do for you or that the Lord can do in your life. He wants first to come in and forgive your sins and make you a child of God; and you need the Holy Spirit to be the husband God wants you to be, to be the wife God wants you to be, to be the parents God wants you to be, to be the children God wants you to be. We need the Holy Spirit, and we need to be obedient to God, but Christ in our hearts changes our homes.

Just real quick, I know I shouldn't repeat what I said the week before, but let me just real quickly give you the four things that Christ brings into our homes when He comes into our heart. He brings His presence, you remember that. Four times in five verses from verses 16-20 you find the phrases, ". . . the Lord . . . the Lord," you find the phrase mentioned, ". . . the Lord," or ". . . the Lord Jesus Christ," so we want the Lord to come into our home. There's a verse of Scripture that says, ". . . and a threefold cord is not quickly,"—easily—"broken." As a marriage, it's not just you and your wife or you and your husband, it's you, your wife, and Christ. Amen? That's a "threefold cord," and it's the strength of the Lord's presence in our lives.

The second thing He brings is His pattern, the pattern of wives submitting, husbands loving, and children obeying. God gives a picture or pattern in Christ loving the Church and giving Himself for it and the Church's submission to Christ. So, we have His presence, we have a

pattern of how the home is to function. As well as in the Godhead between God the Father, God the Holy Spirit, and God the Son, all three are One, just like the two, husband and wife, are one. “. . . as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands,” Ephesians 5:24. “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church,” so He brings His pattern.

Thirdly, He also brings His purpose, if you're writing this down, His presence, His pattern, His purpose. Verse 17 says that we all do everything, as Christians, to the glory of His name—for His name and for His glory. Now you have a purpose in your marriage. Do you know what one of your chief purpose is for in your marriage? The glory of God, to glorify and honor God. Your love, your submission, your commitment, your lives as husband and wife are to reflect the glory of God, so you need to have a fear of God. A God-fearing marriage is a strong marriage—both the husband and wife committed to Christ and committed to one another and committed to the glory of His name.

Fourthly, lastly, when the Lord comes into our hearts and our homes, He brings His power—His presence, His pattern, His purpose, and His Power. Write down Ephesians 5:18 where Paul says, “. . . be filled with the Spirit,” and then immediately he goes into husbands and wives. We need a Spirit-filled marriage. We need the Spirit to give us His love and to give us His grace and mercy and power to be all that He wants us to be.

As Paul gives us God's Word to wives, husbands, children and parents, I want you to note a couple of preliminary things. First, the emphasis of the whole passage is on duties not on privileges or on rights. You know, the problem in our culture today, everyone is screaming for their rights. You've got animal rights, we have gay rights, we have all the different rights that people are clamoring for. What about duty? What about responsibility? We have totally lost the idea...women's rights, and on the list we go. Whatever happened to my duties? Not what I'm due, but what I'm due to others? And the emphasis too, in light of this, is husbands are to see what God calls them to do and do it. They're not to wait for their wife to get their act together before they'd do what they're supposed to do.

I've often found out that the wives can quote the husbands' verse, and the husbands can quote the wives' verse. It ought not to be. Husbands, you need to memorize this verse. You need to memorize Ephesians 5, we're going to look at it in just a moment, of what you are to do to love your wife. The focus is duties not rights or privileges; so if you're whining and complaining, and griping about you're not getting what you want in your marriage, well, what are you supposed to do? Sometimes people will say, “It doesn't meet my needs. I'm not happy.” Well, whoopee-de, big deal. Are you married? Yes, you're married. Did you take vows? Yes, you did, promised to love and to cherish. You promised to do that 'til death do you part, and if you didn't, you should've. I believe in traditional vows, not “as long as we both shall love,” but 'til death do us part. Love them, “. . . in sickness and in health, for richer or for poorer, 'til death do us part, so help me, God.” You vow that before God and man, so what are your duties?

Also, secondly, the duties are shown to be reciprocal. What do I mean by that? If a wife is to

submit to her husband, the husband is to love his wife. If children are to obey their parents, parents are not to provoke their children to wrath or anger. If servants are to obey their masters, masters are to give to their servants that which is just and equal. God isn't lopsided or one-sided; it's not all just wives submit, it's husbands love your wives. When a husband loves his wife as Christ loved the Church, there will be no problem on her submission to a loving husband in this way.

Now, we come to God's Word for husbands. Let's look at it, verse 19. Again, "Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them." I don't need to say this, but I'm going to say it. The husband is a man, a wife is a woman. God made them male and female—husbands, male; wives, female. You got that? There are not multiple genders. Gender is not fluid. You can't decide what gender you want to be, God makes them male and female, and He says, "For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife; And they twain shall be one flesh."

