

Colossians Ch 3 Vs 18- Ch 4:1

Family Matters

Vs 18-Ch4:1

One man said, “Who can ever forget Winston Churchill’s immortal words: “We shall fight on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills.” It sounds exactly like our family vacation.”

“A minister was speaking to the Sunday school about the things money can’t buy. “It can’t buy laughter and it can’t buy love” he told them. Driving his point home he said, “What would you do if I offered you \$1,000 not to love your mother and father?” Stunned silence ensued. Finally a small voice queried, “How much would you give me not to love my big sister?”

“The man who seldom finds himself in hot water is the one with a wife, several daughters and one bathroom.”

“An exhaustive study shows that no woman has ever shot her husband while he was doing the dishes.”

“To prove his love for her, he swam the deepest river, crossed the widest desert and climbed the highest mountain. She divorced him. He was never home.”

Something is radically wrong with homes today, America now has more broken homes than ever, single parent families are on the increase, over ½ of all mothers are now working outside the home, many with small children. and The “battered child” syndrome continues to increase with 2-4 million cases reported each yr (many which are not) and nearly 5 children dying everyday from abuse in the United States. All of this in the nation which sports on its currency “in God we trust” but as goes home, so goes the society, and the nation.

The 1st institution that God founded upon the earth was that of the home and the breakdown of the home is surely a sign that we’re living in the last days. We read in 2 Tim 3:1-5 “*But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power.*” These are the perilous times of the last days, centuries ago Confucius said, “The strength of a nation is derived from the integrity of its homes.” and I believe he was right concerning that point, one of the greatest things that we can do as individuals is to help build godly Christian homes.

Which brings us back around to our text this morning, the bible is very clear on the order of a home and how we as believers are to function if we're to have a healthy, spiritually flourishing family life. Paul is addressing family matters, and you might say what can he know, that book was written a couple thousand yrs ago, how can it apply today. Listen, times and cultures may change (my friends) but human nature and God's will for the family never does. That's why God's Word transcends time, because it deals with human nature, not your haircuts or cultural trends, but the heart of man. Now, to keep us flowing with in the context last week we examined the characteristics of Christ, what it meant to be clothed with Christ, to put on Christ.

We spoke of tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering. We spoke of the necessity of forgiveness even as Christ has forgiven you and that above and beyond all of those things the most essential part of the Christian life is that we be robbed in that Christ-like agape' love of God, because apart from love those other things become legalism, and love fulfills them all. Now, as the body of Christ we've been called to peace and unity, we're to let the Word of Christ dwell in us and among us richly and *everything* we do, in word or deed, we're to do in the name of the Lord Jesus. and So with these concepts and practicalities in the forefronts of our minds, Paul begins now to address where these things ought to be put into practice 1st. It's at best hypocritical to treat mere acquaintances with more respect, mercy, kindness and love, than we do our own family. Yet as I've said before so often where we need to be setting our standards, is where we choose to set them aside, how is the tender mercy of God, and the kindness and humility of Christ displayed in the family unit?

Vs18

Now again we spent considerable time on the subject of the Christ centered family when we went through Ephesians so if some of these things sound familiar it's because Col and Eph correlate very closely together. But when I say the word "submit" in the biblical sense of the word, what, or, who, is the 1st person who comes to your mind. Most generally we think of the wives and again with some husbands the extent of their knowledge of the Word seems to begin and end with this one vs "*Wives, submit to your husbands!*" But the biblical principal of submission in no way is limited to or finalized in wives. and To apply the idea of submission only to wives is to grossly error in your understanding of scripture. The bible calls every single believer with out exception to a life of submission, in manifold levels and degrees. It's not a woman/wife thing, it's a godly Christian thing, men, women, children, young and old alike married, or single; we read in James 4:7 (and this is the crux of it all, all other areas of submission pivot around this *one*).

