

“Husband Love in Practice”
Colossians 3:19
(Preached at Trinity, October 14, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. In **Chapter 3** Paul describes the transforming work of God's grace. There is no part of our life that our relationship with Christ does not impact.
Colossians 3:17 NAU - "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."
2. Christianity impacts how we interact with other people. The Christian is characterized by love, mercy, patience and forbearance, humility and meekness.
In the final verses of **Chapter 3** Paul describes the impact of faith upon the family. God's grace transforms families—husbands and wives, parents and children, servants and masters. In **verses 18-19** Paul describes the distinct roles of husbands and wives. This deals with the subject of what is called “complementarianism.”
Complementarianism is the Biblical teaching that men and women have different, but complementary roles. The Bible describes these distinctions most clearly in the in marriage, in the home, and in the church.
3. Paul's charge to husbands and wives in Colossians is very brief and concise. He is focusing upon the chief duties for husbands and wives.
 - A. We've looked at the duty of wives to submit to the leadership of their husbands.
"Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."
 - B. Last week we turned our attention to Paul's charge to husbands.
"Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them."
4. Paul charges husbands to two duties in this verse.
 - A. To love their wives. Genuine love is sacrificial. In his letter to the Ephesians Paul gives the greatest model of this sacrificial love.
Ephesians 5:25 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her"
 - B. To not be embittered against them. Putting positively, he must be gracious towards her. Paul's words refer to patience, gentleness. He must be gentle towards his wife, never harsh or cross.
As we saw before, this is the expression of the Christian behavior Paul described in the previous verses:
Colossians 3:12-13 NAU - "put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."
5. This morning I want to set before you some of the practical aspects of Paul's charge to husbands. While the wife's chief duty is to follow, the husband's chief duty is to lead. Both are in the context of self-denial.

6. Leadership is weighty. It carries great accountability. Paul is telling the husband that while he is the head of his wife, this leadership must be in the context of love—
“husbands love your wives.”
Paul doesn’t tell the husbands, “Husbands, be the head of your wife, or husbands, rule your wives, but husbands love your wives.” This is the husband’s duty towards his wife.
7. This weighty charge is high and difficult. There are two dangers husbands must guard against.
- A. On one side a man can lord over his wife in a prideful and sinful manner.
1. There is a great difference between male dominance and male headship.
 - a. Headship is a recognition of God-given leadership that is exercised with love, humility, and service.
 - b. Sin often causes man to abuse his authority. This can be seen on many levels – employers, law enforcement, politicians, pastors
 - c. This is particularly ugly when husbands and fathers abuse their authority.
 2. A godly man exercises selfless headship as he strives to serve his wife in leadership that will glorify God and edify her
- B. On the other end of the spectrum men pervert God’s design for them as husbands by succumbing to the woman’s desire for authority and relinquishing his responsibility to exercise a proper headship.
1. Sometimes it’s because the husband fears his wife
 - a. We should avoid strife if possible, but this doesn’t relieve men of the duty to lead, even when the wife is not cooperative. I’m not talking about forcefully demanding submission. I’m talking about patient, gracious, unrelenting leadership.
 - b. Biblical principles must be followed, even when the principles are not well received –
Acts 5:29 - "We must obey God rather than men."
 - c. There is a behavior expected of men – a heart of courage. We need to be men in our homes.
1 Corinthians 16:13 NAU - "Be on the alert, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong."
 - d. Christ leads His Bride, the church, with love, patience, and tenderness, but also with great strength
 2. Often men fail to lead because of passive laziness
 - a. Many men find it easier and more convenient to let their wives lead
 - b. It is more convenient to let the wife discipline the children.
 - c. Popular today is the “Man Cave” where the man can get away from his family. What if Christ chose to absent Himself from His Church?
 - d. It is terrible in a Christian home when the wife becomes the spiritual leader
4. With Christ’s love for the church as our model, the Godly husband must realize he can never love his wife enough. This morning I want to turn our focus to the practical ways this works out in a marriage.
How does the Godly husband imitate Christ in loving his wife?

- I. By giving himself to his wife in sacrificial love
- A. Jesus gave Himself for His Church
Ephesians 5:25 NAU - "love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her"
1. When on the earth Jesus demonstrated a life of service
John 13:3-5 NAU - "*Jesus*, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, ⁴ got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. ⁵ Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded."
 2. His greatest act of love was in dying for the church
John 15:13 NAU - "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."
 3. This great love of Christ for us draws us to Him. It drives us to submit to His gracious care.
1 John 4:19 NAU - "We love, because He first loved us."
2 Corinthians 5:14 NAU - "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died;"
- B. The charge to husbands is to imitate this sacrificial love
1. We are naturally selfish and desire to be served.
 In our sinful condition we love ourselves supremely. When the lost man says I love you, he is actually saying I love me and you satisfy me. I love you for what you do for me.
 2. Too often we focus primary attention upon ourselves. We want everyone to know about our needs, how we feel.
 3. The Godly husband loves his wife as he looks to the example of Christ's love for him. He denies himself and seeks to sacrificially serve his wife.
 - a. This plays out in an infinite number of ways
 - b. Instead of indulging our many hobbies and interests, we should seek to satisfy the needs and desires of our wife. Learn to find joy in the things you can do together.
 - c. He helps with the dishes and even the laundry.
 He engages himself with the children taking his share of diaper changes and taking charge at bath time.
 - d. Men sometimes complain that their wives will not submit to their leadership. I wonder if they ever examine the degree to which they love their wives. What wife would not subordinate herself to a man who selflessly loves her and continually gives of himself?
 4. Christ genuinely cares for His Bride.
 1. He knows her. He has a relationship with her.
 2. The husband must have a genuine interest in the wellbeing of his wife. He knows her needs and labors to supply them.
 3. One of the most important aspects of a marriage is that of friendship. Your wife must be your closest friend. You'd rather spend time with her than anyone else in the world.

