

First Baptist Church Merritt Island
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COLOSSIANS – Hope of Glory
In Relationship with Christ – part 2
Colossians 3:18-4:1

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This morning, we are continuing our verse-by-verse study of the book of Colossians. We are in a section of this letter that focuses on relationships. It all starts with our relationship with Jesus. When we come to faith in Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior, He changes us. He makes us children of God and gives us His power to live a brand-new life.

Alongside that, there is a change that happens in us over time. Our attitudes and actions begin to change. Jesus begins to transform us by shaping our will to want what we should want. This process of change begins the moment we trust Jesus and will last for the rest of our lives. It includes the decisions we make each and every day, like the decisions we make in relationship with other people. Every day, we get to choose whether or not we will make decisions and live in relationship with others by depending on the power of Jesus in us or by depending on ourselves.

And, in Colossians 3, we get a vivid description of how we live toward others when Jesus is living in us. We choose to put away anger and malice and lying and choose to step into compassion and kindness and forgiveness. If we will trust Jesus and step into those things, they will revolutionize all of our relationships.

But there are some very specific relationships that have unique dynamics. The relationships between husbands and wives, parents and children, employees and employers. There are specific things Jesus will empower in those relationships as we trust in Him. And that's what Paul is describing in this section of Colossians. Last week, we considered the call of Jesus for wives. This morning, we are going to consider the call of Jesus for husbands. What does it look like to be a husband who is being transformed by Jesus?

Colossians 3:18–19

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

These verses might not be complicated, but they can be challenging. What I mean is that Christian husbands and wives are constantly having to determine how these verses affect the decisions they make about their children and their finances and their jobs. They have to decide how these verses impact the way they'll make those decisions. They have to decide what healthy communication and dialogue and debate and disagreement might look like in their marriage. So, while these verses might not be complicated on the surface, putting them into practice can be challenging.

So, my desire is to take as straightforward an approach as I can with the hope that focusing on the plain teaching of Scripture will provide a helpful foundation for God's calling for husbands.

Big Idea: In Christ, husbands are called to lead their wives in love.

That comes straight out of our text. Verse 18 says that wives are called to submit to their husbands. Last week we saw submission means to voluntarily yield to the leadership of someone. In this

instance, that someone is her husband. And that leadership is to be characterized by one, primary word: love.

Paul spells this out in even more detail in Ephesians 5.

Ephesians 5:22–26

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. 24 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word,

God has designed marriage as a picture of Jesus and His church. Husbands aren't called to replace Jesus, they are called to represent Jesus, to reflect Jesus in their marriage.

And one way husbands reflect Jesus in their marriage is by being the head of the family, providing leadership in a way that is analogous to the leadership of Jesus to His church.

This is critical for helping us understand the role of husbands in a balanced, biblical way.

Two ditches, either ditch will do. Some people have twisted the idea of leadership to look more like an authoritarian dictatorship than the loving headship of Jesus. All kinds of sinful abuse and control have been justified in the name of men being the head of the home.

At the other end of the spectrum, some have redefined headship to look more like a weak figurehead than the strong, leading headship of Jesus. In an overreaction to the sinful abuse of authority, some have removed any trace of actual leadership or authority from the role of husbands.

Neither of those extremes are faithful to Scripture. So, what does it actually look like for a husband to lead in love like Jesus? Well, I can't spell everything out for you this morning, but what I'd like to do is give you 5 biblical descriptions of what it means for a husband to lead in love like Jesus.

1. Leading in love means never being harsh with your wife.

Colossians 3:19

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

That word "harsh" translates a word that means "to make something bitter." Paul is saying that husbands should never lead with a kind of harsh leadership that leaves a bitter taste with their wives. Leading in love means you aren't rude or hurtful or demanding or oppressive. It means you don't bark orders at your spouse. It means never intimidating or belittling or dismissing your wife. It never looks like mind-games or manipulation.

Domination is never a demonstration of the power of Jesus. He doesn't dominate His people. He draws them in love. At the same time, abdication is never a demonstration of the power of Jesus. He doesn't withdraw or abandon His work in them. He doesn't make His people pick up His slack or tell them to ask their mother.

God is calling husbands to exercise leadership in their homes in a way that is a source of blessing and not bitterness to a godly woman.

So, husband, how would your wife honestly describe your leadership in your home? Is it a source of blessing or bitterness? Does it make her feel oppressed or neglected or loved?

2. Leading in love means seeking to understand your wife.

1 Peter 3:7

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way...

