

Put on Christ in Your Home - Colossians 3:18-21

Introduction, Outlines

- **Scripture reading:** Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:22-6:4.
- **Introduction:** Would you like to see Jesus in this life? Not the real Jesus, of course. Not the totality of His glory. But... we can truly see part of His glorious image even now! Do you believe that? Christians are those who have “put on Christ”, or, “put on the new self” (Galatians 3:27; Romans 13:14; Colossians 3:10, 12).
- **Main point:** These verses will help us to apply this principle so we may know how to put on Christ in our family life and to manifest the life and glory of Lord Jesus Christ in our home!
- **The importance of family:** The helper God created for Adam is not a co-worker, not a group of friends, but a spouse. The first commitment relating to interpersonal relationships is to honor your parents. 1 Timothy 3:5 says “if a man does not know how to manage his own household, how will he take care of the church of God?” The closest interpersonal relationship God gave mankind is family relationship. If a Christian does not put on Christ and live out the life of Christ at home, he/she cannot live out the life of Christ in church or in society outside of home.
- **Outlines:**
 - Topic: Put on Christ in Your Home
 - A. Christ displayed by wives —— subject to your own husband (v18)
 - B. Christ displayed by husbands —— love your wife (v19)
 - C. Christ displayed by children —— obey your parents (v20)
 - D. Christ displayed by parents —— teach your children (v21)

Christ displayed by wives —— subject to your own husband (v18)

- **“Submission”:** The concept of authority is not popular in our world today, which is marked by individualism. (Two examples: the students who don’t even know the word; the woman who left church in a rage.)

Some principles of submission:

1. It is an imperative command, implying that submission needs to be taught and requires much effort. It doesn’t come naturally. The nature of sinners is rebellious. The essence of original sin is rebellion against God’s authority and wanting it their own way.
2. The command is for all wives without exception, regardless of the couple’s temperaments, spiritual gifts, talents, achievements and social status. Even if the husband is not a believer, the wife as a believer still needs to be submissive to her own husband. (1 Peter 3:1)
3. Submission is an act of worship, for it is “*fitting in the Lord*” (v18), “*is well-pleasing to the Lord*” (v20). It is not just how you relate to others, but how you relate to God. Ultimately, submission is a matter between you and God.

4. Submission is entirely based on the order of authority which God ordained. “*is fitting* in the Lord”, is what our Lord sees as fitting, good and right, for it fits the beautiful order God created, no matter what our culture today may tell you. Submission is not due to any difference in essential attributes such as strength, talent, temperament, IQ and EQ, but simply because of the order established by God.

1 Corinthians 11:3 “But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.”

5. Submission must be from a willing heart. The verb means “put under”, originally as a military technical term, signifying military rank. When used in the active voice, it means “to subdue, place in submission”; and in the passive, “to be subdued”; but wives’ submission to their husbands is middle voice, meaning to put herself under her husband. It is neither the husbands’ duty to subdue his wife, “Submit!”, nor are the wives forced to do so; It is the wife willingly putting herself under the authority of her husband according to the order God designed for a harmonious and beautiful marital relationship.

1 Peter 3:4-5 “but *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands;”

Ephesians 5:33 “.....she respects her husband.”

6. The Lord Jesus is the ultimate example of submission. (John 6:38; Philippians 2:8)

Submission does not mean:

1. Inequality in status or value; 2. Compromise on biblical standard. Wives cannot submit to demands directly against biblical command (Acts 5:29); 3. That you cannot express opinions or have discussions. Wife is her husband’s helper (Genesis 2:18) seeking unity through communication is the way to enjoy the beautiful relationship of oneness; 4. Being passive about it, only doing things when asked; 5. Manipulation with emotions (crying, sweet talks, etc.), in order to get your husband to decide on something you’ve already decided.

Christ displayed by husbands —— love your wife (v19)

- “**Love your wives**”: Love is how *all* believers are to treat one another, and so wives obviously need to love their husbands too. However, the specific emphasis of love falls on the husband. **Loving your wife is extremely important!** If God has given you a wife, your primary duty in loving others is to **love your wife first**, and then to love brothers/sisters and all people.

Similarly, it needs to be taught and reminded and doesn’t come naturally. For many men, their career is their whole life, and their home is merely a place of rest and entertainment, just so that they can have better performance at work! (For example, a pastor was divorced by his wife, who complained, “He has a mistress. His mistress is the church!”)

The love of Christian couples is very different from the love in the world:

1. An indispensable family member —— Lord Jesus; 2. A different ultimate goal —— worship God (v17); 3. An example to follow——Christ’s love to His church (Ephesians 5:25).