By the way, the word "husband" here, the Greek word used for husband is also used for male in the Bible, so you can't have two women (one's the husband, one's the wife), or two men (one's the wife, one's the husband), or whatever you want to call it. That's not marriage. You can do that if you want, God has given you free will, but you'll reap the sad consequences of that—you won't enjoy the blessings of what God has created marriage to be. Marriage is a divine institution. It's not cultural. It's not government. It's a divine institution. It is actually the foundation of society—as goes marriage, so goes the world.

When marriage degenerates, the whole culture degenerates. I actually believe that we are watching the degeneration of our culture in America today. In so many practical ways, America is degenerating. If you know your Bible, Romans 1, what's happening in America and other countries of the world is the wrath of God is being revealed. We've rejected God and His precepts, and we are reaping what we have sown. We are presently, right now, experiencing the wrath of God revealed, which is by the way God letting you follow your own sin and reaping the consequences of your own sin.

There are two commands, verse 19, given to the husband, one positive and one negative. First the positive is, "Husbands, love your wives," the other, negative, "and be not bitter against them." Actually, that phrase is only found here in the book of Colossians. Now, the positive point for the husband, "Husbands, love your wives." Now, this directive is radically elevating, and it is radical in those days, it's radical today. The plight of women in the ancient world before Christianity was terrible.

Let me read to you William Barclay. He says, "Under Jewish law a woman was a thing. She was a possession of her husband just as much as the house or the flocks or the material goods were. She had no legal right whatever. For instance, under Jewish law, a husband could divorce his wife for any cause while a wife had no rights whatsoever in the initiation of divorce. In the Greek culture, the Greco-Roman world, the respectable women lived a life of entire seclusion. She never appeared on the streets alone, not even to go marketing. She lived in the

women's apartments and did not join her menfolk, even for meals." Did you know that husbands and wives didn't even eat together? They didn't even live together in the Greco-Roman culture. "From her there was demanded a complete servitude and chastity, but her husband could go out as much as he chose and could enter into as many relationships outside the marriage as he liked and incur no stigma. Both under Jewish and under Greek laws and customs, all the privileges belong to the husband, and all the duties belong to the wife."

Isn't it fascinating that today the rebellion against God's standards and Christianity and God's design for marriage is looked at as being repressive and oppressive and old fashioned? That's what's going on. When just the opposite is true? God wants to liberate women. Jesus Christ elevates women. Jesus Christ liberates women.

You know, I'm not here to talk politics, but Donald Trump's Vice President pick, JD Vance is a Roman Catholic. I don't really have a problem with that. I don't agree with Roman Catholic theology, but I believe he loves Jesus and he loves the Bible, and he holds to God's standards. When it comes to marriage, he's being so violently, just in this last week, attacked for his views on women, gender, and marriage. He's being called radical. He's being called an extreme. He's being called chauvinistic, and all the different things that are attacking him because he believes in traditional marriage. The things that they're attacking him about I totally believe because they're biblical. So, it's getting to the point where if you believe in God's design for marriage and hold a biblical view, which they call traditional, that you're going to be indicted by the world.

I believe that very, very soon, if we don't have a turn-around in our nation, that pastors who faithfully teach the Bible will be put into jail or will be arrested or put into prison and their churches will be shut down in the United States of America. I never thought I would say that, but I watch the decline and the trends and it is coming to our nation if there isn't a revival, so pray for America.

My point is Christianity elevates and liberates the woman. Also, this directive is in the Greek, what's called a present imperative, "Husbands, love your wives," means that husbands should love their wives at all times and in all circumstances. I know that right now you're thinking, Oh, no. This was written before my wife was born. It didn't include her. At all times, and in all situations. Remember, love is not just an emotion or a feeling. I'm going to break down the word love here in the Greek, agape. "Love is not a passing emotion, love is a continual devotion," says Warren Wiersbe. Love is not a passing emotion, it's a continual devotion. The fact that this is an imperative or commanded by God indicates it's not an emotion. It's a decision that the husband makes of the will to seek the highest good of his wife.

When you love somebody, you seek their highest good. It's not self-centered. It's not self-focused. It's what is best for that other person what will glorify God, and that you make a decision to show love. It's a verb, by the way, the word "love" there, so it means that you put into action what God tells you to do, how you treat your wife. It doesn't mean you might not always have the emotions of love, but it means that you show her love as God has commanded you to

do.