That word “understanding” in the original language is the word for knowledge. The question is, “the knowledge of what?” What are husbands supposed to know?

Primarily, I believe Paul is saying husbands should seek to know and understand their wives. So, live closely with your wife in a way that shows your knowledge of her. Guys, your wife is unlike anyone else on earth. She is a unique creation of God. She has hopes and dreams and deep desires that you should want to know so that you can lead in your home in a way that blesses her. Men, work to know your wives. Know her more than your favorite sport or your biggest project at work. Know her more deeply than the food she likes and the places she likes to go. Know her thoughts and fears and hopes and dreams.

Take the time to talk. Ask her questions and not just, “What’s for dinner?” Ask her how she is feeling about your marriage. Ask her what she wants and needs from you as her husband. And ask the Lord to help you better understand what her life is like so you can lead in an understanding way. Try to imagine what it’s like to be married to someone like you.

I’ve told you this before, but I had an epiphany moment when Em and I had been married about 3-4 years. Logan was a year old or so, and I noticed that Emily seemed to be a little agitated at me. I’m not certain how it all went down, but I think I was watching sports, and she was in the kitchen putting away dishes. She was kind of noisy with the pots and pans, so I turned the volume up a little louder...then I think Logan was crying, so I turned the volume up a little louder.

And that’s when it happened. I came to my senses...with a little help from Emily. She looked at me in bewilderment and asked, “Are you serious?” I was like, “yeah, I really can’t hear over the banging in the kitchen and the baby crying.”

She said something about me being amazing...or something like that...and then just looked at me. And then I think I said something like, “Can I help you?” She laughed...like one of those she’s about to lose her mind kind of laughs...and then she asked me something like this “do you seriously not see everything I’m trying to do?”

And I didn’t want to answer that, but it hit me really hard...no, I didn’t. I was oblivious. To my shame, it never even dawned on me to routinely think about what her days were like. To understand how it felt to never have an adult conversation...to be responsible for the food and diapers and baths and clothes...to never have a break...to work during our baby’s nap times so that she could spend quality time with him while he was awake...and then for me to come home and put my feet up because I needed a break.

Husbands, seek to understand your wives. It requires time, talking, and thinking about what life is like for her and it’s God’s call for you

And ladies, one quick word for you. Don’t hide from your husband. Remember, in the garden of Eden, Eve hid from Adam. And just like it is your husband’s responsibility to pursue knowing you, it’s your responsibility to help him succeed by not hiding from him. He can’t read your mind. He may

struggle to understand what you plainly tell him, don't hide. Don't give all your emotion to your friends and have nothing left for him. He can only know you if you are willing to make yourself known. Don't rip into him and take out 20 years of frustration when he's honestly trying to apply this message.

Leading in love means seeking to understand your wife.

3. Leading in love means honoring your wife.

1 Peter 3:7

Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Not only should we know our wives, but we should also honor our wives. The word "honor" means "the amount at which something is valued." Peter uses this word several times in this letter. In 1:7, he says that genuine faith is more precious, or valuable, than gold. Then in 1:19, he says that the blood of Jesus is precious, or valuable, because we have been redeemed by it.

And that's the word he uses here. He says to show how precious and valuable your wife is. And Peter is talking this way to a first Century audience. This passage would have been revolutionary to a first century audience. An audience that didn't have equal rights for men and women. In some cases, men could legally treat their wives as property.

Peter says wives are every bit as valuable as husbands. That's why verse 7 says "they are heirs with you of the grace of life." That's not just understanding your wife, that's understanding the gospel. When we trust in Jesus, He offers complete forgiveness of our sin. He allows us to be in perfect relationship with God the Father. Through the work of Jesus, God adopts us into His family. We become children of the Most High God. And we will inherit all the riches of God who is our Father. And Paul says that husbands are to lead their wives in a way that honors her as his equal and as a child of Almighty God.

I heard one preacher say that every morning a Christ-follower wakes up and sees his believing wife, he should say "That's a woman who will be queen of heaven and earth." Your wife is a royal daughter of the Most-High God and your words, your tone, your actions, your provision and protection should reflect that.

I love and respect my father-in-law. He's like a second dad to me and I think he sees me as a genuine son. But I remember the first time I met him. He was a rather intimidating guy. He played linebacker for Army. He could bench press my car. He was nice to me, but I got the unmistakable impression that if I laid a hand on his daughter, he would lay a hand on me. We've been married for 22 years and that's still the case. There's a certain accountability that comes with being entrusted with the daughter of a man like that.

My difference between having a son and daughters...I would give my life for my son...and take a life for my daughters!

