



*18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

*19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.*

*20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.*

*21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

*22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.*

As we have discovered, the Book of Colossians is written for Christians. It has many instructions for believers on how to live out the Christian life. He's telling us to live it out, and he's telling us how to live it out. As we walk in Christ, we will become more Christ-like. And we've learned that we can only do this successfully by walking "in Christ" through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Paul let us know that legalism doesn't do it. There is no power in rule-keeping. Hyper-Spiritualism isn't what is needed either. That's when people try to "out spiritualize" each other by talking about visions, dreams, and special knowledge they might claim to have (that YOU DON'T HAVE). He's telling the Church in Colossae how to WALK THE WALK AND HOW TO WALK THE TALK.

In the chapter, we have learned that God transforms us as we understand our identity in Christ and as we learn to walk in it. It requires action on our part. There was a list of at least fourteen imperatives that we studied on Sunday, and they commanded us to do certain things and not do certain things. That's the faith walk. The chapter began with Paul encouraging us to move our eyes from this world's things and put them on heavenly things. Only through Jesus working in and through us are we empowered to live this Christian life. Paul is now going to

speak about the relationships that we have. Specifically, he's talking about the relationship between husbands and wives in a Christian home. He's talking about the father's interaction with his children. And he's talking about the relationship we have with those we work for out in the workplace.

We continue to see the disintegration of the family in this country. We see people estranged from their parents and their family. Paul tells us exactly how Christian marriage is to operate, and in the flesh, it is impossible for the husband and the wife.

***18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.***

Modern society hates the word "submit", but God's formula for a Christian marriage commands the wife to "submit" to her husband. What exactly does that mean? Let's look at the Greek.

18 αΑι1 γυναῖκες2, b→ ὑποτάσσεσθε3 → → τοῖς4 ἀνδράσιν5, ὡς6 → ἀνῆκεν7 ἐν8 → κυρίῳ9.

That third word ὑποτάσσεσθε3, *Hypotasthese* – comes from an ancient Greek military term meaning "to arrange [troop divisions] in a military fashion under the command of a leader".<sup>[1]</sup> That means that a wife is to "come in under a leader" in battle. Life is a battle, and this reminds me that the husband is the chief protector and defender of the wife and the entire family.

A Christian wife wilfully subordinates/surrenders herself to the leadership of her husband. I realize that some husbands are nincompoops, but wives are commanded to have the kind of respect toward their husbands that is due to the position that he's been given by God. When a woman responds with the proper respect, she is honoring the Lord. Secular society is at war with this, and of course, there are some big qualifiers in this: abusive husbands, etc. Valid submission doesn't put the woman down. Jesus came to earth to submit to the Father, but in doing so, He didn't assert His rights of Divinity and laid them aside [he emptied Himself] to be a bondservant.

Submission doesn't make someone less equal; instead it defers to another.

*5 Have this same attitude in yourselves which was in Christ Jesus [look to Him as your example in selfless humility], 6 who, although He existed in the form and unchanging essence of God [as One with Him, possessing the fullness of all the*

divine attributes—the entire nature of deity], did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped or asserted [as if He did not already possess it, or was afraid of losing it]; 7 but emptied Himself [without renouncing or diminishing His deity, but only temporarily giving up the outward expression of divine equality and His rightful dignity] by assuming the form of a bondservant, and being made in the likeness of men [He became completely human but was without sin, being fully God and fully man]. (Philippians 2:5-7 Amplified Bible)

Wives shouldn't consider their equality as a right to demand. This is a willful act. Men have **NO PLACE TO TELL THEIR WIVES THAT THEY MUST SUBMIT**. She does it as an act of obedience to God. She respects him for the position of headship that God has ordained for him. The measuring stick for the woman's degree of respect for her husband is Jesus. That's the same measuring stick for the husband.

*19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.*

19 αοι1 ἄνδρες2, ἀγαπᾶτε3 → τὰς4 γυναῖκας5 καὶ6 ► 8 μὴ7 → πικραίνεσθε8 πρὸς9 αὐτάς10.

*25 Husbands, love [AGAPE – love her expecting nothing back] your wives [seek the highest good for her and surround her with a caring, unselfish love], just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, (Ephesians 5:25 Amplified)*

We are talking in these two verses about "love that never quits." It is love that is there even when a husband doesn't "like" his wife. It is the kind of love that is always there even if the husband says, "I no longer love her." Love is something you do. It is not something you feel. A wife cannot submit/respect her husband, and a husband can't love his wife how he should WITHOUT THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Husbands are commanded to love an imperfect person as well, and a husband must love his wife sacrificially. That's how Christ loved us and died for us. Otherwise, a woman will be used and abused by her husband. A husband can't possibly abuse his wife if he is walking in obedience to God's Word. The love of a husband is marked by the willingness of a man to put his wife first and to "lay down his life for her". Wow! That's tough. I have to lay down my wants and desires in deference to her, considering her needs. Her likes and dislikes become

first before my own. That's hard for any of us. It can only happen through the power of the Holy Spirit.

If a man loves his wife, she should never suffer from her choice to submit to him. We men are called to be unselfish in our love for our wives. I often didn't deserve my wife's respect, but she respected me anyway. God is not talking about a husband romantically loving his wife. God is talking about a love that is a *chesed* kind of love and an *agape* kind of love. It is an unselfish love that never quits.

Sandy's notes:

This is the ideal for a husband and wife, as the Pulpit Commentary states: "*The husband should be the ever-vigilant and self-denying protector, guardian, deliverer, of his family, though his saving power can never come near the high level of Christ's. A husband reckless of these obligations virtually ceases to have any claim on the subjection of the wife and the family.*" Husbands are expected to treat their wives as Christ treats the church—to protect, build up, and provide for her with selfless love. Into such a family are born children that honor their parents:

***20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.***

***Tekna*** [children who are still in their parents' household and under their authority]. This isn't talking about adult children. This is God instructing adults to teach their children obedience and correct conduct.

***21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.***

This implies that dads can provoke their children to anger quite easily. One way we can do this is by being too harsh on our kids. A dad who is always criticizing destroys his kids to anger and frustration and brings them to wrath. Also, dads who do not know how to apologize provoke their children to anger. A father who never tells his kids that he loves them pushes them to wrath and discourages them.

***22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,***

Work hard for your boss/company, giving them a day's work for a day's wage. You are not paid to talk on the phone, do your chores, or take care of your own business while you're on the company's time. Please don't do it. Do all of your work knowing that you work for the Lord. As Pastor Larry says, "Your job location is just the 'field of harvest' where God has you for a while."

*24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.*

The attitudes you have in your family and in your workplace will have eternal consequences.

[1] Strong, J. (1995). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Woodside Bible Fellowship.