The Greek word “love” in verse 19 is a variation of it because of the tense, is a Greek word agape. In the English language, and I know you’ve heard it before, we have one word for “love,” and do you know what the one word for “love” is? Love. This is why again, forgive me, I can’t help it, you have these crazy government-sponsored ads on tv, “Love is love.” Well, isn’t that an intelligent statement, “Love is love.” You can just define it willy-nilly however you want?

That’s one of the problems with the English language. I love peanut butter and jelly. Every... once a year I can only eat one a year, but once a year I’ll make a big, thick, gnarly, juicy peanut butter and jelly sandwich—tons of jelly, tons of peanut butter—you just gotta keep licking it and eating it. After it’s over, I’m just buzzing because of the sugar that I just had. So, I love peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and I love my wife. Obviously, I just used the same word for love peanut butter and jelly and love my wife, but I hope and pray to God that my love for my wife is far different than my love for peanut butter and jelly sandwiches.

You may love your dog. People are flipping out over dogs and cats nowadays. They’re not having kids, they’re having dogs and cats and calling it their kids. “I love my car,” and “I love my house,” and “I love this,” and “I love that,” and “Yeah, I love my wife, too.”

In the Greek there are multiple words for love that differ as to what kind of love we’re talking about. Let me give you the four fundamental words. The first is eros. We get our word erotic from it. This is a love that is sensual. We would use the term lust. Sometimes when a guy says, “I love you,” he’s just lusting after a woman. He just wants. This is a taking love. There’s nothing wrong with being physically attractive to one another and having sexual love in a marriage relationship, outside of that is not God’s design. But this is not the word eros. Husbands, eros your wife.

There’s a second word, the word storge. The word storge means a family love. I love my girls, my daughters. I have three daughters. I love my granddaughters. They are awesome. I love my grandkids. You love your mom and you love your dad and you love your family, your aunts and uncles, your cousins. It’s a family love.

There’s a third word. The word is phileo. We get our word Philadelphia from that word, which means city of brotherly love. A phileo love is more of a give and take, sharing love; a friendship love. It’s a friend...I’ve got a friend that loves to play tennis, so we love to play tennis together. I love hanging out with you. We’re good friends. It’s a friendship love.

The fourth love that’s used here in this passage for husbands is the Greek word agape. Agape is a love from God that is a giving love. So, eros wants to take; storge wants to take and receive; phileo is a friendship love; and agape is a love that give and gives and gives and gives without any expectation of receiving. This is the love found in John 3:16, “For God so loved the world,”—agaped the world—“that he gave,”—there’s the definition, God agaped, so He gave—“his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have

everlasting life.”

Hold your place here quickly. I don't like to jump around much when I preach, but turn to 1 Corinthians 13:4-8. I want you to see a definition. This is the famous “love chapter” in the Bible. It's read quite often at weddings, fittingly. I'm going to read it from the New Living Translation, so it's a little bit of a different slant. Just follow beginning in verse 4. “Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud.” You have the characteristics of love, husbands, patient, kind, not jealous, not boastful, not proud. Look at verse 5, “or rude. It does not demand its own way.” Isn't that interesting? Love does not demand its own way. Love, “is not irritable,”—wow, I'd like to erase that one from there. That's hard. “ . . . and it keeps no record of being wronged.”

Remember, guys, this is how you're to love your wife. He didn't carry a little book around. He gets all mad and says, “Remember three months ago you sneezed and didn't cover your mouth and it got on me? I'm pretty upset about that. I'm still mad about that.” Or, “You took that last piece of apple pie that I wanted,” and they write it in their book and remember it. It doesn't take record of what has been done wrong.

Verse 6, “It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. 7 Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and,” verse 8, “But love will last forever!” The King James says, “Love never fails.” Again, you should meditate, husband, on 1 Corinthians 13 to understand the kind of love you're to have for your wife. This is the kind of love a husband is commanded to have for his wife. “This kind of love,” to quote Charles Erdman, “transforms and controls the exercise of authority.” Let me repeat that. “This kind of love,” for the husband for his wife, “transforms and controls the exercise of authority. It makes tyranny and unkindness, selfishness and cruelty, absolutely impossible. It removes from the submission expected of a wife all that is distasteful and difficult.” I love that! I love that! I love that! When a husband loves his wife in agape love, it removes all possibility of tyranny.

Write down Galatians 5:22, this love is also the fruit of the Holy Spirit. So, husbands, be filled with the Spirit and God will give you that fruit, that love. This is why in Ephesians 5:18 Paul commands married couples to be filled with the Spirit.

