

The Christian Home - Part 2  
**WIVES AND HUSBANDS**  
Colossians 3:18-19

**Intro:** In the Christian life our first responsibility is as individuals. Paul addressed this letter, not to every person in Colosse, but “to the saints and faithful brethren which are at Colosse” (Col. 1:2). And in the rest of his introduction in this letter he made it even clearer that his concern was for all who had trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior. And they had demonstrated the reality of their faith in Christ by their love for each other, and by the fact that they were looking forward to the hope that they had a believer in “the hope which is laid up for you in heaven. As I have said many times during the time we have given to this epistle, Paul at this point in his ministry when he was a prisoner in Rome, had never been to Rome. But he had been burdened by the Holy Spirit to write to them briefly instructing them in the doctrines of the faith, and then exhorting them to live as he had briefly described in the first seventeen verses of chapter 3.

Now we all know that we were born individually. Our mother may have had twins, or triplets, but birth for all of us has been an individual matter. And after we were born, we all have grown individually. We develop individually. Now there is a close parallel in salvation. Our spiritual birth has been a personal, individual experience, and so has our growth physically. When Peter wrote in his first epistle, “As newborn babes desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby” (1 Peter 2:2), he was pointing out what every Christian needs to do. And at the very end of his second epistle (and he only wrote two epistles) he said this:

18 But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ (2 Peter 3:18).

We are born into the family of God, and then we need to grow. This is the message of all of the epistles of the NT. As long as we are on this earth, we will need to be growing in our understanding of the Bible, and growing in the way we live each day obeying the Word of God.

Now not every person who receives Christ as Savior, and is born again, has been told this very basic fact. That is why they need to read the Bible and to attend a church where they are going to be taught what is in the Bible. I still need to grow, and you do too. God saved us to make us like the Lord Jesus Christ, and He has given us the Holy Spirit to dwell

## Colossians #23 (2)

permanently in us to accomplish that purpose. But we have responsibilities in this. We read the Bible to learn what God wants us to know, and we seek His grace and blessing to be the kind of people that he wants us to be, and to live the way that he wants us to live. This is very simple, and very basic truth, that I hope all of us understand. We grow by reading God's Word. We grow by memorizing God's Word, and by meditating on God's Word. And the Lord helps us as we look to Him in prayer to help us to understand His Word, and then to obey it.

God made us male and female. We all know that Adam and Eve were the first human beings. He made Adam first, and then made Eve because he needed a wife. They had children, and it has been God's plan from the very beginning that a husband and wife have children, and that their children grow up and have children, and this is the way that God has ordained that the world be populated.

Adam and Eve were created without sin. God placed them in a perfect environment with the one prohibition that they were not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. But Satan, a fallen angel, who had already sinned against God, came to Eve in the Garden, tempted her to eat the fruit which God had forbidden her to eat. Then she gave it to her husband, and he ate it. At that point sin entered into the world. All of creation was affected, and man became a sinner by nature, under the sentence of physical death, spiritual death, which meant alienation from God, and eternal death which meant hell which had already been prepared for the Devil and his angels.

At this point Adam and Eve had no children. But when they were put out of the Garden of Eden, they had children, two sons, and the older son killed the younger son because he was jealous over his younger brother's acceptance with God through his sacrifice, but Cain's was rejected. Starting with Cain, every child born into this world has been a sinner by nature. We live in a fallen world where sin is everyone's main problem. And throughout human history, we have seen, and continue to see, the effects of sin in personal lives, family life, and national life throughout the whole world generation after generation.

The situation would have been absolutely hopeless if it had not been for the mercy and grace of God. Paul briefly surveyed the Gospel in Colossians, chapter 1. God sent His Son into the world to die as a Substitute for sinners. He had a human mother, but no human father. He was

## Colossians #23 (3)

conceived by the Holy Spirit. God charged His Son with the sins of all who would ever be saved. He died taking their penalty on Himself, so that all who trust in Him and His work on the Cross, would be born again, forgiven of their sins, and brought into the family of God. And throughout human history people who have believed the Gospel, the good news about Christ and His death and resurrection, have been born of God, and made new creatures in Christ. But all of them, or all of us, have had to learn to live in a new way, and that life is described for us in the Bible, a life that is pleasing to God.

Christians get married, and have children, and so establish Christian homes. Christians are not supposed to marry those who are not Christians. But sometimes they do. Christians are not perfect yet, and so you will never find a perfect home. But the more a husband and wife seek to live lives that are pleasing to God, not trusting in themselves but in trusting God, the Christian home comes the closest to be what God originally intended for the home to be.

Now we have seen just in this short book of Colossians that Paul was addressing Christians in Colosse, people who had realized their sinful condition, had trusted Christ to save them from the penalty of their sins, and who were now concerned about living lives to please God. Obviously there were people who had already married before they were saved, but after they were saved they knew that not only did their personal lives need to be changed, but so did their lives as husbands and wives. That is why Paul reviewed for them the Gospel and explained what God had done for them through the death of Christ. But then he told them briefly how they should be living. He did this, as I have said in the first 17 verses of chapter 3.

