

Christ's Lordship in Family Relationships, Part 1

Col 3:17-19

Pastor/Elder Phil Layton, GCBC February 14, 2021

BE SURE TO PRESENT GOSPEL SOMEWHERE

Turn to Col 3 and those psalm-based hymns and spiritual songs teach us:

Each deed empowered by sovereign hands, Renew my spirit, help me stand
 ...Let every effort of my life, Display the matchless worth of Christ
 Make me a living sacrifice; Be glorified today¹

That really sets up our text, by His sovereign power, every word and deed to the glory of Christ's matchless name. Col 3:17 *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*
¹⁸ *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.* ¹⁹ *Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.*

PRAY

In God's providence this is our next text on V-Day (different cultural ideas).

In the original context, this text on marriage and family was counter-cultural

- Greco-Roman world, man of the house is considered lord, in charge
- The honor of the family name was most pre-eminent, but v. 17 starts with everything to be in Jesus' name, He alone is Lord of the family
- The pre-eminence of Jesus is the theme of this book, all to His honor
- Ancient household codes often didn't give man duties, never to love
- NT house rules address men equally, to love with highest standards
- It confronts any culture, men like to be harsh, wives don't like v. 17

Men and women don't want to submit to God's design for marriage or male or female. There's long been a "battle of the sexes" but today we have a war *on* the sexes.² It's fighting words to say there's only 2 sexes and 2 genders.

An executive order has redefined sex by orientation or gender you choose.³

Masculinity or femininity in society or in family is attacked in many ways.

Col 3 has timely words on the family in these anti-family times we live in.

These words are counter-cultural. They biblically correct but they're not politically correct. v. 17 tells a man to not be harsh, but today if a man says marriage is for a man and a woman, husband and wife, he's 'harsh' to gays.

Try quoting v. 18 in a secular workplace or campus and see how it goes for you?

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. If a coworker or classmate asks about your weekend, tell them about this verse in God's Word you heard. Not popular or palatable to the worldly! Even mentioning wives and husbands is controversial, so is moms and dads in v. 20-21. To assume fathers in the home like v. 21 offends both feminists and Marxists.

Last year I read to you from the BlackLivesMatter organization what they said about the nuclear family (that means a father and mother with kids):

'We disrupt the Western-prescribed nuclear family structure requirement...' They no longer put their What We Believe page out there on the website, but those who of us do believe in husband-wife-child families are literally considered oppressors (esp. white straight conservative men, I get 4 strikes)

But let's just talk about this year, 2021. Words like father in v. 21 or wife or husband in v. 18 are not considered inclusive enough for our government.

Nancy Pelosi of NorCal last month proposed and it passed in the House of Representatives new rules for the 117th congress for gender-neutral terms:

'strike "father, mother, son, daughter, brother, sister, uncle, aunt...husband, wife...and insert "parent, child, sibling, parent's sibling...spouse..."

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I saw in the UK some want to replace word 'mother' with 'birth person.'

Some would want Col 3:17 to say 'God the parent' (instead of Father)? And apparently Uncle Sam isn't allowed anymore in US Congress, just "parent's sibling Sam"? But Pelosi's Twitter feed still lists her "mother, grandmother ..." If you think it's getting out of hand, say amen (don't say A-women!).

But in all seriousness, it's not ok today, biblical family or sex by biology.

The tolerance police are very intolerant of us who use biblical language for family, female and male. The ministry Focus on the Family had a Twitter accounts locked in recent weeks for not calling a biological man a woman.⁴ The Cancel Culture has it sights on Christian organizations and churches.

Let's not forget 9 years ago Biden and Obama still said marriage was only for a man and woman (gender by birth). But any saying that today will go down faster than a Civil War statue. In 2012 Biden, then Obama 'evolved.'

But truth doesn't evolve. The Creator of marriage sets the rules and roles.

GCBC Statement on Marriage and Sexuality: We teach the term "marriage" has only one meaning and that is marriage sanctioned by God which joins one man and one woman, as created by God, in a single, exclusive union (Matt. 19:4-9), in a public, formal and officially recognized covenant (Mal. 2:14, Prov. 2:17), to picture Christ and His bride, the church (Eph. 5:22- 33). We teach God designed sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other (Heb. 13:4), and that departures from God's design are sinful, including adultery, fornication, homosexual or bisexual or transsexual conduct, incest, pornography, etc. (1 Thess 4:3-8; Matt. 5:28; Rom. 1:24-32; 1 Cor. 5:1, 6:9-10; Lev. 18:1-30; Deut. 22:5). We teach while these and other sins are offensive to God, there is redemption and forgiveness through Jesus Christ for all who confess and forsake their sin to follow Christ, and we teach every forgiven sinner "in Christ" is a "new creation" (1 Cor. 6:9-11; 2 Cor. 5:17; Acts 3:19-20; Pr. 28:13; Ps. 103:3, 12; Col. 2:13-14, 3:5-10).