I want you, again, to turn to another verse before we come back to Colossians 3. I want you to turn to Ephesians 5:25-30. It's an important parallel passage. You remember I've mentioned it more than once that Ephesians was written the same time Colossians was, and they are parallel books. Guys, turn with me to Ephesians 5:25, and we'll begin reading there. We're going to see four qualities of a husband's agape love for his wife. I'm sorry I couldn't get them on the screen for you tonight, so make sure you write them down. First, agape love is a sacrificial love. Look at Ephesians 5:25. “Husbands,”—agape—“your wives, even as,”—there's the pattern—“Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.” That is the picture, the pattern, sacrificial love. You give yourself in love to your wife. How did Jesus love the Church? He gave Himself for it. He died on a cross.

Husbands, do you give yourself for your wife sacrificially? This might mean that she would want you to maybe go shopping with her sometime. You say, "Come on, Pastor, you stopped preaching and you're prying right now." Maybe go to the mall with your wife. When men go into the mall they see the sign over the door that says, "Abandon all hope ye who enter here." Or, fix things around the house. I remember when I was teaching this very passage a few years ago my wife had quite a 'honey-do' list for me. I remember thinking, Oh man, how am I going to preach this verse when I haven't done what she asked me to do? So, actually I was leaving for church that Sunday morning and said, "Kristy, tomorrow I won't go surfing. I'm going to stay home and get those things done." She said, "Oh great! Wonderful." I said, "Yeah, that way I can preach my sermon this morning at church." You give up what you want, to minister to what your wife needs. That's what it means to sacrificially love your wife.

The second characteristic is that it is a sanctifying love, Ephesians 5:26. "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word." He gave Himself for the Church, "That he might sanctify and cleanse,"—the Church—"with the washing of water by the word." Husband, is your wife more like Jesus because of you or in spite of you? Sanctify means to set apart and to make holy. You, as a husband, should have—listen carefully—a sanctifying effect upon your wife.

We all know, it's common knowledge, that quite often the wife is more spiritual than the husband. I see it even in church on Sundays sometimes when I'm preaching. The wife's got her Bible out, and she's got her notes out. She's taking notes and her husband has his arms crossed. He's just kind of looking around like, real macho, you know. He kind of looks over, "Hmph." I actually feel like walking down off the stage, taking her Bible, and handing it to him. You know, husband, get a Bible. Read your Bible. Be a man of the Word. I've had men say, "Well, I don't know how to read." Well, learn to read.

I had to learn to read. When I got saved, I was 19 years old. I was about this close to illiterate. I didn't know how to...I bluffed my way through high school. I didn't know how to read after graduating from high school. When I got saved, and had a hunger for the Word, I learned to read by reading the Bible. So, you can read. God will help you. You can learn. Then, as your life is being sanctified, you will influence your wife.

Do you want your wife to be godly? You be godly. Do you want your wife to go to church? You go to church. Do you want your wife to pray, you should pray. Do you want your wife to be Spirit-filled, you should be Spirit-filled. You can't just say, "Oh, that's a woman's thing. Women do that. They're taking care of that." No. Men should be the leaders, so your wife should be more spiritual because of you, not in spite of you.

Thirdly, this command is a command for affectionate love. Write that down, affectionate love. Look at Ephesians 5:28-29, "So ought men,"—which are husbands—"to love their wives as their own bodies. He that loveth his wife loveth himself." Isn't that an amazing statement? Years ago there was a book on marriage. The title of the book was, Do Yourself A Favor: Love Your Wife. You love your wife as you love your own body. Look at Ephesians 5:29, "For no man ever

yet hated his own flesh; but,”—here’s the key word—“nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church.”

That word “nourish” and “cherish” is really kind of a one word that is taken from two words. The meaning of the word in its etymology is—listen carefully—to warm with body heat. It means to warm another with body heat. Do you know how this can be translated? Husbands, hug your wives. Be affectionate toward them. Show them affection. A lot of wives just say, “My husband doesn’t show me any affection.” (In a gruff, Southern accent) “Awwwww, she knows I love her. I come home from work, don’t I? She knows I love her, I eat her food. It isn’t that great, but I eat it anyway.” Slap that dude. Do you ever tell her, “I love you.” “No, she knows I love her.” Tell her that you love her. Hug her. Kiss her, just to show her you love her. Warm her with your body heat. Be affectionate toward your wife.

It also carries the idea of to protect and care for. It was used of a mother bird who would put itself over her little chicklings to warm them, to cherish them, and protect them. It also as the idea of to hold dear and to keep in one’s mind. So, we need to show that affection. I love what Martin Luther, the Protestant Reformer, said. He said, “Let the wife make the husband glad to come home,” I love that, “and let him make her sorry to see him leave.” Isn’t that great? Let the wife make the husband glad to come home. Some guys don’t want to come home, that’s why they go a the bar and get all liquored up before they go home. “I gotta go to the Fuzzy Frog and hang out for a while,” it’s not a real bar, I just made that up, “and deal with my wife,” you know. I love to be with men who love their wives and encourage one another to be loving toward their wife and be with their wife and to go home to their wives. Once you’re home, be the kind of a man that makes her sorry to see you leave.