If this is worked out in your life, every other arena of submission will fall in line, if it's not, it's likely that none of the others will in the fullness of their intention. It says, "*Therefore submit to God.*" This applies to every single believer with out exception; you and I are to submit ourselves completely and fully to God in every arena of life both relationally and personally. Rom 13:1 also applies to all believers, "*Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*"

Pay your taxes and follow the rules, don't break the law, that's your duty as a believer, that's one way in which you submit to and honor God. 1 Peter 2:13-16 says, "*submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men-- as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.*"

Peter also gives us 2 other areas of submission that apply to all of us to some degree or another, in 1 Peter 5:5 "*Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."* So those who are younger are to be respectful and submissive to those who are older, and in fact we're all to be submissive and respectful to one another, as Paul would say, in honor, giving preference to one another. But notice the relationship between submission and humility, Peter says be submissive to one another and be "Clothed with humility" for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Pride enters in to the arena of non-submissiveness. 1 more Heb 13:17 "*Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account.*" Referring of course to church leadership, those in spiritual authority over us.

So as we approach this 1st vs in our text let's be careful not to cast the responsibility to submit upon the wives alone, in fact the husband and the wife are to submit one to the other, now their submission to each other is demonstrated in varying ways, but submission is a very real part of all of our lives.

Now, when we speak of the word "submit" what do we mean by that? Well, one thing we don't mean is "obey" as in vs 20 where we read that children are to obey their parents. Wives don't take on a role in the marriage like another child whom you direct and correct and command as if they're your daughter. Nor does she have any equivalence to greater or lesser as far as value is concerned.

As we've read before, that in Christ is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free, male or female, we're all one, we're all co-equals in Christ. Jesus submitted His will to the Father, but was in no way lesser in His being or value. But God is a God of order; everything is to be done decently and in order. and Even as in the Church God holds a single individual (the pastor) ultimately accountable for the ministry, He holds one individual (the husband) ultimately accountable for the family. This is his role, to oversee his family and if he's to do this appropriately there has to be some order.

According to the Thayer's Greek Lexicon this word "submit" is, "A Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader." In non-military use, it was "a *voluntary* attitude of giving in, cooperating, and assuming responsibility." David Guzik makes this comment, "Submission does not mean inferiority. Submission does not mean silence. Submission means "sub-mission." There is a mission for your marriage, and that mission is obeying and glorifying God. The wife says, "I'm going to put myself under that *mission*. That *mission* is more important than my individual desires. I'm not putting myself below my husband, I'm putting myself below the *mission* God has for our marriage, for my life."

I think that captures a pretty good idea of what's referred to as "submission" it's placing ourselves in subjection to God mission for our lives. Which for the wife, is to be a helpmate to her husband, not catering to his every whim. But complimenting and being of benefit to his life, spiritually and otherwise, if he lacks in proper spiritual leadership, encourage him in that role, ask him to pray with you, ask him to read the bible to you or you and the kids, even if it's just a chapter. Be a helpmate, not a hindrance, let him know that you're in his corner and trust his leadership, and even if he makes a wrong move, you're still behind him.

Now that doesn't mean that you don't discuss every detail of decisions made together. Absolutely you should, be it in your finances, your spiritual or emotional frailties, your business or family matters, talk things over. and If you're wife has insight that's more keen and understanding than yours, then humble yourself and take that action. But if you have a disagreement and a decision has to be made, then the husband will give an account before God on the matter so out of respect for his responsibility and accountability before God, you take his path. Even if it's the wrong one, and don't do the whole, "I told you so" bit when it backfires. That won't help matters, simply encourage him, let him know you're praying for him and you're still behind him.

Now I want you to notice ladies that it says, "submit to *your own husbands*." This is not a general male to female thing, nor is it a boyfriend girlfriend arrangement; this is exclusive to a husband/wife relationship. and It's "as is fitting in the Lord" it doesn't apply if your husband is trying to subject you to ungodly behavior or activities. If his decisions go against the grain of godliness you're by no means bound to submit to such things, you're to obey God 1st and submit to Him, God doesn't ask you to submit yourself to ungodliness. Now Paul moves on to husbands.

