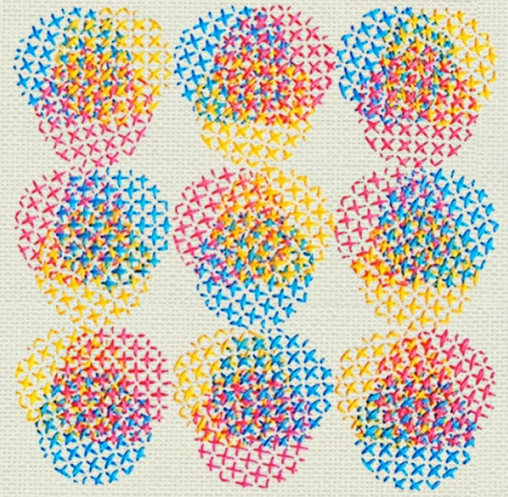


# COLOSSIANS

## A B O V E A L L



### COLOSSIANS: LIFE IN THE FAMILY

*JUNE 6, 2021*

Derek LaFontaine

#### Colossians 3:18-21

Well, good morning, Doxa. My name is Derek LaFontaine, and I, like Donald said, I'm honored and privileged to be one of your lay elders. I'm never, ever -- that's God's grace on my life -- I would never, ever thought I would be a pastor at a church, giving a sermon on this stage, that is God's grace. 100%. If you knew my story, you would agree.

Um, my family and I we've been with Doxa from the beginning. I was installed as a lay elder in 2017. I love this family. Like Donald said, I love to pray with you. I love you guys a lot. I love to do ministry with you. I love to encourage you. I know several of you out there and I just love this church. We have such an amazing family. Amen? We do. Um, and I get the privilege to serve with men like Donald and Tim and all the other lay elders that love you a lot. And uh, I get emotional thinking about it because these men really labor for you. They do. And I get to be a part of that. Sometimes I feel like I don't deserve it, but I get to, and it's amazing. And then I get a chance to preach Jesus to you. So, amen.

A little bit about me. I don't know everybody out there. So I am a husband, I've been married to my amazing wife, Janice. She's sitting right here. She is, uh, the biggest blessing of my life. Amazing blessing. She is a godly woman. She is sacrificial. She is selfless. She lays her life down for our family, for our kids, our two sons are here. Which brings me to, uh, that I'm a husband. I'm sorry, getting off to -- I'm a father. I'm a father to three amazing kids.

My two sons right there, Keiko and Keanu. Hey guys. Uh, and uh, they are two amazing sons. They cause a lot of trouble around Doxa, you'll see them running around (laughs). And I have an amazing daughter, Hope. She is 23 years old now, I'm proud of her. She's sitting right here with her boyfriend Tanner. I love you too, Tanner. My daughter is amazing. We've been through

some crazy times in the last 23 years, right? And its God's grace in our life, and I'm extremely proud of her.

We live in Carnation and now I agree with pastor Tim, who lives in Carnation too, that Carnation is the land of milk and honey. It is. Uh, we moved from Redmond about a year ago to Carnation. And, uh, I'm telling you, country roads and barns do something to a man's soul.

Where do I work? I work for a fire department. I've been in the fire service for about 20 years now. I spent about 12 years on a fire engine and I'm actually serve as the fire marshal for my fire department now. And that profession is amazing. I worked with many men and women who run into danger like every single day. And that just does something to your heart also; I see the urgency of the gospel in those situations, and that profession has just blessed me.

So before we get after it, let's pray. We'll pray first and we'll get after it. Lord, thank you, Jesus. You are a great God doing great things. And I am in awe of you right now. We are in awe of who you are in our lives, Lord. Not only do you know us individually, you know us individually, everybody here in this room, you know our names, you know our stories, our perspectives, you know where we struggle, you engage each and every one of us and you are working in our hearts to make us more like you, so thank you. But not only do you know us individually, Lord, you know us as a family, you know us together as brothers and sisters in Christ. Lord, you've taken all of our stories and perspectives, Lord, and you've, you've placed them under your story, Lord. We are all unified under one banner and that is Christ Jesus, and that is why we're here in this room. Thank you for what you are doing in our family. And Lord, I just pray, God, you just use me this morning to be your voice piece, Lord. That I'm faithful to your word, Lord, and we are encouraged. In Jesus name. Amen.

