

IT ALL STARTS AT HOME
Colossians 3: 18-19
Ephesians 5: 22-33

It certainly does not take a PhD in criminal justice or economics or sociology to know that America is in deep, deep trouble. All we have to do is read the newspaper, watch the evening news, or glance at the headlines on Yahoo. Crime and corruption and hatred and scandal are the order of the day. Our own government fights against our Christian heritage. And the reason is that we've elected a group of politicians that as a whole have no Christian principles themselves. But this is no surprise when you consider the following statistics about Americans and our moral compass, the Bible.

According to one survey, fewer than half of all American adults can name the four gospels. Another survey said that 60% of Americans can't name five of the Ten Commandments. Other misconceptions include, 82% of Americans believe that the saying, "God helps those who help themselves" is a Bible verse, 12% of adults believe that Joan of Arc was Noah's wife, and one survey of high school seniors revealed that half of them thought that Sodom and Gomorrah were husband and wife. And when our politicians and educators throw up their hands in despair and look for answers to our moral and social ills in vain, someone needs to tell them that when you X-out of your society the only source of righteous conduct that you have, which is God and His Word, what do you expect?

But as Christians you and I cannot try to pull the mote out of our country's eye before we pull the beam out of our own eyes first. And until we start to become salt in a world of dullness and light in a world of darkness we need not expect things to improve.

Albert Mohler, president of Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, says that it is up to the present generation of Christian parents to reverse the course, that parents cannot depend on the church, no matter how biblical its teachings, to be responsible for what God has commanded them to do. And that is to instill in their children and grandchildren the doctrines of the faith. Speaking to Israel, God says in Deut. 4:9, “Only take heed to yourself, and diligently keep yourself, lest you forget the things your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. And **teach them to your children and your grandchildren**”. And what Al Mohler says is so right. It all starts in the home. The home is the very foundation of the culture and the church.

But beloved, we must go back a step even further. Before our homes can be right the relationship of husband and wife must be right. You can't have a Christian home without a Christian husband and a Christian wife who not only are Christians, but who act like Christians in their relationship to one another. And so today we are going to begin to look at the roles of the godly wife and the godly husband. Please turn in your Bibles to Col. 3:18-19 and Eph. 5:22-33. In our study through Colossians we've seen a very definite flow of thought from the apostle Paul. In the first two chapters we saw a great theological treatise on the person of Christ. We saw Jesus exalted as the fullness of God in bodily form. Jesus Christ is nothing less than Almighty God. We saw that in Christ we are complete; we need nothing else for salvation or sanctification than Him. Jesus has defeated every foe that would damn us and defeat us.

And then in ch. 3 Paul turns to the practical side of our faith. We are to set our minds on things above, we are to put off the old man and put on the new man every day, living a godly life that is pleasing to Him. And last week we began to look at some of the nuts and bolts of that life, which was putting on love, submitting to God's peace, and digesting the Word. So we see a progression, from theology to methodology, from

appreciation to application. And last week the main truth that we saw was that the ultimate calling upon our lives as believers was to do everything in the name of Jesus Christ, that is, to glorify God in all of life.

But the Holy Spirit has not yet finished instructing the Colossians on their beliefs and behavior. He wanted to be even more specific, more practical, and so He tells them to start fleshing out His commands in the place where it was most important, and that was in the relationship between man and wife, the most intimate, personal relationship on earth. Where the masks come off, where the veneer has worn away, and where the real you is revealed as in no other relationship.

Now, in Colossians Paul merely makes a statement about the conduct of husbands and wives with very little detail. But in his parallel teaching in Ephesians he gives a fuller explanation that I want us to focus on today, and he starts with the wives. He says, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord”. And all of the men of God said, “Amen”, and all the women of God said, “Paul, I didn’t quite understand you. Would you please say that again?” But ladies, Paul did not stutter. He said, “Wives, submit”. The word means, “to line up under”, or “to subject one’s self”, or “to obey”. And when some single women hear the word submit, it is just another reason for them to stay single. They’re like an old maid I read about recently. Speaking of a potential marriage she said, “What do I need with a man? I have a stove that smokes, a parrot that curses, and a cat that stays out all night”. And many women say, “I have to submit to my boss. I have to submit to my creditors. Why should I have to submit to a husband?”