Love’s core essence: Self-sacrifice (Ephesians 5:25; Galatians 2:20; 1 John 3:16; Romans 5:8).

Imitating Christ’s love to His church: Unconditional love (Romans 5:8, 10); Unending love (John 13:1); Resolved love (John 15:16); Purposeful love (Ephesians 5:26-27); Exclusive love (John 17:9).

- “do not be embittered against them”; Paul knows that this is the common temptation for husbands. The verb literally means “to be bitter” (Revelation 8:11). Some wives are full of bitterness when they think of their husbands, and the first thing they say when they talk about their husbands is "Oh, don't even mention him.....” This is what being “embittered against your wives” looks like, no matter how you got her there.

Christ displayed by children —— obey your parents (v20)

- “be obedient....in all things”: Many principles of wives’ submission can be applied to children as well:
1. It needs to be taught, there is not a single child who is born obedient to parents; 2. It is an act of worship, for the ultimate reason of obedience is “for this is well-pleasing to the Lord”; 3. Lord Jesus is the example (Luke 2:51).

“Submission” focuses on attitude, “obedience” focuses on action. The Bible often uses “submission” to describe the wives’ duty and “obedience” the children’s duty, but they are reversed in some verses. God requires that our attitudes and actions agree. Having only attitude without action or only action without attitude is both wrong.

Some principles for obedience to your parents:

1. Complete obedience. “be obedient....in *all things*”. As long as it is not directly against the biblical command, you have to obey.
2. Immediate obedience. No repetition or “count to three.” Obey as soon as you hear a command for the first time. Delayed obedience is rebellion.
3. Wholehearted obedience. You cannot think in your heart “I am still playing it in my heart” while you put your toys away. God requires that your attitudes and actions agree.
4. Proactive obedience. Older kids need to learn to ask parents “what may I do to help” and not just obey when asked. God wants us to love selflessly, not merely looking out for our own personal interests. You need to ask intentionally, “Mom, what can I do to help you?” then happily obey.
5. Private obedience, not just when parents are present. “What you are in private, that you are and no more.”

Christ displayed by parents —— teach your children (v21)

- “Fathers”: Fathers have primary responsibility for raising children , for they are the leaders of their families。 Although they are not making every decision for every detail themselves, they do have

responsibility to make major decisions、 discussing parenting issues with their wives、 and lead wives in seeking God's will together in prayer.

- “do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.”: Once your children lose heart, it is hard for them to accept their parents' teaching and discipline willingly.

Common ways to let your children lose hearts: 1. Overly severe discipline (You must not discipline children with anger, you have to deal with your emotions first before you can discipline); 2. Not expressing your love to your children (especially after discipline); 3. Not listening to children's thoughts and feelings (especially when your child is emotional); 4. Setting unrealistic expectations (for example: grade); 5. Showing favoritism when you have more than one children (Jacob loves Joseph, and.....); 6. Excessive protection, not giving any freedom to children, and letting the children feel no trust from the parents.

Ephesians 6:4 “Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”

Not provoking your children is a negative command; the positive responsibility is to “bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” “Discipline” focuses more on using punishment as a way to train. When your children are young, the main method is to use “the rod”(Proverbs 13:24, etc.); “Instruction” focuses more on informing the mind, that is, teaching the truth. Discipline and instruction are parents' responsibilities. Letting your children lose heart is bad because it hinders your positive responsibility to discipline and instruct them.

Summary

Two summary points, as we go back to the overall principle:

1. These four verses are not independent, but are based on the previous texts. If you want this kind of beautiful family relationship, you have to first examine whether you have the life foundation of the first three chapters, including: true knowledge of Christ in 1:15-20; genuine salvation in 1:21-23; pursuit to walk in Christ in 2:6-7; watchfulness against false teachings in 2:8-23; heavenly perspective to seek Christ in 3:1-4; resolution to put off sin in 3:5-11 and to put on the character of Christ in 3:12-17. Only this way, your family life can be blessed by God!

2. When you have this kind of new life, your family life starts to change, and you will see Christ's glory richly dwell in your home, for all these roles point to Christ! Wives' submission to husbands reflects Christ's submission to His heavenly father; Husbands loving their wives reflects Christ's love for His church; Children's obedience imitates young Jesus's example of total obedience to His earthly parents; Parents' instruction to their children just like Christ's shepherding and teaching His church by God's Word to make us grow. A family living according to the biblical order is a Christ-filled family, full of Christ's glory!