

Colossians: Living Under The Lordship of Christ

“Husbands and Wives”

Colossians 3:18-19

Husbands and Wives – an important subject

The condition of the family within a culture generally tells the story of the health of that society and the relationship between husband and wife is the epicenter.

The apostle’s words in Colossians and in Ephesians have often been attacked as destructive to the family. The great irony is that Paul presents the Colossians (and the Ephesians) with a model for marriage and family – and beyond – that was revolutionary.

The NT shifts the narrative about women to a far more positive perspective than was true of the typical first century viewpoint.

Contextual or Perpetual?

One of the big questions which is raised by both scholars and everyday people like us, relates to the extent of the application of this passage. In other words, are these ideas intended for the 21st century.

- Some would say these instructions are bound only to the 1st century.
- Some attempt to change the meaning of the words to reflect current values.

Two reasons for refusing to follow such thinking:

Nothing in the text suggests an expiration date.

Paul speaks/writes as an apostle and thus speaks with God’s authority.

Dreaded Word(s)?

Submission

- Submission essentially means to come under the authority of another.
- When Paul tells wives to submit, he is telling them to recognize and willingly place themselves within the context of their husband’s authority.
- When wives submit, they are in reality submitting to the Lord and the order he has established in the home.

Defining by what it’s not:

Love

Defining by what it’s not:

1 Corinthians 13 is a good place to find a definition of love.

Paul defines love with these qualities:

patient
kind
benevolent; giving; goodwill
humble
elevates others
respectful
values others opinions
pleasant
thankful; appreciative
rejoices with the truth
bears all things
believes all things

hopes all things
endures all things
never ends (fails)

An Essential Definition

Ephesians 5:25 offers husbands a basic definition of what love means – a willingness to give themselves up – to sacrifice themselves for their wives.

Husbands are to love their wives as they love their own bodies.

When we love our wives as Christ loved us, we honor the authority of Christ in our marriage and proclaim his lordship over us.
Keeping It Together

Too often this passage has been looked upon as defining who gets to call the shots. But such an approach entirely misses the point Paul is attempting to make when he speaks to husbands and wives about submission and love. Once again Ephesians is helpful for clarification.

There are four things that result when submission and love work together:

- *The home becomes a place where the character of God is displayed – especially His glory and holiness*
- *The home becomes a place where husbands and wives are mutually nurtured and appropriately valued*
- *The home becomes a place of unity and oneness which reflects who God is.*
- *The home becomes a place where the mutual qualities of love and respect flourish.*