So we've been in the book of Colossians, I think six or seven weeks now. We've heard some amazing messages from Pastor Donald, Ken Flower, some great messages from Ken. And we, a couple of weeks ago, we heard a great message from Pastor Paul Dean from Soma Eastside on uni-- being unified as a church, it was a great message. And this morning we're in chapter three, verses 18 through 21, where Paul is giving, uh, instructions for Christian families, rules for Christian households. And this is an extremely important, timely message.

God has set up our families to reflect the gospel to the world, to each other first and then to the world. Amen? The enemy knows this. And the enemy attacks. He uses several methods. Culture is one of them, of course, the chaos of the world, right? That some things are alarming, but that shouldn't, that shouldn't take us by surprise, right? That's the world that's culture. But I believe the primary method Satan uses to, to destroy families is to divide us. If he can divide a husband and a wife, if he is successful at creating bitterness that leads to division between a husband and a wife and that family divides. Then the enemy does not need to worry about your family reflecting the gospel to each other into the world anymore, right. The world doesn't get to see the gospel in motion in your family anymore. What the world sees is a broken gospel and broken families and that's concerning.

So what I want to do this morning is, I want to get our own houses in order. I wanna focus on the truth.

The Federal Reserve. The Federal Reserve has a counterfeit money unit. What they do is they go around looking for counterfeit money, obviously, and try to bust the counterfeiters. And I found it odd that they don't spend a lot of time studying and researching counterfeit money. They found that if they spend too much time looking at counterfeit money, then it's harder to identify out in the field. They've actually found that they spend most of their time reflecting on the real, real, real money, real currency, the truth, right? The truth. That when they see a counterfeit, man, they identify it immediately. And that's what I want to do this morning. And the truth, the big idea, the truth is families in Christ will reflect a selfless and sacrificial gospel first to each other, and then ultimately the world.

So I'm writing this message and I'm praying, Lord, how should I form this message? There's two things that came to my heart. It's a sense of caution and a call to arms. A call to arms for husbands and wives, for families, for men and women, because Satan, he's prowling around, he's looking for something to devour. He wants to separate you. He wants to divide you. He wants to discourage you. He's coming after our husbands. He's coming after our wives. He's coming after our kids.

I've been in ministry now for 12 years, that is not that long, but I've seen enough divorce in the church to last lifetime. It's concerning. I've seen Christian husbands, I've seen Christian wives refusing, refusing to give grace and mercy to each other, refusing to give patience, refusing to forgive. They're at that point in their hearts where they're full of contempt for each other, and the only way out at that point for them is division; to divide.

See the enemy is coming for our families, and God, the Lord himself tells us to pray without ceasing. Amen. Pray without ceasing with Thanksgiving in your hearts, and men, men act like men and stay alert, to stand firm in the faith, be strong and let all that you do be done in love. We'll talk a little bit more about men acting like men a little bit later, but first I want to encourage you. Doxa this isn't a doom and gloom sermon. I want to encourage you. Like I said, I love this family. I know several men and women in this church that love Jesus. You fight the good fight. You do. I know you. You're prayer warriors. You want to be more and more like Jesus. Every day you lead and love your kids, selflessly and sacrificially. I know that. And you encourage me.

So today, let's start by reading the scripture. Read it again. So turn with me to Colossians chapter three, verses 18 through 21. Paul says, Wives submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children unless they become discouraged.

And what we need to do is we, we have to read this scripture in context. We have to fight to keep it in its context. If you take it out of context, with no Jesus, with no gospel, with no set your minds on things that are above -- it doesn't make any sense; the world and the enemy wants you to take this scripture and put it in its own context, and make it all about you. And this is all about Jesus.

