

## **Col 3:18 –21**

### **The New Life in Christ – The Christian Household**

#### **Introduction**

##### Christ is the source

- Theme of Colossians – Christ is our supreme and all-sufficient Savior and Sanctifier. This applies to these instructions for the Christian household
- Christ is the source for understanding God’s will for us in these relationships
- Christ is the source for power to fulfill God’s will in these relationships
- This is the result of our union with Christ – spiritual knowledge and power

##### Christ is the goal

- The principle in 3:17 not only summarizes the verses before it but also introduces the ones after it
  - Whatever you do in word or deed in the various relationships at home, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father
- This idea is scattered through all the verses in this section:
  - “as is fitting in the Lord” 3:18
  - “this is well-pleasing in the Lord” 3:20
  - “fearing the Lord” 3:22
  - “work heartily as for the Lord” 3:23
  - “It is the Lord Christ whom you serve” 3:24
  - “you have a Master in Heaven” 4:1

##### Christ is the example

- Christ as the bridegroom of the church furnishes the highest standard of love for Christian marriages – Eph 5:25-32
- Christ as a child on this earth was obedient to his earthly parents (Lk 2:51), while suffering on the cross provided for his mother (Jn 19:25-27), and during his entire life was obedient to his heavenly Father, even to the point of death (Phil 2:8).
- Christ set the example for masters and servants when stooping low to wash the feet of his disciples (Jn 13:13-17)

##### Additional comments

- These are instructions for Christian households – other passages of scripture address situations where one spouse or the master is not a believer.
- There are three sets of reciprocal relationships – husband & wife, father & child, master & servant – each with reciprocal instructions resulting in fairness and balance.

#### **Duties of Wives**

## Why must the wife be subject to her husband?

- It is the natural order of creation
  - 1 Cor 11:8-9 – “...man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.”
  - 1 Tim 2:13 – Paul’s first reason given to Timothy about why women should not have authority over men in the church is that Adam was first created, and then Eve.
  - Gen 3 – God made Adam. Then, after he gave him time to realize he was alone and probably build up a desire for company, He said that it was not good for the man to be alone and that he would make Adam a helper suitable for him. He took a part of man out of him and made a woman from it. Then he brought the women to the man.
    - God made the woman for man. Not the other way around.
    - Her very name “Ish-sha” was derived from his name –“Ish”.
  - Before the fall there was complete harmony in the relationship and both willingly accepted their role and position.
    - The man was thrilled to have the woman and cherished her dearly. His natural frame of mind was to protect her, provide for her, and most importantly shower her with his love so that she would feel secure.
    - The woman was glad to have the man to lead her, protect & defend her, provide for her and to be showered with his love. So she willingly committed to be there for him and follow him.
  - Any attempt to reverse these distinctions and roles would upset the natural balance of the created order and bring misery and disappointment into their relationship.
    - Then sin entered the world...and resulted in exactly that.
- It is enforced because of the fall
  - 1 Tim 2:14 – Paul’s second reason given to Timothy about why women should not have authority over men is because they fell into sin by being deceived.
    - If someone is deceived they are not fully aware of what they are doing at the time. Usually they only find out about their folly after the fact. That is what happened to Eve, she was deceived.
    - She needed a wise strong leader to prevent her from making that mistake. Adam of course failed to do that.
    - However she evidently did know what her husband had told her about God’s command concerning the fruit of that particular tree because she quoted him. But being deceived she still decided to foolishly reject God’s authority.
  - Before the fall - “The tendency to follow was embedded in Eve’s soul as she came forth from the hand of her Creator.” – Hendrickson
  - But the fall causes women now to have the tendency to fight against this.
  - So after the fall God has to enforce what used to be natural for her in the form of a curse.