Now, let me stop and say something before we go any further that we should know already. Our Heavenly Father wants only the best for us. The Psalmist wrote, “The Lord is good (Ps. 100:6)”, and, “No good thing will He withhold from those who walk uprightly (Ps. 84:11)”. While the world was still perfect, the first institution that God ordained was

marriage, because it was not good that man be alone. And it was a good and perfect institution. And God made Eve as Adam's helper (Gen. 2:18). And God confirms the woman's role as helper in 1 Cor. 11:3 when He says that the head of the woman is the man. And ladies, you can be assured that that whatever He commands you to do is for your good. But if that is so, then why did He command wives to do that which is so unnatural, that which to many is so disdainful, that which can be even so fearful, to submit to your husband?

Well, let me begin by saying that God has not asked you ladies to do something that He has not already asked your husband to do. Look back at verse 21. God says that husbands and wives are to submit themselves to one another. You see, God never intended for the marriage arrangement to be nothing but a sugar coated business arrangement, where the man has a 51% stock holding and the woman 49%. And I can tell you that any man who believes that is liable to go to work one morning and find out that he just lost 49% of his assets to another company. No, the marriage relationship is a 50-50 partnership between two people who LOVE each other and each giving 100% effort to make it work. And that means mutual submission one to another. That means two people living by the God's admonition in Phil. 2:4, "Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others". It means two people not keeping score, but sacrificing to serve the other and to make them happy. And ladies, if this is happening with you and your husband you can be sure that when it comes time for you to submit to him for the good of you home you will be glad to do it.

"Whoa, there!" I can just hear some of you ladies thoughts right now. "Bro. Mike, you said 'if this is happening', and brother, I here to tell you that it ain't". And I know it's not happening with some of you. But hang on and in just a few minutes we'll see why God says to submit anyway. But right now I want us to see from our text three reasons that

God has said, “Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord”, and the first reason is for **peace**. Peace in the home.

I want you to think about something. We know from reading 1 Corinthians that the church at Corinth was a troubled church with little if any peace. They had more drama going on in that church than any youth group ever dreamed to have. And one of soaps swirled around the practice of speaking in tongues. And after Paul dedicated a whole chapter to addressing the issue he concluded by saying, “Let all things be done decently and in order”. Beloved, our God is a God of order, because order brings peace, and God is a God of peace. And you see, there was no peace in the Corinthian church because there was no order. They were all speaking in tongues willy-nilly, and Paul said there was danger that unsaved people would come into their services and say, “You are all out of your mind”. For where there is disorder there is turmoil, always. Whether it be in the church, or the boardroom, or the classroom, or the courtroom, or the locker room, or the living room, **disorder always brings turmoil**.

But it is different where there is order. Where there is order there is peace. And in every area of life we see where God has established order. In the Trinity there has been order from the foundation of the world. 1 Cor. 11:3 says, “....the head of Christ is God”. Two equal Persons, yet one head over the other. God established order in Creation. He told Adam and Eve, “...have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth” (Gen. 1:28). What happens when this order is overturned? Locusts plagues, elephant stampedes, grizzly bear attacks and the like, and no peace. God established order in government. He said in Rom. 13:1, “Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities..” God established order in the church. Look at verse 23a. Christ is the head of the church. And when all of the body of Christ submits to the head of the body what do you have? You have peace in the

church. And God says that the husband and wife relationship is to be as the Christ and church relationship, that the husband is to be the head and the wife the follower. And when we follow God's order, just like there's peace in the church there's peace in the marriage.

Ed Young pastors 2nd Baptist Church in Houston, one of the largest SBC churches in America, and he says, "Every enterprise has its leaders. Our nation has a president...every state in the nation has its governor....cities have mayors...Someone has to be in charge of the enterprise....A woman is not inferior to a man....Positionally they are equal....Functionally, however, they are different..... And if the follower tries to be something that God did not cut her out to be, there is turmoil. Let me give you an example from another slice of life. What would you think, sports fans, if you heard on the sports news tonight that Nick Saban had decided to switch a couple of people around in the starting lineup against LSU this Saturday. He decided to start A.J. McCarron at guard and guard Anthony Steen at quarterback. Think that would make the Tide a better team? Ladies, God wants you to embrace your role and fulfill your role as a helper to your husband. And when you do it will do much to bring peace to your home.