So we want to put it in Paul's context. We have to go all the way back to chapter one, verses 9 through 10. This is Paul's heart for the Colossians, this is Paul's heart us, Doxa Church. Paul says,

That you may be filled with the knowledge of his will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so as to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him; bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God; being strengthened with all power, according to his glorious might, for all endurance and patience with joy. Amen? It's amazing. Paul wants us to increase in knowledge and spiritual wisdom, so we would walk in a manner that's pleasing and worthy of our Lord. And when we do that, we are strengthened with all power. We live with endurance. We live with patience, and we live with joy.

A follower of Jesus, as they nourish their souls with the knowledge of God, they will develop a desire to walk in a manner that's worthy and pleasing to him.

Paul knows who he is talking, he was talking about Jesus. Why do we want to walk in a manner that's worthy and pleasing to this Lord? And Paul knows. He knows why. He knows who Jesus is. He knows what Jesus did for us. This is not any other human we're talking about. And it changes everything for us. Paul goes on to say about Jesus in chapter 1, verses 15 through 21. Paul says that Jesus is the image of the invisible God, The firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created. That means you and your families. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

And here's the important part of the gospel. And you. You. Who were once alienated and hostile in mind doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled in his body of flesh by his death, in order to present you holy and blameless above reproach before him, if indeed you continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel.

This is one of the most important parts of the gospel, in my opinion. In this point of the gospel, we're talking about you. Specifically you. Me. Not your husband, not your wife, not your kids, not the people who offend you. We're just talking about you. Specifically you. Not the pain, not the sin that was committed against you, but all of the pain and all of the sin that you have committed. You were creating a debt that you could not repay. And then Jesus steps in between you God's wrath, sheds his blood unto death for you.

I believe when you understand the weight of your own sin, you will understand the depth of your salvation. Let me say that again. When you understand the weight of your own sin, you will understand the depth of your salvation. And the gratitude, it'll spill over into how you engage people, how you engage your spouse. You'll ultimately become selfless and sacrificial, just like our savior. Christians, we love much because we were forgiven much. Amen?

There's a parable that Jesus tells -- this is the parable that keeps me up at night. It's the parable of the unforgiving servant, we all know the story. This guy is forgiven. He owes the master 10,000 talents, is what the Bible says. And I looked on Google. I Googled it. Uh, 10,000 talents is, in US dollars today, it's \$3.4 billion. That's what he owed his master.

He's forgiven the \$3.4 billion, and he turns around and he finds his, his servant that owes him, Bible says 100 denari. I Googled that too. That's \$150. He goes out and he looks for the guy who owes him \$150 after being forgiven 3.4 billion. The guy can't repay him, and what does he do? He throws him into prison. And the master finds out about it and says, what are you doing? I just forgave you \$3.4 billion. And you're trying to make this guy pay you back? And he throws

him into prison. And the Bible says he keeps him there until he can repay every single cent. I think about that. I think about that when I have a fight with my wife. Does she owe me 150 bucks? Nah I don't know, maybe it's 300 bucks, right? But it's something she can't repay in my heart. And I can't physically throw her into a prison, but I guarantee you all of us, we have a little prison right here that when somebody owes us something, we throw them directly into prison. And I keep them there until they pay it back, figure it out, right?

Creates bitterness, creates a division. Satan knows this. So that is the context that we read this scripture. And we are people that want to grow in the knowledge of the Lord and act appropriately, as people that know they've been forgiven much.

We'll move on now to the three main ideas. And you're going to notice a trend here. The first one is selfless and sacrificial submission. Second is selfless and sacrificial love. And the third is selfless and sacrificial fathers.

Verse 18 says, Wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. I want to start with this. All submission, all submission starts with submission to the Father. Amen?

We all submit. We all submit to something. Men, women, husbands, wives, kids. We all submit to something. And I would say that we would say, amen, we want to submit to the Father, right? We all do. It's easy to submit to the Father, he's God. We want to do that. We fail a lot, but we want to. It's easier in our hearts to do that. And then God sends us out to submit to each other, and that's hard. That's harder. But remember we want to focus on the truth today.

