

Sermon: Part 9, Living in Your New Life in Family (Colossians 3:17-21)

IN *Opportunities to connect and pray as a group*

1. Share a time when you came to your 'family' (biological or spiritual family, friends) for support and refuge.
2. Pastor Henry referred to the family as the 'non-medical' treatment centre. Share an experience you have had with this concept.

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

1. Why did Paul write the words of Colossians 1, 2 before he wrote Colossians 3? What words and phrases in chapters 1 and 2 are especially important for an understanding of what is being taught in chapters 3?
2. Refer to Eph 5:22-33; 6:1-4 and Col 3:18-21. Discuss the significance of Paul's words to believers in light of the culture of Colossae. Discuss their relevance to us as believers in light of our culture.
3. Pastor Henry listed four characteristics of a healthy family (see summary).
 1. Healthy families love and trust the Lord;
 2. In healthy families, husbands and wives love and respect one another;
 3. In healthy families, children obey and honour their parents
 4. In healthy families, parents love and encourage their children.

Read the following verses. How does each verse connect with the four characteristics?

Matt 26:39; Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1; Gal 5:6b; Eph 6:4; Phil 2:3-5

Give examples of how these are demonstrated in a healthy family/relationship.

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

1. To what extent does your Community Group exemplify a 'healthy family'? What is it doing well? What needs to be developed?
2. Meditate on Phil 2:3-8. Ask the Spirit to stir up daily within you the qualities you need to practice in your relationships. To whom will you be accountable for your renewed actions?

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)

Colossians 3:17-21

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.

²⁰Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

²¹Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

Ephesians 5:22-33; 6:1-4

²²Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. ²³For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

²⁵Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—³⁰for we are members of his body. ³¹"For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³²This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

6:1-4 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ²"Honor your father and mother"—which is the first commandment with a promise—

³"so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth." ⁴Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

Matthew 26:39

³⁹Going a little farther, he fell with his face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, may this cup be taken from me. Yet not as I will, but as you will."

Acts 5:29

²⁹Peter and the other apostles replied: "We must obey God rather than human beings!

Romans 13:1 Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.

Galatians 5:6 b

The only thing that counts is faith expressing itself through love.

Philippians 2:3-5

³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. ⁵In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Sermon Study Summary

Where do you turn to when your confidence collapses, your self-worth is beaten up or when your heart gets broken? Do you have a family or group who serve as a refuge for you, who love you and accept you, believe in you and encourage you and stand with you no matter what? God planned for us to have that kind of family, whether it is biological or adoptive, or a family of close friends where we can go for comfort, support and encouragement. This kind of family is like a non-medical treatment centre where we can take refuge with family/friends who will pray for us, believe in us and celebrate us. In Colossians 3, Paul under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit writes us a prescription for developing healthy relationships and building healthy Godly families. He is writing to Christ-followers of Colossae.

Healthy families love and trust the Lord

It begins with deciding who we are going to trust – God or ourselves? Are we going to do life God's way or our way? (Col.3:1) We must have the same attitude as Jesus (Phil. 2:5) if we want to have harmonious relationships. Like Jesus, we need to live in humble dependence on our Heavenly Father – "not as I will . . . but as You will." Like Jesus, we submit ourselves completely to His guidance and instruction.

In healthy families, husbands and wives love and respect one another(Col. 3:18, 19)

In Christ's time women were chattel, owned by their husband. Women had no rights. Children were at the mercy of their fathers who could sell them and even kill them without consequence. Until their fathers died, children were under their fathers' complete control. It was an ungodly and self-centered society. Paul states in Col. 3 that this is not so for Christ followers – "For you died and your new life is now hidden with Christ in God." Parents lead the way in blessing the family by loving and respecting each other.

In healthy families, children obey and honor their parents (Col. 3:20, Eph. 6:1, Rom. 13:1)

Obedying our parents means to listen to them and do what they say. To honor parents means to respect them. God commands us to honor our parents regardless of their performance, behavior or dysfunction.

To do so requires us to live by faith and to find out identity in Christ. Honoring does not mean that you obey when they want you to do something illegal, immoral or ungodly. (Acts 5:29, Eph. 6:1). In our culture, as Christ followers, we are required to honor our parents as long as they are alive and obey as long as we are dependent on them. Obeying our parents pleases the Lord. (v. 20) In extreme cases where there has been extreme abuse and where there are safety issues you may have no choice but to stop seeing them. Pray that this hurt will stop with you and ask Jesus to help you not to pass this on to your family and relationships.

In healthy families, parents love and encourage their children (Col. 3:v. 21, Eph. 6:4)

This means that if you want your children to be all that God created them to be you will love and encourage them. One way to do this is to love them unconditionally. God's love for us is that kind of love. It is based on the fact that we are His. It is not earned by merit or performance. It is important that parents instill in their children expectations that are focused on the Creator, NOT on the created things which the world deems success. Children need to be encouraged to put their hope in God and constantly reminded that they are loved unconditionally by God and by us.

Another way to encourage children is to spend time with them. Our whole purpose in life is learning how to love in a culture that rewards accomplishment. It is so easy to be distracted by earthly things. We need to stay in God's word. Gal. 5:6 says 'the only thing that counts is faith expressing itself in love' and the most impactful way to love your children is to spend time with them. Play with them. Playing with children makes them feel wanted and loved. It also helps them develop a healthy self confidence.

Another way to love and encourage is to be open and transparent with them. Create an atmosphere where everyone can express their concerns, issues, questions, and insecurities without fear and ridicule. Model openness about how you deal with mistakes and failures. Acknowledge your failures and fears and ask them to forgive you when you have made mistakes in parenting. Let them hear you ask the Lord for forgiveness. Show them that when we place our trust in God and seek His help, His power is made perfect through our weakness.

All of these principles for creating healthy families are the same principles that we can use to create healthy relationships in our marriages, families, workplaces and churches.