There is another reason that God has ordained that the wife submit to her husband. And that is for the purpose of **provision & protection** Look at verse 23 again (...and He is the Savior of the body..) Jesus is our Savior. He died primarily to save us from our sins. But as children of God, He gives us so many earthly blessings as well. David said, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want". And you know the rest of the psalm. The shepherd will provide for the sheep's every need. Green pasture, still waters – there is nothing the sheep needs that the shepherd will not provide in abundance. But he not only provides, he protects. No lion, no bear, no vulture, no sheep thief, nothing at all will ever harm the sheep as long as the shepherd is on his watch. And our Shepherd is the

Good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, and He never slumbers nor sleeps! And dear ladies, that is what your husband should be to you. Your provider and your protector. And he is able to do this so much better when you submit to his leadership in your life, rather than trying to be the leader yourself.

Stay with me for a few more minutes, ladies. I want you to know that when God made you He gave you a high and lofty status as members of the feminine gender! He made you to be adored and cherished by your husband. That's certainly the thoughts that Adam had the moment he woke up from surgery and laid eyes on Eve. When Adam looked at Eve her countenance was beautiful to the eyes, her voice was pleasant to the ears, and her flesh was soft to the touch. In fact, an Arabic definition for the Hebrew word for "woman" means "to be soft".

Do you know what someone told me this week? Ladies, you can go to the gym and pump all of the weights in this world, but you'll never build your muscles up like a man. Because God just didn't give you the muscle mass to do it. Now, we've all seen these women who've worked out and have muscles like a man. But they had to cheat to do it. They had to take the male hormone. But shoot, ladies. Why would you want to have muscles like a man, anyway? God made you beautiful, soft, and lovable. God made you to be honored by your husband, not to look like your husband. God made you to beat your husband at consoling children, not arm wrestling. God made you to be provided for by your husband. Yes, you are to be a Proverbs 31 wife. You are to be industrious, you are to look out for the welfare of your husband and children. But at the end of the day, you are the one to be adored, cared for, and loved. And that's another reason for submission.

There's a third reason for submission. Not only for **peace, provision and protection**, but also for a **pattern**. Look at verse 31-32. Paul writes that this "one flesh"

relationship between husband and wife is a great mystery. How two people can become so very inseparably intertwined in body and soul. But the mystery extends to another relationship, that of Christ to His church. Paul says that the marriage between a man and a woman is the earthly picture of the spiritual marriage in Heaven of Christ and His bride. And what an even greater mystery that is! That the God of glory would become human flesh and die for the sins of every human being. And then that He would take every one of them who would trust in Him as His spotless bride, washed in His own blood. It is more than the mind can fathom. And when men look upon a godly marriage of a godly man and woman they actually get a glimpse of what the marriage is like between Christ and the church. But ladies, without submitting to your husband, this pattern will never be seen.

Now, let's go back and address the question I promised earlier to tackle before we close. What if the man you're married to is lost? Or what if he is out of the will of God, and he treats you like a household slave when you submit, and you know that he loves his coon dog more than you? Should you still submit? And the answer is "yes". You should submit for two reasons. First of all, you should submit for **your husband's profit**. Look at 1 Peter 2: 1-2. Peter says that there have been many men who cared nothing for God and His Word, but by observing the godly conduct of their wives, were won to faith in Christ, without one word. And ladies, that word is still true! The greatest influence your husband will ever receive will probably not be from some TV preacher or Easter sermon or Christmas musical he attends, but from just watching you serve Him like Jesus, and feel you loving Him like Jesus. And for the sake of your husband's soul, God says, "submit".

There is a second reason that God would have you to submit to your husband. Not only for **his profit**, but also for **God's pleasure**. Look at verse 3-4. Sisters in Christ,

there is nothing more attractive about you to anyone than a demeanor that only comes from Heaven. A gentle and quiet spirit that reflects a heart of peace, no matter what the circumstances. You know people like that. There's just something about their personality. It's not necessarily what they say, it's not what they do, it's what they are that makes them stand out. And they are beautiful to you, and they are even more beautiful to God. And ladies, when you trust God and seek to fulfill your God-given role of submitting to your husband, even though he may be the biggest jerk in the world, God is pleased! For Paul said to submit to your husband as unto the Lord. And when you submit to your husband, you are also submitting to Him.

There is one more question we must address before we close. Is there ever a time when a wife should not submit to her husband. And the answer is a qualified "yes". Yes, if your husband asks you to do something that you know to be contrary to the will of God, or if he asks you not to do something that you know to be the will of God, then you have the liberty not to submit. When Peter and the apostles were called in by the authorities and asked why they continued to preach Christ after they had been commanded not to, they replied, "We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29). But this comes only after much prayer and receiving God's peace, because oftentimes the will of God is the hard road, just like the cross. But be assured ladies, if you will obey and submit God provides the strength!