So I want to bring you to the most amazing example of submission in the Bible. It's when Jesus submitted to the Father. Jesus in the garden, right, he's sweating blood, he knows what's about to happen to him. And what does he say? Father, let this cup pass from me. If possible, please. No. And then what does he say? He knows the stakes. He knows what's at hand. He says, not my will be done, but what? Your will be done. The Father's will. He wants the Father's will to be done. And that was the win, I submit that to you, that was "the win" in the Bible. When Jesus submitted to the Father in that moment, it was a win for the kingdom. Satan, sin, and death was defeated by that one act of submission. Jesus was selfless and sacrificial. Selflessly laying down his rights as the Son of God and sacrificially laying down his life for us, spilling his blood unto death. Suffering the wrath of God for us.

And wives have been given that amazing responsibility to reflect that part of the gospel to her family; to the world. I submit to you that submission is a huge spiritual action that crushes the enemy because it is selfless and sacrificial. Everything in us is screaming, self. Self-protect. Jesus is saying, be selfless. Sacrifice. Lay down your rights. The bride lays down her rights in submission to who the Lord has placed in the leadership role in the family, the husband, the groom.

I want to say this also; wives, you are co-equals in the marriage relationship. It's not husband and wife. You're co-equals in the kingdom of God. You have equal say; your voices are very important. So please don't hear that you are less than at all. That is not what submission means in this family.

So wives, as you ponder these things, and you have to work these things out in your heart, I don't know everybody's stories and situations, but work those out with your DNA's with your MCs, come to a pastor. If you have questions, we can talk about it. Okay.

Let's move on to verse 19, Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. I love this kind of scripture. I have a heart for men. So men, this is my call to arms for you. Love your bride like Jesus loves his bride. Selflessly and sacrificially. We lay down our rights. We lay down our lives as husbands.

I'm thinking about this message, and I'm thinking about reasons we want to love our wives, and, uh, I have two of them right now. The first one is the easy one, right? Cause they're our wives. They're are brides. These were the women that we met and it was amazing, right? It was absolutely phenomenal. I liken the beginning of a relationship to a 747 taking off. If you don't like to fly, I apologize, but I love to fly. And I chose the 747 on purpose because I come from a Boeing family. I love Boeing airplanes, but that was the first jumbo jet. The largest 747 is I think it's 447,000 tons, and it takes four engines to get that thing in the air. It's amazing, right? It's a miracle the thing even flies.

So I imagine myself like sitting in the seat of that 747, right? And then Janice sits next to me. Right? And I look at her. And right when I look at her, the dang pilot hits the thrusters and that thing starts taking off. Starts flying down the runway; it's got to get up to almost 200 miles an hour to even get that thing to lift just a little bit. Man, it's exciting. I'm back in my seat, I'm looking at Janice. It's amazing, right? And then it takes off. And you just feel this just amazing sense of excitement. It's all about Janice. I can't get my mind off of her. We have a million things to talk about. We agree on everything. We're like, we listen to our stories. We're getting know everything. It's just great. And the plane just keeps ascending and ascending and ascending. And then some point in the ascension; let's get married, we get married. Beautiful wedding, amazing wedding; we had a great wedding in Hawaii. Honeymoon was amazing. Everything's amazing, right? Our wives, it's our brides, right? And we're so excited, right? And that plane just keeps ascending. Eventually gets to altitude, 25,000 feet. And it's 25,000 feet for as far as the eye can see.

That's when everything starts to settle down. Bills, responsibilities, schedules fill up, kids come. Everything happens, right. And you hit turbulence. I want to submit to you, this is the second reason we love our wives is when we're at altitude. Because that's when things happen, right?

We want to love her at altitude, to nourish her and protect her. We want to protect her because we want to thwart the plans of the enemy to divide us. We want to nourish her. We want to lay down our rights. Her interests become more important than my own. Her desires, her needs become more important than my own, but everything in me is still saying, self. And Satan knows that. And I don't want to be all melodramatic about it. Satan isn't dropping bombs on your marriage every single day. Like just a bomb after bomb, after bomb. That's not how he works. He just lays in wait and he pays attention to you. He looks for that little foothold he can get into between you and your wife.