- II. In his display of love he is careful to take the spiritual lead in the home
- A. Christ also serves as our model
Ephesians 5:26 NAU - "that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,"
1. He cleansed us through justification as the cross is applied
 2. He also continues to make us holy through sanctification – the “washing of water with the Word.”
- B. The Godly husband keeps Christ and His Word central in the home
1. He prays for his wife. He intercedes on her behalf. He sees himself as priest in the home
 2. A husband must continually seek to lead his wife closer to God
 - a. He has the responsibility of teaching his wife – his duty. This means he has a duty to study in order to equip himself to rightly handle the Word of God.
 - b. Some husbands spend hours sitting at the computer reading blogs and visiting endless websites. Or he spends his free time in front of the TV watching his favorite programs or sports teams. Or he spends his time pursuing his favorite hobby.
 The Godly husband gives priority to immersing himself in those things that have a spiritual impact upon his life so that he can have a spiritual impact upon his wife.
 3. Paul implies that the Christian husband will be able to rightly handle the word of God.
1 Corinthians 14:34-35 NAU - "The women are to keep silent in the churches; for they are not permitted to speak, but are to subject themselves, just as the Law also says. ³⁵ If they desire to learn anything, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is improper for a woman to speak in church."
 4. This implies that his wife readily receives her husband’s instruction as the Bride of Christ readily receives the instruction of her Lord. But the Christian husband must patiently teach even when it is not well received.

- III. In love the Godly husband applies himself to knowing his wife – to learn about her.
1 Peter 3:7 NAU - "You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered." γυνῶσις
- A. Christ knows His bride intimately
1. He knows us better than we know ourselves
 2. He Takes pity on our weaknesses.
Psalms 103:13-14 NAU - "Just as a father has compassion on *his* children, So the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. ¹⁴ For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are *but* dust."
- B. A wise husband recognizes the unique characteristics of women
1. They are more emotional, vulnerable – the weaker vessel.
They are affected by hormonal changes.
This means you need to be sensitive, gentle and protective
Colossians 3:19 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them."
 2. Men and women are greatly different. The Godly husband understands this. Men tend to be mission oriented with a one-track mind – women are practical, intuitive, multitaskers. Women are more inclined to want to “talk about” or discuss problems. Men want to leap forward with dominion and “fix” them. This is good—it is what we are wired to do. But we must also be willing to listen and perhaps heed their wise counsel before we leap.
 3. Women are more relationship oriented than men. They want to share their feelings. This is a place the Godly woman has to guard her heart. The danger is to desire to share everything. Social media has made it easy to be idle gossipers without ever leaving the house. Paul warned about such:
1 Timothy 5:13 NAU - "At the same time they also learn *to be* idle, as they go around from house to house; and not merely idle, but also gossips and busybodies, talking about things not proper *to mention*."
 4. The godly husband needs to understand these differences.
A movie written by a man for men is all about mission, conquering, dominion. A movie written for women is more about relationships.
Your wife appreciates outward signs of affection.
A bouquet of flowers on her birthday is special for her.
Telling her you appreciate her cooking or the way she cares for the home is important to her.
- C. A Godly husband needs to know more than just the difference between men and women. He must strive to understand his wife particularly.
1. What are you doing to increase your knowledge of your wife?
What are her interests? What delights her? What makes her sad? What are her fears? What are her hopes for the future?
 2. And what are you doing with this knowledge?

- IV. In love the husband sacrificially gives himself as provider and protector of his wife – physical, emotional, spiritual
- A. The husband has a duty to provide for his home
There is no place for laziness in a Godly husband – he’s a hard worker.
1. He must maintain the balance.
 - a. There is always a danger of making work our idol. A man can neglect his family through his vocation.
 - b. But we have to understand that it is a man’s duty to work.
He must give himself sacrificially in order to provide for his family
 2. This does not prohibit a man from helping in the home
Nor does it prohibit a woman from working outside the home – but the primary calling, roles and duties do not change
- B. The Godly husband stands boldly as the protector of his wife
1. He protects her from other people
 2. He protects her from himself. He guards his tongue from words of criticism.
 3. He protects her from false teaching
 4. He guards against heaping upon her more than she can bear or more than she should bear.

Conclusion:

1. These are some of the ways a man demonstrates love to his wife through sacrificial service.
2. Marriage isn’t about seeking self-fulfillment. It is about laboring to make marriage a platform for declaring God’s glory upon the earth.
Wives are to submit to their husbands and husbands are to love their wives sacrificially as they work together for the glory of God.