- Gen 3:16 – “Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”
    - God has to now tell the women that her husband will rule over her.
    - And she is going to long for her husband’s love – implying that the husband is being told to give her the love she needs.
  - NOTE: Adam also messed up, just in a different way. He knew what he was doing. He just didn’t have the backbone to stand and stop it.
    - So now men have either have the tendency to be lazy in taking the lead in their family, or they exercise authority without love,
- It is fitting in the Lord
  - Her submitting to her husband is in harmony with the Lord’s will revealed throughout Scripture.
    - 1 Cor 14:34, 35; Eph 5:22-24, 33; 1 Tim 2:11-15; Titus 2:5; 1 Pet 3:1-6
  - More importantly, her submitting to her husband gives honor to her Lord because it pictures what the church, the bride of Christ, is to be like toward our heavenly Bridegroom.
    - Eph 5:22-24 – “But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.”
    - Christian wives have a high calling to demonstrate to the world in their relationship with their husband the beautiful relationship that the Church has with Christ.

#### What if the husband is unloving to her?

- Submitting to a husband who is unloving and/or unwise is definitely not easy (just like loving an un-submissive wife is not easy)
- But notice that it does not say “Wives submit to your husband as long as he loves you.” This command doesn’t come with an “if” or a “as long as”.
- What can help wives to obey this command?
  - Trusting in God’s wise design.
  - Seeing that her submitting is ultimately unto the Lord who deserves her submission, even when the husband does not.
  - By relying on the power of Christ!
    - “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” – Phil 4:13

#### What submitting does not mean

- It does not imply the wives’ inferiority to their husbands.
  - This was the view among the Greeks, Romans and even Jews.
  - Women were viewed as the property of the husband and had no rights.
  - Christianity change all this – Gal 3:27-29
    - Jesus exalted women back up to their original equal importance with men.
    - He made some of his most startling revelations to women – Jn 4:13, 14; 21-26; 11:25, 26; 20:11-18.
  - A wife is not the slave of the husband – she is a supporting companion to be highly appreciated by the husband because she is a sister in the Lord.

- Note: this command is not for the husband but for the wife. It does not say, “Husbands make sure your wife submits to you and remind her of it every day.”
- It is not absolute – Acts 5:29 – she is not to obey her husband if he asks her to disobey God.
- Wives submitting is to be a choice they make to fulfill their role and calling out of service to the Lord and Master Jesus Christ.

## Duties of husbands

### Love your wife

- If you were to ask men what their primary role as a husband is, most would probably say to be the leader.
  - While it is true on one-hand, God answers this question in a different way.
  - He says the husband’s primary responsibility is to love his wife.
- This command is just as difficult for the husband to follow as it is for the wife to following the command to submit to her husband.
  - Matt 19 - Jesus' taught on the permanence of marriage and the sinfulness of divorce. His disciples responded by exclaiming, *"If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry!"*
  - But here, Paul is saying that not only must a man live with his wife for the rest of his life, he has to **love** his wife for the rest of his life!
- Note: this command is not for the wife but for the husband.
  - It doesn't say, “Wives make sure your husbands love you and remind him of it every day.”
  - This command is for the husband. It is their responsibility to love.
  - Every man is ultimately responsible for what his marriage becomes.
- The Greek word used here for love is *agapao*.
  - It is a present tense imperative indicating continuous action. It could be translated: "keep on loving."
  - It expresses a willing sacrificial love, not the love of passion or emotion, but the love of choice - a covenant kind of love.
  - According to the Bible, love is something you DO. So how much you love is determined by how much you do.
    - 1 John 3:18 - “Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.
  - Society teaches love is a feeling. It's a mystical sensation that sweeps over you one day and may disappear the next. As long as you feel a certain way, you're in love. When the feeling goes away, you're not in love.
  - The Bible teaches just the opposite. Love is not a feeling. It's an action. It's something you do. Feelings can and will result from loving action, but they are not always there. But a commitment from the heart can always be there.

- The standard of love *apapao* love was set by Christ.
  - Christian husbands have the high calling to demonstrate to the world in their relationship with their wife the sacrificial loving relationship that the Christ has with his Church – Eph 5:25-33
    - The way that we relate to our wives is to be the way Christ relates to the church.
    - How did Christ love the church? "He gave himself up for her."
  - This is a total unselfish commitment to your wife.
  