Vs19

So the 1st thing that we want to take note of is that the aspect of the wife submitting herself to her husband is found with in the context of a loving husband. Not a violent or godless man, now in Eph this principal is expounded on a bit more where Paul defines the type of love he's speaking of (being the sacrificial agape love of God) when he says there, Eph 5:25-27 *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."* So how did Christ love the church? Sacrificially, He gave Himself whole-heartedly for the church, sanctifyingly, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of the water by the word. It was a nurturing love, and it was a faithful and unbreakable love. Now the question was never whether or not the bride of Christ deserved such love, or merited that type of love, because the answer is a resounding no!

We don't deserve such unconditional love, but He gave it to us regardless of what we deserved. and Even so husbands (and future husbands,) you're love for your wife is to mimic that of Christ's love for the church. You're to love her sacrificially, supremely (under God that is), sanctifyingly, you're to tend to her spiritual needs, making sure she gets time in the Word of God personally and publicly in a corporate setting, you're to nurture her, and care for her, and she needs the assurance that your love for her is faithful, and unbreakable. Not because of who she is or what she deserves or what she does or doesn't do for you, you're love isn't to be a self serving love, it's to be a selfless love, and apart from the power of God in your life, you can't fulfill your God given role to your wife and your family. These are the God given responsibilities to you as a husband, things you are to do.

We see here a command of something we're not to do. "Do not be bitter toward them" or you might understand it, "don't irritate or exasperate them" but rather provide loving leadership. A root of bitterness in the home can poison a marriage relationship and give the enemy a foothold, you see a husband who loves his wife won't be acting bitterly or harshly towards her, he won't be throwing his weight around in the home. How many times has Christ been harsh with you, or thrown His weight around with you?

1 Cor 13:4-5 tells us that, *"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs."* Or thinks no evil, and even as Christ has our best interest in mind as the church even so, the husband should have the best interest (not of himself) but of his wife in mind. You see, I have no problem submitting to Christ because I know He loves me, I know He's not a taskmaster or a slave driver, but He has my best interest in His heart and mind at all times. and That love that He has for me has cast out all my fear of His direction, and correction, and protection in my life. Husbands it's exactly the same for us in our relationship to our wives, if she's convinced of your love for her, she won't question your leadership, she knows that you'll seek the very best for her, and have no intentions of harming, or allowing harm to come to her in anyway.

So the husband's love for his wife is seen in his sacrifice for her, placing her needs above his own, not doing things to degrade or humiliate her. and A Wife's love for her husband is seen in her submission to his loving leadership, and as Wiersbe states, "Where there are sacrifice and submission, in an atmosphere of love, you will find a happy home."

God only gave two rules for a successful marriage, "Wives, submit to your husbands" "Husbands, love your wives." It's that simple, yet that complicated huh? Well, now that we've dealt with the husband and the wife, or the parents, Paul moves on to the children, and the order is significant because unless the relationship between the 1st 2 are correct, then how can this relationship be right? But how are the characteristics of the new man displayed in the lives of children, what's the effect of the word of Christ dwelling richly in *their* lives.

Vs 20

Now understand young people that this word "children" is simply a general term for children and is not limited to a specific age group. It refers to any child still living in the home and under parental guidance. Now never are we to be disrespectful to our parents, but if you're under the roof of your parents, under their direct care and provision, then it doesn't matter how old you are, this applies to you. and The present tense of "be obedient" demands a continuous obedience. This is a principal that's taught repeatedly in the scriptures, it's 1 of the 10 commandments, "Honor your father and your mother." and Dishonoring your parents, striking them or cursing them (in the OT) was punishable by death. Prov 6:20-21 *"My son, keep your father's command, And do not forsake the law of your mother. Bind them continually upon your heart; Tie them around your neck."*

A child's obedience can be a testimony of godliness, but disobedience marks the ungodly, and we mentioned that in the beginning in 2 Tim 3:2 and again in Rom 1:30 Paul lumps dishonoring our parents right in there with all of those other malicious things like, *"backbiters, haters of God, violent, proud, boasters, inventors of evil things."* Again the only time there is an exception in any of our calls to submission is when we're called on to violate God's Word, or His precepts. If your folks try to get you to deliver a dime bag for them, or steal something or do something that clearly goes against the grain of God's Word, then you are to honor God 1st.