So husbands stay alert. Don't let the enemy flank you. You think he's going to attack from the front. He's always trying to come around the rear. Here's how I know the enemy is flanking me

and my and my marriage. I start to think about me way more than I think about my bride. I become selfish. Everything in me is about me. It starts very small. So pay attention to that.

Paul has a great list of what love is; I call the pre-flight checklist. I'm sure this scripture was read at your every single wedding here; first Corinthians 13. But it's the best checklist in the Bible. Check your heart against this scripture. Let's read it together. First Corinthians 13 -- Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it's not arrogant or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it's not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but rejoices with the truth. I love this -- Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, and endures all things. Men, we were built for endurance, by the way. And I love the last line, Love never ends.

It sounds like Jesus, doesn't it. Jesus is the fulfillment and the example of that scripture. I love that. Husbands have been given that high calling of not only being the head of the family, but reflecting God's love to his wife and to his family. And it is not, it's not a feeling. It's an action. It's a choice. It's a high calling by the Lord himself.

I want to talk about a little bit about "men act like men". Paul says, act like men, right? What does that mean to you? It's a little bit different to every man here, I know that. Doesn't mean hunters and gruners -- I work in a profession that is full of hunters and gruners. If you're a hunter and a gruner, amen. Praise God. But that's not necessarily what it means. Paul is talking about godly men here. Godly men initiate and engage their families. Godly men protect their families and they pray over their families.

And there's nothing like putting my arm around my wife and praying for her, and I don't do it enough. Men, godly men are on the lookout and they're dependable. I love dependable men. And probably one of the most important parts of a godly man is we repent because we will fail at all of that. We need to repent turn back towards Jesus and re-engage. Anything other than this type of love is counterfeit, and we need to be able to call it out. Because of sin, the enemy attacks and biblical love goes sideways and biblical submission goes sideways. And of course, we always fail each other. Failing each other, it should not take us by surprise. We're sinners. We're fail -- we fail.

That's part of the gospel. But we should be ready. We should be ready for that failure. To respond to that failure with love and encouragement and grace and patience. If we don't, it leads to hopelessness. It leads to bitterness. Finally, it divides you.

But Doxa, the Lord engages us. He is for our marriages. He can restore, he can reconcile any situation. Amen? He can.

As a husband, I asked myself, am I worth following? I ask myself every day, am I worth following today? Because many, many days I am not worth following. I am unworthy. Like marriage is amazing some days, right? It's amazing. Some days it's hard. Marriage can be very, very hard. Some days Janice and I are soulmates, and some days we're cellmates. It's true, but we've made our cell a home. We've taken that cell and we've made it a home and there's nobody I would rather be locked in that cell with than Janice. (Comment from the crowd, followed by laughter) It'd be nice if, nah -- So husbands and wives show selfless and sacrificial to each other. That is the foundation of the family.

Let's move on to selfless and sacrificial fathers. Verses 20 and 21 said, Children -- you guys -- obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord and fathers do not provoke your children unless they become discouraged.

And this is a scripture for me. It makes me emotional because of the truth of who our Father is. Who my Father is. Everyone here has a story, right? And you all have a story and a perspective that the Father engages and he takes your story and he merges it into his story and he becomes your Father. And our Father. He loves us. He engages us. He initiates. He is for us. Never discourages us. He never guilts us. He never shames us. We may let go of him, but he will never let go of us. He sustains us. He has compassion on us. He disciplines us with love as sons and daughters, and he leads us. He listens to us. He talks to us. He reveals himself to us. He's our strength when we are weak. That is our Father. Amen? That's our Father, that's your Father. And dads, we have been given that great responsibility to show our kids the Father's love. That kind of love. What more tangible way will they ever see it? Who here has a perspective on our heavenly Father that has been shaped by our earthly fathers? I'm pretty sure most of us have. How gracious they were or ungracious or patient or impatient has been shaped by them. But that is not our heavenly Father.