Assuming that they then understood what a Christian is, and how a Christian should live, then the Apostle Paul addressed himself to the Christian home. And, as you can see, he started with the parents, mentioning the wife first, and then the husband. You follow in your Bible as I read Colossians 3:18 and 19. (Read.)

Then he went on to children and fathers, but we will save that for next Sunday, the Lord willing. But let us think of wives and husbands for the rest of our time this morning.

One thing you notice is how brief Paul's instructions were to them. One

statement for the wives, and one statement for the husbands. Now Paul was not always that brief. For example, if you turn to Paul's epistle to the Ephesians, you will see that he mentioned wives and husbands first, and in that order, but there are three verses for the wives, but nine verses for the husbands! And it is very likely that the Colossian parents had access to Ephesian letter because it seems that the Ephesian letter was circulated to several churches, and that the Colossian church was probably one of them. If we knew the situation in both churches, we would be in a better position to understand why there was this difference between the two epistles, a difference not in the emphasis, but in the space devoted to each.

I have searched in vain among the commentaries that I have on Colossians to learn what they have to say as to why in each of the three classifications that we have here (wives and husbands, children and father, servants and masters) the one with the least authority is mentioned first. Many professing Christians try to link this with Paul's past life as a Jewish rabbi. But that is actually an attack on the inspiration of the Word of God. We need to approach every part of Scripture remembering 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17, and Peter's statement in 2 Peter 1:21 to the effect that no Scripture is of human origin, but that "men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Spirit." And so we must take Scripture as it is, and believe that that is the way God intended for it to be. Life for women in the heathen world was anything but that which was pleasing to God, nor was it the best for women. Women, Christian women, are given no greater place, no greater honor, than they are given in the Word of God. And the same goes for children, and for servants. "Servants" in this passage are bond-servants. We have to agree, if we believe that the Bible is the Word of God, that God's will is always best, and that it always leads to the greatest happiness in life. So that when Paul spoke of wives and husbands, he was speaking of Christian wives and Christian husbands. When he spoke of children and their fathers, he was speaking of Christian children and Christian fathers. But this would apply to children who may not have gotten to the age where they really understood the Gospel. The same can be said about servants and masters where both are Christians. We get ourselves into trouble when we reject the Word of God in preference for our own way, or society's way.

A Christian wife is to submit to her husband. That is her primary responsibility. She places herself under his authority. This is her overall position as a wife. This is the ground she walks on. She believes that God

has brought them together, and her contribution to making their home what God intends for it to be. She believes that the husband is the head of the wife, and that she was made for him, and she is determined to live her life for him, as it is proper for a Christian wife to do. After all, the crowning glory of all Christians, is the humility, first to God, and then to each other. We are all to have the mind of Christ

But the Lord does not ask a wife to submit herself to someone who will treat her as a slave, but to one who loves her. And Ephesians 5:25 makes it even more specific: “as Christ loved the church, and gave Himself for it.” That is a standard that no husband has ever been able to meet perfectly, and all of the time. But it is to be a standard that he is always seeking to attain. A Christian husband is to love all other Christians. That is one mark of all true Christians. But the one he is to love more than all others, and to love as Christ loved the church, is his wife. And the question that every Christian husband needs to be doing is to make a life-long study of the love of Christ for the church so that he will know the standard by which he is to measure his love for his wife. Obviously no husband can do this “on his own.” It has to be the result of the work of God in his own heart.

Now instead of passing judgment on the Word of God, every wife and every husband needs to accept the Word as their only rule of life. depending upon the Lord to crown their efforts with his blessing. A husband who has a wife who refuses to be submissive to him, has a major problem on his hands. God’s will for him does not change because of his wife’s disobedience. Likewise, a husband’s failure to love His wife does not release her from the expressed will of God for all wives. In fact, continued obedience to the Lord on the part of either partner, will often be what the Lord uses to bring the other to see His faults, and to change.

After all, with all of the marital problems that exist even in Christian families, isn’t it time for us to come back to Scripture to do things God’s way?

Paul gives one warning to husbands here in Colossians: “And be not bitter against them.” Bitterness is resentment and anger which is allowed to remain unchecked the heart. And it has a tendency to grow and to get stronger. It not only affects us, but it has a tendency to spread and to affect others.

**Concl:** This is not all that can be said about marriage – about husbands and wives, but this is basic. It is mentioned first because what we are at home, is what we are. Our relationship with each other as husbands and wives, is basic to our relationship with our children, basic to our relationship to our church, to our work, to every detail of our lives. But basic even to our relationship with each other as husbands and wives, is our relationship with God and Christ and the Holy Spirit. So that when we run into trouble with our spouses, we need to look first at our relationship with the Lord. All of these things are tied in with each other. And so when we run into trouble, as all of us have, and as all of us will again, we need to make sure that we are walking with the Lord in good fellowship, and that we are fulfilling whatever the Word of God teaches about our responsibilities toward those with whom things are not right. God's ways are always different from our ways, but God's ways are as much better than our ways as the heavens are high about the earth.