

Lesson Thirteen
Colossians 3:18-19
Marriage...Jesus Style

The new man in Christ is to have an impact on the society in which he lives and that begins with personal relationships. Paul uses the latter part of his letter to the Colossians to speak directly to believers about the relationships that comprise our home life, specifically marriage. Just as the gospel changes individual lives, it also has the power to transform how we relate to one another. By definition, if something has been transformed, it has been dramatically altered or undergone a total change. We will always experience difficulties with people, but the Bible challenges us to bring all of our life under the Lordship of Christ so that any potential problems are transformed into agents of true change. Even though this lesson contains instructions to specific individuals, there is something to be learned by everyone if we allow the Word of God to dramatically alter our thinking.

Day One – The Christian Wife
Read Colossians 3:18

1. Christianity can have a powerfully positive effect on society when the individuals within the home reflect Jesus Christ. Who is Paul specifically speaking to in Colossians 3:18? What are they instructed to do?

a. Give some reasons why you think Paul began his instructions with this important person.

2. The exhortation given in verse 18 to the Christian wife can be a sensitive one for women. What is your initial thought or impression when you hear the word submit or submission?

a. Why is submission sometimes difficult for wives?

b. Use a dictionary to define the word submit so that you might fully understand the meaning.

4. Galatians 3:28 clearly affirms that, spiritually, there is no difference between male and female. However, many problems in Christian marriages come from a misunderstanding of the scriptural roles of men and women. What do you learn about God's perfect design for submission within marriage?

1 Corinthians 11:3

Ephesians 5:21-24

a. What did you glean from these verses that you can apply to your life?

5. There may be times when submission within marriage is not an absolute. What principle is found in Acts 5:29 that supports this idea?

a. List some ways in which this principle could be applied to the marriage relationship.

Day Two – The Wife's Attire

Read Colossians 3:18

1. Reread Ephesians 5:22b and Colossians 3:18b. What is to be the underlying motivation for wives to defer to their husbands?

a. How could this insight affect whether or not a woman will submit to her husband?

2. The biblical principle of submission is not limited to marriage. What instructions are given to all believers in Ephesians 5:21 and 1 Peter 5:5?

a. Why do you think that God has asked us to exercise this in our relationships?

b. What key elements will make submission, to whomever God has placed in authority over you, an easier task?

3. Use what you have learned thus far to describe a woman who exemplifies godly submission in her marriage or to those in authority over her. What changes will you make in order to model her attitude and behavior?

“An excellent wife is the crown of her husband...” Proverbs 12:4a

Day Three – The Christian Husband
Read Colossians 3:19

1. Under both Jewish and Greek laws and customs, all of the privileges in marriage belonged to the husband and all the duties to the wife. Christianity changed everything. What two-fold instruction is given in verse 19 that introduced a new standard for husbands?

2. What else is expected of Christian husbands according to Ephesians 5:25-29?

a. Do you see ways where this might be different from what is usually expected in marriage?

3. The word for love in both the Ephesians and Colossians passages is agape. Agape love expresses a God-given unconditional love. It is not a love based only on passion or emotion but is self-sacrificial in a way that willingly chooses to keep loving, even when it is difficult. One of the most familiar scriptures that gives a step-by-step guide on how to practice agape love is found in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. From these verses give an illustration of how agape love can be put into practice in a marriage. Note: if you are not married, it is still important to think about how true love should behave in all types of relationships.

Love suffers long:

Love is kind:

Love does not envy:

Love does not parade itself, is not puffed up:

Love does not behave rudely:

Love does not seek its own:

Love is not provoked:

Love thinks no evil:

Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth:

Love bears all things, believes all things, endures all things:

4. What benefits would be present in a marriage if both husband and wife reflected this kind of thinking and behavior?

5. The command to love with God's agape love is not limited solely to husbands. What admonition for wives is found in Titus 2:4-5?

Day Four – Pattern for Success

Read Colossians 3:19

1. In Colossians 3:19, Paul gives a special word of warning to husbands against having bitterness toward their wives. Bitterness can poison homes, marriages, and relationships of all sorts, while giving Satan a stronghold to launch even greater attacks. The word bitter means to exasperate, irritate, be harsh, and resentful. How can applying the following verses help to keep these types of attitudes and actions from becoming a way of life?

Hebrews 12:12-15

1 Peter 3:7-12

2. Whether married or not, can you truthfully say that you are free from all bitterness? Is there anything that you are holding against your spouse or anyone else for that matter? Take some time to sit quietly before the Lord and ask Him to search your heart to see if there is anything that is causing you to sin in this way. Use the space below to write your thought or a prayer.

3. A question was once asked as to whether a certain man was a Christian. The reply was given, "I do not know; I have never lived with him." That statement is so very true as it's who we are in our daily life that gives true evidence of our faith and if we are abiding in Christ. Our faith should be actively reflected in all relationships, especially marriage. How has the Lord spoken to you personally regarding the commands given in Colossians 3:18-19? How do you think He would have you to apply the knowledge you have gained?

In Christian marriage, love is not an option. It is a duty. – R. C. Sproul