- The role of the husband is to love his wife to such a degree that she feels secure in his love, just like we feel secure in our Savior's love.
  - A sacrificial unconditional love without limits.
  - Such love means that the husband is on the lookout for how he can best meet the needs of his wife.
  - He seeks to nurture her, to care for her, to help her enjoy marriage to the fullest.
  - He gives of his interest, time, pleasures, ambitions and friends.
  - He labors to help her develop in spiritual and emotional maturity. His joy and delight is seeing the progress and growth in his wife.
  - When a husband loves his wife like this, he will have a wife who desires to submit to him.
  
  - There are a lot of men who would stand between their wives and an intruder to offer protection. But those same men, though chivalrous in protection, would not think of adjusting their schedule or career or outside interests for their wives.

### Do not be embittered against them

- God does not want us to become cross with our wives.
  - He does not want us to resent them.
  - He doesn't want us to take out our frustrations on them or blame them.
  - He doesn't want us to keep a record of wrong that can create an attitude of bitterness.
- Many men are polite to all those outside the home, but treat their wives and children while in the home harshly because they do not fear being seen.
- Women are made differently than men. You can be sharp with a guy friend, and he will shrug it off and not become upset by it. But if you do that with your wife, you will cut her deeply, far more than you may realize.
- Having a proper appreciation for them will help husbands to not do this.
  - Mathew Henry nicely describes the beauty of a wife - "If man is the head, she is the crown, a crown to her husband, the crown of the visible creation. The man was dust refined (showing that mankind is best and most excellent of God's creatures), but the woman was dust double-refined, one removed further from the earth."
  
  - Talking about the roles of men and women in marriage he says – "The woman was made of a rib out of the side of Adam; not made out of his head

to rule over him, nor out his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved.”

- The ultimate power to love your wife and not be embittered against them comes from Christ and our union with him.
  - “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” – Phil 4:13

## **Duties of Children**

### Obey your parents in all things

- The Bible from beginning to end is consistent concerning the duties of children.
  - 5th Commandment – Ex 20:12, Deut 5:16
  - Proverbs is full of instructions for children to listen to their parents.
  - Jesus taught that this commandment is still good for today in several places
  - Paul also gave the Ephesians the same type of instructions – 6:1-3.
  - The Bible makes it clear that obedience is well-pleasing to the Lord.
- Disobedience to parents is one of the results of refusing to acknowledge the Creator and Him giving them over to a depraved mind – Rom 1:30.
- Disobedience to parents marks the ever-increasing wickedness of the “last days” – 2 Tim 3:1-2.
- Children are not born neutral without sin. They are born with a sinful nature and already guilty of Adam’s sin, both which were handed down to them by their parents – Ps 51:5.
- So children must be taught and trained to obey by their parents.
- The only hope for them to truly obey from the heart is for the Holy Spirit to regenerate them and give them a new heart that will want to obey.
- That is why from infancy they need to be taught the Scriptures and have the Gospel preached to them.
- They need to also be given positive encouragement to believe and obey this command because it comes with a promise. “..that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.”

### In the Lord

- This means in fellowship with and in dependence upon the Lord.
- “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” – Phil 4:13
  - We need to teach our children to depend upon Christ and to walk with Him daily.
  - Bring Christ and the truth of the Bible into everything you do as a family.

## **Duties of Fathers**

### Create a positive atmosphere for obedience

- In this passage, Paul does not go into details about the duties of fathers to train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord – Eph 6:4
- His instructions here to Fathers flow from the instructions he just gave children: to obey their parents in all things.
  - If children are to obey, then Fathers are to create an atmosphere which will make obedience easy and natural.
  - Mothers share this responsibility also, but the Father has the ultimate responsibility.
- Being unjust, overly severe or consistently finding fault will result in the child losing heart.
  - “No matter what I do, it’s always wrong.”
- Training children does require negative admonition and the use of the rod, but that is not all it is to be.
  - The emphasis should be on positive admonitions.
  - Show them what is good and right and encouraging them in it.
  - Point out to them when they do what is right and good and rejoice in it.
  - It of course must also include quality time with them just enjoying life together, but always being keen to point to God in everything – Deut 6:7
  - Setting the right example will have a more powerful impact on them than just words – practice what you teach them.