



A GODLY HOME

Colossians 3:18-21

We have fallen prey to several serious mistakes of late in our culture regarding the family. One of those is that the Christian life is about achieving some sort of instant attainment thing. Just apply the magic formula, the correct set of mantras and, "Poof! Maturity!"

It is a bit like calling in to your internet service provider. I had that joy recently. The voice on the other end said: "Hi David, I'm Rasheed. What can I do for you?" I said, "Fix this problem I am having." He said, "No worries. I am sending you a file with an attachment. Simply double click on it and it will walk you through some simple steps which will certainly fix your problem." Before I could say "Dot.com" he was gone, and I was listening to a recording asking me if I would like to answer a quick 15 question customer satisfaction survey.

You know the drill. I had to make another call. It is like Gnosticism. Only people who work for the company have the inside knowledge to make computers work. *Christian maturity is more than double-clicking and downloading.*

A **second** mistake we make is associated with guilt. If we are not living like we should at home, how can we live like we should in the world? Everything that touches our Christianity begins at home and how we deal with those in our home. Once we come to grips with this, Paul wants us to see that the way our relationship with Christ manifests itself is in the everyday issues of life. Colossians 3 is one of the most fundamental chapters in the whole Bible on the issue of what it means to be a Christian.

Throughout the book of Colossians, Paul has been saying that the Christian life can be lived in any and every circumstance if we grasp this fundamental point: in all of life's relationships we are living primarily for our Lord Jesus Christ. When we get to the place that we see no one in the picture but Jesus, our life is transformed in every relationship in which we are engaged. When we think of the relationship and responsibilities of marriage, if Jesus is not the head of it, then nothing else can be right.

1. HIS COUNSEL TO WIVES – BE SUBMISSIVE

According to a leading commentary on Colossians, of the over 40 occurrences of this

word in the NT, they all carry “the overtone of authority and subjection.” What Paul is saying here, as he makes clear elsewhere, is what is said at the very beginning of the Bible: that the entire central ministry of the wife is to be a helper suitable for her husband.” (Genesis 2:18).

Now Paul does not say so here, but in Ephesians 5 (and remember these 2 epistles were circular ones which were read and re-read throughout the Lycus Valley where Colossae was situated, and that therefore these Colossian Christians would have been familiar with what Paul wrote in Ephesians) he goes to draw the metaphor that submission to one’s brother is illustrated in how the church submits herself to Christ (Ephesians 5:22-24).

Think about it! The reason why the church submits herself to the Lord is not only because He is her head, but also because He is her Savior!! He is the One who protects and keeps her. There is a pattern established, that, to cite Peter, it is the “unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit” in which a woman finds her true identity.

“The holier a woman is” wrote Leon Blay, “the more she is a woman.” What spiritual maturity displays in a woman is her femininity. Jesus said: “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Because only as you lose yourself will you find yourself.” Only in Christ do we find who we are supposed to be as men and women.

2. TO HUSBANDS, LOVE YOUR WIVES AND DO NOT BE HARSH WITH THEM

Paul knows all too well our ability to take one command and run it over to an extreme. As a preventative, he makes ONE positive command and ONE negative command. POSITIVE: LOVE YOUR WIFE. Elsewhere Paul likens this to the way Christ loves the Church and gives Himself for her that He might present her as a spotless bride. THIS IS SELF-SACRIFICING LOVE.

NEGATIVE: DO NOT BE HARSH! The word implies that the husband takes out the frustrations and bitterness he feels in other areas of his life on his wife.

You cannot be prepared to know anything of spiritual maturity if, when you speak to your wife, you reduce her to tears. If you snap and growl and act like a Rottweiler, accept the fact that your spiritual maturity is what you are at that moment.

Since Scripture interprets Scripture, go with me to 1 Peter 3:7. “Husbands, in the same way be

considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.”

How are we to love our wives? Treat them with respect and honor. What does a Christian man do with respect to his wife? He gives her honor. And then he explains a little more as to what that means. He says, “You not only give her honor, but you must regard her as an heiress. Now you need to understand that this was a world in which women did not inherit. These injunctions were shocking. He is saying that they are heirs of the kingdom of God. And he is really saying that you have to apply within your marriage a principle that can be applied across the board: you are dealing with one of God’s heirs. You honor them, because Jesus Christ has honored them, and as he says at the end of verse 7, so that you may live in communion with God.

Isn’t that staggering that you come before God in your prayers, and because you are not honoring your wife, God says, “I cannot have communion with you.” Men, I don’t know about you, but I find this to be very sobering indeed. Because you are going about sulking and not speaking to your spouse means, as far as God is concerned, communion will be cut off too.

God says, “You go and put that right and then come back to me and we will put things right.”

3. GOD CARES ABOUT HOW WE TREAT OUR CHILDREN

“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged” (Colossians 3:20, 21)

God has set up an order within the family that is very important. Notice the warning: DO NOT EMBITTER YOUR CHILDREN, OR THEY WILL BE DISCOURAGED. Is Paul thinking of unreasonable demands, showing favoritism, or failing to show love? Humiliating them, putting them down, failing to praise them – all these things cause angry young men and women.

Parents, do your children disappoint you by not turning out to be what you want them to be? I’m not talking about letting their sin run rampant, I’m talking about recognizing that God has made them in a certain way and it may not be the way you wanted. This is a sure path to discouragement for a child.

4. SUMMARY

FIRST: Is this a description of your marriage? The family is the single most powerful evangelistic tool the church has today.

SECOND: It is a mark of our devotion that can be measured in our homes. How you behave in public is one thing, but how you are in your home is where it is measured.

THIRD: If you wanted to destroy the very fabric of society, destabilize everything, bring about a quiet revolution, how would you go about that?