Fathers have been given great power. The enemy is busy trying to destroy our influence, but we have the ultimate weapon. It's a weapon the enemy cannot answer. And that is sa -- selfless and sacrificial love. And prayer, pray over your kids. And then when dads, when we fail, we repent and we just continue to repeat, repeat that cycle.

Men, we must fight back with action-based engaging love. We are raising the next generation of kids that are going to engage the world for Jesus. So we need to show them selfless and sacrificial love for the bigger picture so they will become selfless and sacrificial. And it trains them to be obedient. So men, fight for the real thing: Jesus.

I was trying to figure out a way to weave this into my sermon. I didn't tell Keiko I was going to do this, but God gave me a gift on Friday. As parents, you always wonder if your kids are listening. And you can tell, I have a lot of fight the enemy kind of language and that's in my heart, right? That's that's how I train my kids. That's how I talk to my kids. I always wonder if they're listening. I'm cleaning the kitchen the other day, and I come across this poem that Keiko wrote. I didn't tell him I was going to do this, but I got to read this. This is my son paying attention. I went to Keiko like, did you write this? And he said, yeah. It's called The Fighting Poem. Original. It says original right here.

I wish I had a Winston Churchill voice to read this, but it says this:

Together we will fight,  
We will fight together with might,  
When you are destroyed, you will see a beautiful sight,  
We will fight together through day and through night,  
And then you will see that justice is right?  
I mean I'm like, he's paying attention! (applause)



So take encouragement in that. Our kids are paying attention.

So Doxa, I have some homework for us. I want to do some weeding of our marriages and our families together as a family. So I was weeding our yard the other day, and I am not a gardener, right? I don't know the names of anything in our yard. But I do love pulling weeds. Something just feels spiritual about it. And we have this ground cover. It's about this big, it's about this high and it's full of little tiny blue flowers, beautiful little plant. From far away, it was beautiful. I came up to it and there was a weed dead center, it was huge, one of those big rooted weeds. And the leaves of that weed were threading all throughout that big ground cover; big long leaves. And I had to do some surgical removal of that weed. And so I had to damage the plant; I had to go under the plant, get to that weed, and pull that thing out. And that thing came out, it felt so good. That thing just came out one big weed, it was big too. And uh, I noticed wherever those leaves of the weed were, there were no blue flowers. The flowers were gone. Snuffed out the beauty of that. And if I had gotten that weed when it was young. If you get that weed when the bitterness is young and early, and you weed that thing out, you're fighting against the enemy. Who's trying to snuff the beauty of your marriage, of your family.

There was another weed sitting next to it. Uh, and it was a weird weed. I don't know the names of weeds, like I said, but this thing had a bunch of sprigs coming up. And the second I put pressure on it to pull it, every single one of those sprigs shot up about 30 seeds each -- that little bugger man. It was like, that's how it defends itself and propagates, like, if you're going to pull me, I'm going to shoot up, you know, a hundred more seeds. But that's what sin does, right? When you go to pull that one sin in your heart, that one thing in your heart, more things pop up, so don't let that discourage you. Don't shy away from pulling that one seed, that one weed that you see, just because of my pull up a bunch of other issues. I know when Janice and I deal with sin in our marriage, and those are some, those are some conversations that we just repent and follow Jesus together.

And we do this Doxa because we want to walk in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord. Amen? Amen. So I want to encourage you. Women, if you need help and encouragement, talk to your DNA, talk to your MC. Talk to Alison Martin or Amy Lathrop. They have a lot of resources. And men, if you need help and encouragement, we are just starting kind of a grassroots men ministry if you're interested in joining us, please come see me or any of the pastors really.

Honored and blessed to be here. Let's pray. Lord, thank you again, God, for what you are doing in our family. You are an amazing God doing amazing things, Lord, and I know that you love each and every one of us here, there is no guilt or shame in any of it. Lord, you are with us and you are for us. Lord I pray you would stir these things up in our heart. Thank you so much for what you've taught us this morning. We love you. In Jesus' name. Amen.