So, what should it be like to be entrusted to care for the daughter of Almighty God?

- Do you talk to your wife like she is a daughter of God? Like you will be taking her home to her Heavenly Dad and He'll know everything you thought and said and did to her and for her?
- Do you care for her like she is a precious treasure? More precious than your favorite sport or hobby or job?

- Do you see her for who she is in Jesus? Holy and blameless in Christ.
- Do you honor how God has uniquely made her by making sure she is free to express her gifts and abilities in your home?

Leading in love means honoring your wife.

4. Leading in love means being sacrificial for your wife.

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,

Jesus gave himself up for the sake of His bride, the church. He sacrificed Himself and His rights for the sake of His people. He used His power and authority to lay His life down for us.

And that's how husbands are called to lead in their home...to lead in sacrifice. You put her before yourself. You put her wants and desires above your own. You lay down your rights and your time and your money and, if necessary, your very life to bless your wife.

I'm not saying it's wrong to have a hobby or a demanding job or to take time for yourself, but if your hobbies or job or you-time is keeping you from loving your wife and meeting her genuine needs then God is calling you to be willing to them down in sacrifice for her. Our wives should never feel as though they are being sacrificed on the altar of our career or our golf games.

Leading in love means laying our lives down in willing sacrifice for our wives.

5. Leading in love means being beneficial to your wife.

Ephesians 5:25–29

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church,

Jesus gave His life for our highest good. He provided forgiveness and cleansing from sin. He provided restoration to God the Father. He committed to sanctify us through the truth of His word. Only Jesus can do those things. Husbands can't save their wives or provide for their forgiveness the way Jesus does. But we are called to reflect Christ in our homes by pursuing the highest good for our wives.

We are called to make decisions with her best interest in mind. Like we talked about last week, most decisions should be made together. But, in the event that a decision has to be made and you can't come to a conclusive agreement, God has called husbands to take the initiative and lead out in the decision in pursuit of what's best for their wives and family.

PROTECTING HER

As Jesus protected us from the threat of punishment for sin, we are called to protect our wives from anything that might threaten them.

PROVIDING FOR HER

As Jesus provided for our greatest needs, we are called to provide for the physical, emotional, financial, and spiritual needs for our wives, as verse 29 says “to nourish and cherish” them. That isn’t to say that husbands are called to do everything in their home. The Proverbs 31 woman was a businesswoman, and her husband praised her for the way she contributed to their household. So, leading out in provision might mean you honor the gifts of your wife as she works to help you provide for your household. That might be what’s best for her and your family.

POINTING HER TO JESUS

Ultimately, pursuing the highest good for our wives means nurturing their relationship with Jesus. Pray for her. Pray with her. Point her to Jesus. Share the word of God with her and encourage her in the faith. Set the spiritual tone in your home by making Jesus the center of it all.

Leading in love means living to benefit your wife by pointing her to Jesus, protecting her from things that threaten her, and being available to provide her emotional, physical, and spiritual needs. That’s the life Jesus desires to empower in you as you trust in Him.

And as we close, let me give you a few ways we all can apply these truths to our lives, even if you aren’t a husband.

Girls, as you are considering marriage or even thinking about dating a guy, the number one question you should be asking about any guy who is interested in you is this: Is he like Jesus? Who cares if he has a great job or a charming personality or a handsome face? If he doesn’t love Jesus and if Jesus isn’t living in him then he won’t love you like Jesus. Girls, don’t give your heart away to anyone who doesn’t want you to know and love Jesus.

Guys, as you are thinking about marriage, your number one question is: Am I becoming more like Jesus? You can’t be a husband who leads in love like Jesus if you aren’t being led and experiencing the love of Christ.

Wives, encourage your husbands to lead in your home by making room for them to make decisions. Celebrate what you see Jesus doing in them. Respect the person God has made them to be. Speak words of affirmation over them. Pray for them.

Husbands, take inventory of your life today. What needs to change in order for you to lead in love in your marriage. I pray you will be strong, tough, courageous leaders. I pray you will be humble, kind, and compassionate lovers. I pray you will recommit yourself to your bride today and step into the life Jesus promises to empower as you reflect Him in your home.

And for all of us, rejoice in the fact that Jesus loves you perfectly and is committed to lead you perfectly. Even if you never get married, you can still enjoy the reality to which marriage is just a picture. Just like a husband proposes to the woman he loves and asks her to spend the rest of her life as his beloved, Jesus invites each and every one of us to spend the rest of eternity as His beloved.

Have you said “I do” to Jesus?