Sometimes the wife is like, “Don’t you have something else to do?” I have sometimes people come to me that are ‘empty nesters’ and say, “You know, our kids are gone now. My husband’s retired. All he does is stare at me all day. Can’t he go find something else to do?” We should be enjoying one another’s company and love with one another even in a time when the kids have gone out of the home.

So, sacrificial, sanctifying, affectionate, here’s the fourth, unbreakable. God’s agape love commanded in Colossians 3:19 is to be unbreakable. Remember 1 Corinthians 13, “Love never fails.” Ephesians 5:31, look at it with me, we’re still in Ephesians 5, “For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife,”—or glued together, permanently bonded together—“and they two shall be one flesh.” The two become one. This is taken from Genesis 2:24, and it was Moses’ commentary on the Genesis record. It speaks of the bond of marriage—God’s design and intention and purpose is that you’re glued to one another and that what God joins together let no man put asunder.

Easy divorce laws are detrimental to our country, and people need to be more committed to staying together and working it out. In Matthew 19, there is teaching of Jesus, and I won’t go into it. It is a whole chapter in my book on marriage dealing with the subject of divorce. Divorce is the divine concession to human sin, and there is a time when God allows for divorce, but it is

a very specific time when that partner has been sexually immoral and you have the basis then to divorce, but you're not commanded to or necessarily have to. In Matthew 19:6 Jesus said, "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." If they divorce, it's because of the hardness of their hearts—one heart or the other heart has become hardened. So, agape love is unbreakable.

Last time I taught this in Colossians, I didn't read it. I want to read a long quote from the book, *The Home Beautiful*, written by a man named J.R. Miller, no relationship to me. This book was written in 1912 about marriage. It says, "When a man offers his hand in marriage to a woman he says by his act that his heart has made choice of her among all women, that he has for her a deeper tender affection than for any other. At the marriage altar he solemnly pledges to her continuance of love until death. When the beauty has faded from her face and the luster from her eyes, when old age has brought wrinkles or when sickness, care, and sorrow has left marks of wasting and marring, the faithful husband's love is to remain deep and true as ever. His heart is still to choose his wife among all women and to find its truest delight in her." . . . 'til death do us part. And, when your wife changes and doesn't look the way she used to—as you don't either—love doesn't change. Love does not alter when it alteration finds. I really believe that your love with age should grow deeper.

Go back to Colossians 3:19 and we'll wrap this up. So, the positive, "Husbands love your wives," that's pretty powerful. Here's the negative, and we won't spend at all the amount of time here. " . . . and be not bitter against them." J.B. Phillips renders that, "Don't let bitterness or resentment spoil your marriage." This, again, is an imperative. It stresses the constant prevention of a sour attitude. It literally would be translated, "Stop being bitter." When love weakens, bitterness set in. Don't let a root of bitterness I just mentioned, Matthew 19:8, that Jesus warned us of the hardness of our hearts. So, when a wife maybe isn't as submissive as a husband would like or maybe not meeting his needs as he would like, you're not to become bitter or sour or angry or cantankerous with them.

Write down 1 Peter 3:7. It says, "Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them,"—that means settle down and be at home with them—"according to knowledge,"—knowing, understanding your wife—"giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel,"—not weak vessel, but weaker; weaker than you as a husband, you're comparative—"and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." Do you know the Bible actually says that if a husband doesn't love his wife, doesn't dwell with his wife in an understanding way, doesn't treat her properly, your prayers are hindered. You can't be right with God and wrong with your wife. You can't be right with God and wrong with your wife. If you want to be right with God, you gotta be right with your wife.

That word "bitter" is used in the book of Revelation 8 where it talks about a star called Wormwood that was bitter. It poisoned the water. Don't let your marriage be poisoned, so husbands become bitter. Husbands and wives, you need to be " . . . kind, one to another . . . forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." Isn't that what the Bible says in Ephesians? "And be ye kind . . . tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for

Christ's sake hath forgiven you." God has forgiven you, you should be forgiving. God has filled you with His Spirit, you should walk in love and be not bitter against your wife.

"Let the peace of Christ rule," Colossians 3:15; "Let the word of Christ dwell," Colossians 3:16; and let the name of Christ be glorified, Colossians 3:17. Let's pray.