

Sermon: Part 9, Living in Your New Life in Marriage (Colossians 3:17-19)

IN *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. What have you believed in the past about marriage/relationships? What unspoken beliefs did you learn from your family?
2. In what culture today (or the past) would you be comfortable being a husband/wife?

UP *Time that is devoted to the Word of God*

1. Review the information we have about the culture of Colossae. How would Paul's writings have been accepted at that time? In what ways were his writings revolutionary for the church?
What differences/similarities are there between that culture and ours today? (world view and Church culture) What is the response today to Paul's writing and viewpoints?
2. Read Col 3:17. How does this verse connect with the next section about spouses, family, close friends and people at work? What is the link between this verse and what Paul wrote in Romans 12:2?
3. For wives: How does the phrase 'as it is fitting in the Lord' (3:18) impact the definition of the word 'submit' to your husband?
For husbands: How does the phrase 'just as Christ loved the church...' (Eph 5:25) impact the definition of the word 'love' your wife?
For everyone: How does the phrase in Eph 5:21 impact relationships?
What qualities and benefits emerge when Col 3:18,19 are followed?
4. Read Genesis 3:16 and Galatians 3:26-28.
What does each verse say? For the Christ-follower, what importance do these verses hold?
5. In **Dr. Eggerich's** writings, ** he suggests four ways to get off the 'crazy cycle'--
Commit to doing relationships God's way;
Choose to believe the best about the other person's intentions;
Make the first move – James 4:17;
Never give up when you fail.
What makes these steps a challenge for you?

**<https://www.facebook.com/Dr-Emerson-Eggerichs-180469222010773/>

OUT *Seek to be the Community of God's people in your community*

1. What principle(s) has impacted you from this message?
How will this work out in your marriage? In other relationships?
If you are single, how will this work out in your relationships?
2. What old 'ways' can you replace with new 'ways' this week?

UP – IN – OUT reflect a balanced life including a focus on our personal relationship with the Father (UP), staying connected to the Body (IN), and reaching our world (OUT).

THE WORD (NIV)

Genesis 3:16

¹⁶To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."

Colossians 3:17 – 19

¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.
¹⁸Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Romans 12:2

²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Galatians 3:26-28

²⁶So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

Ephesians 5:21, 25

²¹Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ... ²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

James 4:17

¹⁷If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.

Sermon Study Summary

Paul says in Colossians 3 that the Christian faith is more than just believing the right things. It involves living out the truth in our day to day lives. Knowing Jesus will change how we relate to those closest to us – including our spouse (Col 3:16-18). Marriages typically start out good and then falter. The core reason for this is sin. We say 'I want what I want rather than what God wants.' Paul says we need to renew our mind (Rom 12:2) if we want to live the full and abundant life God has for us, and if we want to have healthy friendships and marriages. We do this by 'deleting' old sinful and selfish patterns and habits and adding Godly patterns, habits and thoughts in their place. Paul speaks of two such principles in Col 3. They are 'wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord', and 'husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.'

Historically these were radical statements. In Paul's day women had no legal rights. They were, in effect, their husband's possession. They were to be used and enjoyed, not loved or cherished. Submission and obedience was expected. They were seen as incapable of intelligence, leadership or creativity. Marriage was a one-way hierarchical relationship centered on the husband. Yet, is not Paul's statement urging submission simply endorsing the same status quo? No. Because:

1. If Paul had written from the perspective of the culture he would not have addressed wives at all. Addressing women as equals alongside their husbands in Paul's challenge was revolutionary.
2. Calling a husband to love his wife as Christ loved the church, or in other words, to give himself to her and to love her with a sacrificial love, was utterly ridiculous to those in ancient Colossae. God was calling husbands to a radical new way of thinking in how they related to their spouse. They were to stop being the center of their universe, humble themselves, and put Christ and His truth, ways and interests in the rightful place at the center of their lives. As well, they were to put the interests of others ahead of themselves.
3. Paul wrote this with the conviction that men and women were equal in Christ. Domination of men over women began at the fall (Gen 3:16). This was a consequence of sin; whenever we sin there are consequences. Before the fall Adam and Eve ruled together. Male dominated societies were never part of God's original plan. But this changed through Jesus Christ (Gal 3:26-28). At Pentecost the Spirit was poured out on men and women (Acts 2, Joel 2:28) making God's Spirit available to all enabling everyone in Christ to minister. Distinctions based on gender, age, race, slave or free were laid aside. They were all one in Christ. Any 'restrictions' Paul laid on the early Church regarding women were not intended for all times and cultures but out of respect for the cultural order of that day.

'Wives, submit to yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting to the Lord.' In Paul's day women didn't have a choice. In Christ's new kingdom women no longer 'had' to submit. It is now a choice and gift that is willingly offered by humbling yourself, trusting in Christ and believing Him and putting your husband's interests ahead of yours. What is more, in Eph 5:21, Paul tells all Christ followers to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. 'As is fitting' means that anything that does not originate in a spirit or attitude of love is not fitting, nor is anything illegal, abusive, demanding or rooted in a spirit of bitterness or self-centered jealousy.

'Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.' This is the ultimate act of submission for the husband – to give your life for the other even as Christ gave His life for us, the Church. The word used here for love is 'agape.' It is the decision to love and provide unceasing care and loving service for the wife's entire well-being. In the same way as Christ entered our world, so a loving husband demonstrates his love for his wife by intentionally seeking to enter her world by listening and seeking to understand her feelings, perspectives and thoughts. As well, the husband is prepared to make significant sacrifices for his wife.

These two principles are foundational to a healthy marriage. Eph 5:22, 25 & 33 mirrors Paul's exhortations in Colossians. Failing to follow this pathway of love and respect may find couples in what Emerson Eggerich calls the 'crazy cycle.' This is where a wife feels unloved and she in return does not respect or submit to him which in turn causes him not to love her in return and so on. Without love, she reacts. Without respect, he reacts. How does one get off this 'crazy cycle'?

1. Commit to doing it God's way. Wives need a husband's love as much as she needs air to breathe no matter what. Husbands need a wife's respect as much. Respect is a man's deepest value.
2. You need to choose to believe the best about the other person's intentions. We all see things differently (Gen 1:27). Seek to understand one another and what they are actually saying.
3. You make the first move. Anyone who waits for the other to act is disobeying God's call to unconditional love or respect (James 4:17). Humble yourself and put your faith in Him and His Word and choose to love and respect them anyway.
4. Never give up when you fail (Eph 4:26, Col 3:13). Ask one another 'Have I been unloving/disrespectful to you in some way?'