

# Colossians 3:18-19

## Christ-Centered Marriage

Image Church // Colossians #8

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### Introduction

Well good morning Image family, I hope you're doing well! If you have your bibles go ahead and turn to **Colossians 3**... We got a lot to cover today so we need to Jump in. **BUT NEW KIDS CLASS IS UP/RUNNING!**

Here's where we're at, Paul's talking about what it means to live in light of the new identity that you have received...

**That our identity in Jesus impacts our activity...**

- There are two ways this plays out... There's a **putting off, or putting to death** our old identity... *Who we used to be...*
- And there's **putting on, or walking in** our new identity that Christ has given us in Him!

And then Paul says this in **Colossians 3:17**: **And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

And what Paul's going to do next is continue to get practical here by speaking to how this plays out in specific everyday relationships...

\*Remember Paul's goal here is a vibrant healthy Christian community where Christ impacts everything and in turn puts Christ on display.

And he's going to start with the **God-given roles** within a marriage...

**Not married**, you need to listen in case you do get married, but also so you can hold those accountable that are married... Keep in mind Paul was single and He's the one writing this...

### Colossians 3:18-25

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

*Real quick before we jump into what this means, we're going to look at what it does not mean and this is important...*

- This is not talking about relationships between men and women **outside** of a married relationship...
- Not talking about engaged couples...

**There's an important part here that helps us understand other things that this passage is not talking about...**

It is the last part: **As fitting to the Lord...** *This means there are some ways that are not fitting to the Lord:*

- Things like **verbal abuse, and physical abuse**... You do not submit to either of those things...
- This verse would confront any form of dictatorship within the home- because **that's not fitting to the Lord**...
- It is not talking about being silent, having no voice, it doesn't mean you're dominated, or your expected to give unconditional obedience...
- This does not mean that you submit when it comes to things that go against God's word...
- Last thing here, this verse is also not talking about the bedroom... and that's a whole other sermon

**Ok, so what's this talking about and what does it look like?!?**

The first thing is this... who's this verse written to?!? **WIVES**... let's say it together, who was this verse written to?!? **WIVES**...

So, husbands, this verse isn't for you... and **it wasn't written for you to use to hold up over your wife's head**... If that were the purpose then you would have been addressed in it, but you're not, so get up out your wife's verse!!! *You got your verse coming in a minute...*

Ok let me start with this:

## **Wives, do not confuse your role in marriage with your worth<sup>1</sup>...**

- Just because your **role** may be different from that of your husband, **does not mean** that your **value** or **worth** is different...
- Wives hear me, you are not less than your husband...
- Man and women created equal- this is marriage roles...
- **Role** and **equality** are not synonymous... They're not the same...

Let me show you what I mean with the best example there is...

- **Jesus**... Everything it means to be God, Jesus was... Paul made that clear in **Colossians 1**... And yet, Jesus voluntarily submitted Himself to the Father...
- **Did that diminish Him?** Did it make Him inferior? Did that dilute His power, or make Him any less God? **Absolutely not!!**

One pastor said: ***"If it was not below Jesus to voluntarily submit to another to whom he was equal, it's not below you, either."***<sup>2</sup>

So, to view **submission** as an attack on your value, worth, or equality, is to disregard the very work of Jesus and everything that Colossians is talking about... Remember, he came, and lived, and died, to give you a new identity in Him... ***Your role doesn't define you, Jesus does!***

Ok so what is submission?

**Submission is this: the permission to lead**

***Which means this wives:***

**Submission isn't a husband's demand of you, it's a gospel response from you.**

The best **example**<sup>3</sup> to help show you what this looks like is dancing...

- *Clam down baptists...*
- I was in the beach music Shag Club at UNC... ***funny***
- ***Learned a lot about dancing and life...***

<sup>1</sup> Idea from Ed Gravely. Lesson 6.

<sup>2</sup> JD Greear. Sermon, *One Simple Question*, Eph. 5:21. First Love. April 14, 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Dance analogy is credited to JD Greear. Explanation and wording is my own..

And here's how dancing works you have 2 people facing one another teamed up together with the same goal... However, ***each of them play different roles***...

They can't do the exact same movement at the same time... *Then it is no longer a dance, it's hungry hippo with your feet...*

For the dance to work, the woman has to submit to the **lead role of the man**...

And the result, when the man leads the way that the man is called to lead, *I'll get to that in a minute*, it is a beautiful dance that's unified and in rhythm with the music...

- You say *what if my husband can't dance... I can't help you there!*

Ok let's get more practical, ***what does this look like played out in real life***...

**Example:** **Tim Keller** explains it personally like this: They were praying about going to NYC and He felt yes; she no. They had to make a decision; to not make one would be, functionally, to not make one. He conceded: "OK, if you don't want to go, we won't go." Kathy: No, you are letting me make the decision, you're not going to put this on me. You have to make the decision and bear the responsibility...