Jesus was very clear regarding the fact that there would be times that a child's obedience to Him would have to supercede their obedience to their parents. Luke 12:51-53 *"Do you suppose that I came to give peace on earth? I tell you, not at all, but rather division. For from now on five in one house will be divided: three against two, and two against three. Father will be divided against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law."*

So the context of submission always finds itself with in the confines of biblical standards, morals, and ethics, and if at anytime we're called upon to violate biblical standards then we're to submit to God 1st, and not to the individual no matter what the cause or who it is. The presupposition here is that the child is under the roof of God fearing, God loving parents, parents who seek the Lord and desire to please Him.

John H. Starkey was a violent British criminal. He murdered his wife, was convicted for the crime and executed. The officials asked General William Booth, (the founder of the Salvation Army) to conduct Starkey's funeral. Of course the crowd that he faced was as ugly and mean a crowd as he'd ever seen in his life, but his 1st words arrested them: "John H. Starkey never had a praying mother!"

Children have the right to have godly parents and a godly upbringing, and young people, your obedience to your parents is an aspect of your worship to the Lord, and it's well pleasing to Him. Even if it's something you don't agree with but scripturally there's no violation, as various fads come and go kids often come up to me and want to know if it's sin to get an earring, or do something funky with their hair, or get a tattoo. None of which are, but one of the 1st things I ask them is, what do your parents say about it, "Well, they don't want me to do it." "Then you can't do it." You're to honor your father and your mother, when you're out on your own then you can consider other options, (barring you stay with in the confines of scripture) if you're under their care, you do what they say, and that's it. Now,

Vs21

Again, children have the right to a godly up bringing; you can't hardly train up a child in the way he should go, if you've never gone there yourself. The story is told of a man on a hiking expedition with his son trailing along behind him and the boy hollers out, "Dad, be sure to take the right path, I'm coming up right behind you!"

Such is true for you and me, our children often times take the very path that we do, so set the standards. Don't provoke your children, and though this implies fathers, it could also be translated "parent" neither parent is to provoke, or stimulate your child to anger, lest they become discouraged and lose heart. We got C's and D's in class, but will accept nothing less than A's and B's from them, we always want our children to do better than we did, and many times we don't give them grace to do their best and be themselves, and so we place unrealistic expectations on them, and frustrate them. Nothing is good enough, or we want to relive our lives through them, we're over protective, or to the other extreme there's a lack of discipline. All of these things can set our children off, frustrate them and provoke them to anger, and they lose heart, just give up. We're to encourage our children, don't place unrealistic expectations on them, trust them, yet guide them lovingly, which includes discipline. We're to train them up in godliness, teach them the principals and precepts of God's Word.

Vs 22

We may comment more on these vs a bit next week, but for times sake we'd liken these vs to the Employer/Employee relationship. and Much like the parent/child relationship in the respect of obedience, if they require something of us that doesn't violate the scriptures we're to do it. and We're not just to look busy when the boss is around, with eyeservice, but in sincerity of heart fearing the Lord.

Vs 23-24

Underline those last words, "You serve the Lord Christ" I'd sum up these vs with the 1st word of vs 22 with these last words of vs 24, "Bondservants, (or Employees) you serve the Lord Christ" and He sees your effort and your diligence, so that even if your earthly employer doesn't compensate you adequately for what you do, God's going to make up for that in the eternal, you just serve in your area of employment with diligence as to the Lord.

Vs25- Ch4:1

A Word to Employers, treat your employees right, and compensate them adequately for the work they do, give them a fair wage, because God sees it all, and He knows your heart.

That's something we all need to be reminded of, God is searching our hearts. and It could be that you're here this morning and as God is looking to your heart, He finds there a void and today God has brought you here for the sole purpose of meeting Him and coming to know Him in a personal way. and God would have you to know that He loves you so much that He gave His only begotten Son, and Jesus laid down His life for you upon the cross, shedding His blood for your sin as payment in full. He paid your penalty, and if you'll only just believe upon Him God will forgive you for everything you've ever done, and these principals of peace, tender mercy, kindness and compassion can become a reality to you today, and God can begin a healing in your life, or in your family, don't resist the calling of God to Salvation.