We teach that God wonderfully and immutably [means this can't be changed] creates each person as male or female, and that these two distinct, complementary sexes/genders together reflect the image and nature of God, and this biblical and biological design is not to be rejected (Gen. 1:26-27)....We teach every person as created in God's image must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity, and we teach that abuse, hate or harassment of individuals is to be repudiated as contrary to Scripture (Jas. 3:9-10, 2:8-9). We teach that the faithful proclamation of the Scripture, including the call to repentance for sin, does not constitute hate speech, or hateful and harassing behavior, but is instead a fundamental part of our loving mission to the world (Lev. 19:17-18; Matt. 28:16-20; Acts 20:27; 2 Cor. 5:11-20; 2 Tim. 4:1-2).¹⁵

What We Teach adds: 'God created man and woman equal (Gen 1:27- 28; Gal 3:28) but different in complementary roles (Gen 2:18; Eph 5:22-33). God created the universe in 6 literal days (Ex 20:11) and created man and woman to glorify and enjoy God as their chief purpose, Isa 43:7...'

As we fulfill our purpose as man and woman to His glory there's joy for us

Big picture: we're equal but different, there's enjoyment in God's design

Outline:

- 1. The Wife's Submission**
- 2. The Husband's Love**
- 3. The Lord's Power**

50+ yrs marriage (my parents, Cross, Myers, Murrays, Wardens, Stillwells) 60+ (Mac & RJ, Norm & Merle, Kemp & Francis, Bill & Betty Hunkapilar)

Russ & Grace Tolliver (Anne Muscarello's mom) 68 as were the Cundalls. There's living testimonies of this text here and a legacy for younger families

DISCUSS how to listen to this passage as widows/widowers, singles, kids

We'll get to kids and parents next time (v. 20-21), this is family series, pt 1.

Ladies first in v. 18 *Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

It's actually the Lord who's first. It's His Lordship in family relationships.

Theme of book: Christ is to have first place in everything (1:18 -> 3:16-17).

Not Christ first in your life, spouse second, kids 3rd, work 4th, church last – He's first place IN everything. 1st place in your marriage, in your family, in your work, in your church. This is about Christ's supremacy in your family.

What biblical submission is not:

Degrading or making inferior

Jaime is superior to me! If you know her and me well you say amen!

That's why I married her! I'm not any better, she's better in many ways, and I needed a better half! I definitely "married up" big time!

Distinct or unique duty of wives

Citizens to govt, Christians to elders, workers to masters, soldiers to those over them, children to parents, Jesus on earth to His parents and taxes to Caesar, Jesus to His Father in heaven, all of us to God

GOSPEL HERE-SUBMIT TO JESUS AS MASTER & SAVIOR

Disobeying God to obey man

‘Submit’ isn’t the word for obedience of children or slaves v. 20, 22.

There are exceptions to submitting to man, never to sin (Acts 5:29).

What if he disobeys God but doesn’t call her to? 1 Peter 3: *wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives...[Peter goes on to describe it as a] respectful ...gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husband...⁶*

That’s true beauty – the world’s substitutes are ugly

Doormat or dictatorship

The disciples submitted to what Jesus said, but also spoke concerns.

Mt 10: loving leadership isn’t lording over, Jesus humbly served, too

Husbands aren’t to make her submit, the wife chooses to submit

Discussion-free patriarchy

Even OT patriarchs discussed (Abraham-Sarah, Isaac-Rebekah, etc.)

David listened to Abigail, Priscilla and Aquila, Mary with Joseph.

v. 16 ‘...teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom...’

What submitting IS (Alistair Begg calls this how to truly be a revolutionary)

Heeding his leading

- Peter uses words like respectful, gentle, won w/out word of nagging
- Eph 5 talks about respecting him as the head (there can’t be 2 heads)

Honoring his decisions

- In word and deed to honor the Lord, with thankfulness (v. 17)
- He’s also to honor her (1 Pet 3:7 ‘showing honor to the woman...’)
- Works best in Rom 12:10 “outdo one another in showing honor”

Helping him in his role (TALK ABOUT GENESIS 2 ‘FIT HELPER’)

Who helps her in her role? Titus 2:3-5 is one key ‘*Older women...teaching what is good...encourage the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, so that the word of God will not be dishonored*’ (NAS)

That’s the key, but a bigger help for her to do v. 18 is when he does v. 19:

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them [literally bitter].

That takes us from #1. the wife's submission to #2. the husband's love

It's been said 'a husband's loving, caring, sacrificial approach to his wife's well-being makes her responsibility of submission easier.'⁷ One author says this 'love is a covenant commitment to one's wife, to be with her, to be for her...to pursue Christlikeness together...not make demands...not overpower ...Instead, the husband who loves like this encourages, empowers, and frees. The more emphasis that is given to love in Col 3:19, the less emphasis will be given to discussions about power and male dominance, leadership, and authority in [v.] 18...The text, then, does not advocate sharing power; it advocates sharing life and love with one another as a new kind of power.'⁸

Love your wives and don't be bitter or harsh. Sounds like 1 Cor 13, love is not 'rude. *It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful...*'

(ESV, NAS 'does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own...')