***Kathy Keller says*** submission means that in matters of disagreement, *I get a vote, Tim gets a vote, in the end Tim bears the responsibility of the decision*...<sup>4</sup>

***Tony Evans:*** *God's way of telling the wife to duck, so he can punch the man!*

**Submission is the permission to lead**

<sup>4</sup> Example credit Ibid.

**And note:** it's not permission to lead when you agree, or feel like he's making the right decision, that's not submission, that's not giving him permission to lead, that's a one sided agreement...<sup>5</sup>

Now, often, it may not look like Tim and Kathy's example... *This is where examples are hard* here because it's not always formulaic... The best way to think through this is that it's more of a **disposition of trust and willful openness toward your husband to faithfully lead**... Paul says in **Eph. 5:24** wives are to submit *in everything*... **This points to a disposition of trust and openness toward your husband to lead**...

- Again Jesus is our model for this through His faithful submission to the Father...

**Example:** Planting Image Church in ATL/School Choice: **Not cut/dry!**

There's a constant cycle in our marriage where Ashley shares her insight and her take on things, but then hands it over to me and says you make the decision that's best for the family and most faithful to our convictions, I trust you... There's a lean in...

**BTW:** You can give permission to lead while still voicing your thoughts, perspective and desires... That actually helps equip your husband to lead! Ashley is a gift here for me!!

**Wives, are you encouraging and equipping your husband to lead?**

*You say: well my husband wont lead, he's not a leader*... Here's an important principal before we look out it's important we always look in first... Start with you then work out...

**It's important to ask if you've contributed to an environment where your husband doesn't have permission to lead?**

*You say i don't know?* Well, let me hold up an area that the bible presses in on that I believe can contribute to this... 5 times<sup>6</sup> in the book of Proverbs the bible speaks to a **nagging or quarrelsome** wife...*Let me define*...

**Nagging/quarrelsome** is: being contentious (likely to cause an argument), bitter, stirs up controversies...

- What if this is my husband?!?! We'll get to him in a min...

Wives what you need to see is that being quarrelsome, bitter and continuous with your husband doesnt **fan the flame of your relationship and give permission for your husband to lead, it quenches it**...

For some of you, you've not created space for your husband to lead because you're all over him all the time stirring up controversies or being bitter towards him... Cutting him off/putting him down...

**Proverbs 12:4** *A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a wife who causes shame is like rotteness in his bones.*

- Noble character is key here...

*Ok, so you've looked in, now what?!? What about my husband?*

Well, it's important to understand that this passage **doesn't say** to submit **only if your husband is a qualified leader**... Here's what you need to see...

**It's not you giving your husband permission to lead only if he's qualified, it's you helping him to see that he is qualified by giving him permission to lead**... *Let me flesh this out*...

Every man out the womb is born with this question: *Do I have what it takes?*

<sup>5</sup> Thought credit to JD Greear, Article: *What Submission, does and doesn't mean.*

<sup>6</sup> Proverbs 19:13; Proverbs 21:9; Proverbs 21:19; Proverbs 25:24; Proverbs 27:15

You have the unique opportunity to show your husband that he does! The way that you do this is by giving him permission to lead even if you feel like he's not qualified or good at it...

- **1 Peter 3** shows us that your faithfulness to obey the Word in your role is a way that can win him over in his role...
- **IOW**: your obedience can fuel His!

And listen when your husband does lead in the right way, you need to affirm that! *My Man!!*

### ***When is the last time you've deferred to your husband?***

- Do you just make absolute statements and shot call things in your relationship or do you state your case and then pass him the ball?!?

\*I recognize that this isn't easy, we don't enjoy sacrifice, and yet this is exactly what Jesus did for us and what He calls us into... This is why the gospel has to be the foundation... ***Because your ability to submit is only found by looking at His submission for us!***

Wives, last thing, before *I jump on... I mean jump to* the men... ***If your husband put into practice what I am about to walk through then you should be comfortable submitting...***

Alright husbands, y'all need to listen up... This may not be what you were thinking is coming... Here's your verse, Paul says in **verse 19**: **Husbands, love your wives and don't be bitter toward them.** *Ok, here's the first thing that I want you to see... Paul says love your wife...*

I need you to understand the nature of Paul's call- it's countercultural and it drives home a new ***Christ-centered reality***... In an oppressive culture!

- Love was not common back then... It was an add-on bonus... It was about procreation and heirs<sup>7</sup>... Keep in mind, most marriages were arranged...
- So this call to husbands is more radical than you think...

### *What does this love look like?*

Paul doesn't expound on it here, so let's look at how he fleshes this out in **Ephesians 5**- because this is what he would have had in mind... *It's important that we always let Scripture be commentary on Scripture...*

Here's how Paul defines your leadership role within your marriage... **Ephesians 5:25: Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her...**

***Husbands, your leadership is to be characterized by the love Christ had for the church!***

So here's what this text would oppose in light of that...

- Abuse of any kind...
- Tyrannical or domineering leadership...
- Leadership where your wife is less than or is pressured to wait on you hand and foot... Or where you limit your wife to only *household things*...
- Your leadership doesn't mean that your wife doesn't have a voice in things or that her opinion doesn't matter, this is not a *you do what I say* type of leadership...

None of those things are at all even remotely loving... And **none of those things reflect Christ's love for us**... They show off the sin in you!

Paul says that your leadership is to be characterized by Christ-like love, *so what does that look like?*

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<sup>7</sup> Source: Tony Merida, *Christ-centered life* (pt. 2).

**In the same way that Jesus gave up his life for the church, you are to give your life up for your wife through service and sacrifice...**

- Jesus is the model for leadership in the home...

In **John 13:1-17** just before Jesus went to the cross, He did something very unique that caught all of his disciples off guard...

He got them together and Jesus, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords, **took off** his outer garment, as **a picture** that embodies the laying aside His power, in order to take on the position of a servant, and He washed his disciple's feet...

And this wasn't just some random act of kindness, this was bigger than that... **Jesus was showing them what was about to happen...**

A few hours from then, Jesus would be stripped of his garments, and He would willfully and intentionally lay aside His power and majesty, and He would go to the cross and He would lay his life so that He could wash you with His blood...

It's through his sacrifice that we would get the greatest display of love the world has ever seen...

in Jesus we see a radically different kind of leadership that the world doesn't understand... It's something called **servant leadership**...

**C.S. Lewis:** *God gives man a crown to wear in marriage, but it is primarily made of paper (just a role) and thorns [a call to sacrifice].*

**This is the foundation of leadership husbands... You lead with the cross in view... The character of Christ shapes how you lead...**

**IOW:** Like Jesus, **your leadership should be characterized by sacrifice and service**, just like Jesus!

- It's not you leveraging your leadership to demand things from your wife, it's leveraging your leadership to sacrifice and serve your wife!

- Her interests, her needs, above yours... She comes first, this is how you lead...
- This is also how you submit to your wife according to **Eph. 5:21**... Both are called to submit! Leverage your leadership to serve and sacrifice...

The way you do this is **through the action of Christ-like love, which is taking pleasure in your wife through service and sacrifice**... This is how you lead!

Let me give you some practical ways that that **Christ-like-love-driven leadership** play out:

**Pursue your wife (V. 25)**

What we see here is that Christ pursued first. He lead the way first in the pursuit of the church... This is true for you husbands...

**Example:** So many husbands treat their wives like I treat my deer heads that are hanging on my wall...

- The thrill of the hunt, you spot stalk, you hang stands, you work, you do whatever it takes to get the deer...
  - **Aside:** we live in a culture where this hardly exists BTW... For those of you men that want to be married... Yall need to pick this one up for free today...
  - You need to know what pursuit looks like... Too many passive men today
- But you go on this hunt doing whatever it takes and then once you get the deer it you hang it on your wall as a trophy and that's it...

Jesus never stops the pursuit of those that are His! In the same way you never stop pursuing your wife...

**You lead the way in romance, and intentional time...** It's going to mean saying *no to work to say yes to time with your wife!* It means *you serve her, by pursuing her how she wants to be pursued...*

Understand this: **you won't pursue your wife like Christ, if you're not pursuing Christ...**

Let's look at some other ways this plays out... Paul says:

**25** Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her **26** to make her holy, cleansing her with the washing of water by the word. **27** He did this to present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or anything like that, but holy and blameless.

### **Wash your wife with the word (V.26)**

How do you do this? **Lead your wife spiritually...**

- This is a huge miss for so many husbands... **The fall happened because Adam didn't lead here...** Sin of omission... Didn't step in and remind his wife of the truths of God!

What does this look like?

- Be present when it comes to the things of Christ and the body of Christ...
  - Do you make church things important?
- Another way: Can be as simple as "hey what did you think about the sermon"...
- It can be praying with your wife...
  - When is the last time you've prayed with your wife?
  - This is like one of the easiest ways to get spiritual stuff into your marriage!

**Paul continues in verse 28...**

**28** In the same way, husbands are to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** For no one ever hates his own flesh but provides and cares for it, just as Christ does for the church, **30** since we are members of his body

### **Care for your wife (V. 28-30)**

In verse **28-30** Paul says that you're to *love your wives as your own body... No one hates their body, cares and provides for it... just as Christ does for the church...* Again *jesus is the model... And Jesus' care for the church is robust...*

**Let me show you how this play out...**

We know our bodies and we care for our bodies...