NIV says love 'is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs...'

NKJV 'thinks no evil...bears all things, believes all things, hopes all...'

3:12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and **beloved**, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

That's what it means to love in context, and to put of bitterness/harshness.

Again this went against ancient culture (man not addressed or told to love).

Aristotle, a writer before Paul, gave his cultural view: 'between the sexes, the male is by nature superior and the female inferior, the male ruler and the female subject.'⁹

'...this principle, of necessity, extends to all mankind.'¹⁰

But Paul wrote 'male and female' are one in Christ (Gal 3:28) and he calls husbands to agape love that puts aside selfishness, harshness and bitterness.

Does v. 19 end with bitterness in attitude, or bitterness in action/harshness?

Closely related, but one comes from the other, most translations focus on where it starts, bitterness in the heart that causes trouble and turmoil and harshness. Same word in Heb 12:15 'See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble...'

IF TIME, TURN TO AND EXPLAIN EPH 4:31-5:2, 4:25-27, 29, 5:25-29

Other helps: just like Titus 2 women, men need men to help us (Prov 27:17)

Biblical counselor Wayne Mack lists practical ways a husband can love:

1. Telling her you love her frequently.
4. Smiling and being cheerful when you come home from work.
6. Taking care of the children ... so that she has free time to do what she wants.
7. Taking her out for dinner or to do some fun thing ...
8. Doing the “fix-it” jobs she wants done around the house.
12. Being willing to talk to her about her concerns and not belittling her for [them]
18. Writing love notes or letters to her.
19. Letting her know you appreciate her and what you appreciate about her ...
36. Asking forgiveness often and saying, “I was wrong and will try to change” [and being ready to catch her when she falls out of her chair if she’s not used to that]
37. Actually changing where and when you should.
38. Sharing your insights, reading, good experiences with her.
42. Being reasonably happy to go shopping with her.
61. Giving her your undivided attention when she wants to talk.
63. Getting up in the middle of the night to take care of the children...¹¹ [or puppy in our case]

There’s many more he gives but I’m convicted enough so I’m moving on...

A wife’s submission and a husband’s love needs #3. The Lord’s power

I fall short but I have to be faithful to preach what God’s Word says and admit again I am nowhere near a perfect husband (and it’s been painfully clear to me already this year). If you think pastors have this mastered, all you need to do to burst that bubble is to talk to Jaime and ask her (actually I’d prefer if you didn’t :). But good news for me and you is there is a perfect Husband we can look to in heaven who loved and gave Himself up for us and will help us. And He never falls short and never fails and is always faithful and fully practiced what He preached and fully keeps His covenant and ... His grace in the gospel gives us the resources to pursue His love.

Wives, look to this Lord as v. 18 calls you, *‘for this is fitting in the Lord.’*

That takes us back to v. 17, do everything in the Lord’s name, and there’s power in Jesus name. When we do it for the Savior, not self, He empowers us and He’s the example for us, and He enables us to love as He loved us.

- In the upper room He loved one who didn’t want washing initially (Peter) and He washed the feet of one who didn’t love Him (Judas)
- Like family He spoke of biblical things at a meal, prayed for/with
- He encouraged His bride (the church) by truths of the Word (Jn 14)
- The Head of the church humbly stooped to be her servant
- He not only models love, He models submission as well
- His gospel grace is available to help men or women who humbly ask

What does it mean to do all in the name of the Lord in v. 17?

I have a set of books of Puritan sermons and one is all on this verse and its many “uses”:

1. It is to do all in his strength and power
2. For his glory
3. To do all by his authority and command
4. To follow his example

Reasons why we must do all in the name of Christ:

1. Because all we have, are, or can do, is of Christ
2. Christ [has the] name above every name

How we may come to do all in the name of the Lord Jesus:

1. Exercise faith upon him, for the supplies of his grace and Spirit
2. Living in close and secret communion with him in his ordinances
3. Exercise your thoughts much upon him, be much taken up in him¹²

CLOSING APPLICATION AND CLOSING SONG: thankfulness in v. 17b

FOOTNOTES:

¹ Sovereign Grace Music, “A Christian’s Daily Prayer.”

² <https://cbmw.org/2021/02/09/gender-neutrality-goes-to-washington/>

³ <https://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-groups-react-to-bidens-lgbt-executive-order.html>

⁴ <https://jimdalysfocusonthefamily.com/twitter-censors-focus-on-the-familys-the-daily-citizen/>

⁵ www.gcb.church

⁶ v. 1-5 NASB.

⁷ Richard R. Melick, *Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*, vol. 32, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991), 313–314.

⁸ Scot McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 349–351.

⁹ Scot McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 349.

¹⁰ Scot McKnight, *The Letter to the Colossians*, ed. Ned B. Stonehouse et al., The New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2018), 347.

¹¹ Adapted from Wayne Mack, *A Homework Manual for Biblical Living*, Volume 2 (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing), p. 42–45.

¹² Henry Wilkinson, in *Puritan Sermons, 1659-1689*, vol. 2, p. 493-99.