- If you're a girl you know where every freckle is...
- *Dudes are are little less observant...* We still think we look like we did in high school, meanwhile you see something different!
  - But we know our bodies and we care for our bodies: *You don't miss a meal...*

Is the same thing true when it comes to your wife? Do you know her and care for her?

**To do this well you have to study her...**

- We study all kinds of things for work, we study golf swings, you study video game cheat codes, and other hobbies and things...

**Do you study your wife??** She should be the second most studied thing in your life outside of Jesus!

- Do you know what she needs, what she likes, what she desires?!?

Do you **provide for her?** Do you make sure that her needs are met? This is caring for her...

Here's another part of this: **Do you protect her...** Do you make sure that she feels safe...

- Listen not just physically, but also emotionally?!? This is a huge miss...
  - Are you a safe space for her to confide in?!



Lastly, I'm going to step out of **Ephesians 5** for this... *Whole counsel!*

### **Honor your wife**

**1 Peter 3:7** says to *honor your wife*...

And the way that Peter fleshes this out is that he says husbands are to live with their wives in an *understanding way*, and to be *gentle* toward your wives... **so that your prayers will not be hindered!** *Big deal!*

This is the opposite of the bitterness that **Colossians 3:19** talks about...

*Do you live with your wife in an understanding way? Are you gentle towards her?*

*Do you look for ways to honor your wife, or do you criticize her and resent her? Do you hold up her value or diminish it?*

**\*\*Here's what I want you to understand in all this, Husbands:** These 4 areas are leadership as an overflow of love looks like...

- This is the root... And when you lead in these ways you will become the kind of husband that your wife wants to submit to **in everything** as Paul says in **Ephesians 5:24**...

***You say: What if my wife won't submit? She doesn't give me permission to lead?!***

Here's the thing you have to understand... Leadership is not your demand to make, it's what you wife is to give... Her call is to **submit**, yours is to **love**...

If your wife isn't giving you permission to lead you continue to focus on Christ-like love toward her, pray for her and trust that the Spirit is at work in her...

**Ok, let me bring all of this together and show you how all of this paints a picture of Jesus...**

**Marriage is a gospel re-enactment** that both the husband and the wife participate in that have been given for the purpose of helping us grow in the gospel...

Let me put together the imagery of **Ephesians 5**...

***The wife submits as a picture of our submission to Christ... The Husband loves his wife in that same way that Christ loved the Church, giving His life up for her... And together the unity and the bond that they have reflects the unity and the bond that we have with Christ!***

- When we do this well we put Jesus on display in your marriage and outside of your marriage
- See, outside of the cross itself is the greatest picture of the gospel that has been given to us...
- The covenant between a man and a woman is to be a model for the covenant that we have with God through Christ...

At the end of the day, you have to understand that marriage is not about you, it's not about making you happy, it's **about making you holy**...

Marriage is something that's designed to help you become more like Jesus... It's why **both roles in a marriage take sacrifice because in that sacrifice, it keeps you centered on Jesus**...

- ***This puts on display Eph. 5:21 submit to one another out of reverence for Christ***...
- It keeps you coming back to Him over and over having to die to self, having to give up... In the same way that He did those things for you...

***It's your identity in Christ that gives you the ability to display the work of Christ in your marriage!***

**Conclusion [VAMP]**

***Here's the last thing I'm going to give you and I don't have time to parse it out, but it's important...***

When you understand what a biblical marriage is and what it points to you realize how unique and sacred it is... That God designed it for a purpose...

Which means that we don't mess with the marriage relationship or diminish it by trying to define it on our own terms or to make it about us through ***cohabitating*** or ***acting as though we are married sexually but you're not...***

Sex is for one man and one woman who are committed for one life time and it is a picture of the oneness we have in Christ...

- When we operate outside of that we break down this picture that God's given us through marriage!
- We live in a culture that has diminished the significance of marriage and as a church we have to be diligent to be faithful to uphold it rightly!

\*At the end of the day all of this starts with Jesus and all of this is about Jesus... ***Our identity drives our activity within our marriage...***

- *Our identity also allows our marriage to preserve...*
- Grace to us from Jesus... Grace through us in our marriages!

Marriage is a gift that God's given to us to make us more like Jesus and to display Jesus... *Where are the gospel gaps in your life?*

- ***Husbands:*** where do you need to repent?
- ***Wives:*** Where do you need to repent?
  
- ***Single:*** Have you been minimizing marriage by the way that you've been engaging and interacting with the opposite sex??

- Non-Christian... Marriage is a picture for you to see Jesus... Some of you need to enter into the marriage of the Lamb this morning! You need to look beyond the sign to the source!

**Pray**