



ISSUE

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Faithful Sayings

BULLETIN OF
THE OL-
SEN PARK
CHURCH OF
CHRIST

Services

Sunday: 9:00 AM

9:30 AM

10:30 AM

Wednesday: 7:00 PM

Elders:

Patrick Ledbetter

Brady McAlister

Jeff Nunn

Deacons:

Ben Hight

Blake McAlister

Walker McNear

Sam Nunn

Lance Purcell

Justin Smiley

Trevor Yontz

Evangelist:

Kyle Pope

God's Simple Plan for the Home

By Kyle Pope

In Paul's letter to the church in Colosse, he wrote four verses that set down in clear and simple terms the plan God has for the home. In an age of ever-increasing confusion over the family let's consider these inspired words.

I. "Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord" (Col. 3:18, NKJV). Americans value independence. We pride ourselves on standing up for our rights and not letting anyone take advantage of us. To many a command to **"submit"** doesn't sit well—but let's make sure we understand what this means. This word is translated from the Greek word *hupotassō*, a military term describing subordination within an arrangement or order. All relationships need organization to function. If all lead a group goes in different directions. So it is in the home. God has ordained, as a consequence of the events in Eden, that man be given headship in the home and leadership in the church (cf. Eph. 5:23; 1 Tim. 2:13-14).

However, that doesn't mean that man is of greater value than woman. Christ died for all and in Him male and female **"are all one in Christ Jesus"** (Gal. 3:27-29). Submission doesn't mean the husband always knows best and the wife's judgment is worthless. The example of Nabal and Abigail illustrates this. Her wise counsel, yet submissive disposition saved her foolish husband from slaughter (1 Sam. 25:1-42).

Submission means that a wife willingly places herself under the authority of her husband for the orderly functioning of a home. That means she shows him respect (Eph. 5:33). An organization won't flourish if its members treat its leaders disrespectfully. She doesn't talk bad about her husband or mock him. The example of Sarah calling Abraham **"Lord"** is not just a quaint story

of a woman that didn't know any better—it is an example of speaking well of a husband to his face and to others (1 Pet. 3:6). A wife's submission does involve obedience. Paul told Titus that older women must teach younger women to be **“obedient to their own husbands”**—adding the warning that if this is not done the word of God will be **“blasphemed”** (Titus 2:5). Yet, as in all things, that doesn't mean wives must obey an instruction to violate God's law—**“we ought to obey God rather than men”** (Acts 5:29). In Christ, there is a sense in which all are to submit to one another (Eph. 5:21). So, the godly husband considers the wife as he leads.

It is now fashionable in our world to portray husbands as buffoons, incapable of good decisions and leadership. This may be in reaction to the portrayal in years past of the “I Love Lucy” type wife whose foolish decisions always resulted in disaster. As Christians we must not allow popular media to determine our views of the home. If a wife treats her husband as untrustworthy and foolish, he will likely act that way. If she treats him with confidence, respect, and love she will generally find that he assumes his place of responsible leadership in the home as God intended.

II. “Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them” (Col. 3:19). Unlike the parallel text in Ephesians 5:23-33, in our text Paul does not emphasize that, **“the husband is head of the wife”** (Eph. 5:23a). The focus in Ephesians is two-fold. Paul is teaching about the home, but also about the church, comparing the headship of the husband to Christ's headship of the church (Eph. 5:23b). In our text the focus is on love and attitude.

We often falsely see leadership as dominion. The Bible teaches that it is service. Paul told the Ephesians that the husband's love for the wife is **“as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her”** (Eph. 5:25). This isn't the tyrant only concerned with his own way, it is sacrificial love giving oneself for the good of his wife. Paul taught, **“husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies”** (Eph. 5:28). We care for our bodies. We feed and protect them. We consider what is best for them. That is how the husband should love his wife. There is no place for neglect, abuse, or mistreatment. Such behavior is sinful and totally contrary to Scripture!

In our text, Paul adds that husbands must, **“not be bitter toward them”** (Col. 3:19b). All relationships have times when conflict or irritation occurs. A submissive wife may struggle with how to express her needs and concerns to her husband. If our attitude is not what it ought to be we might see this as nagging and ignore the feelings of our wife that motivated her words. In areas of intimacy, there are times when one mate or the other may not be as receptive because of the stresses of the day, fatigue, or other concerns. While husbands and wives must not neglect this responsibility to one another (1 Cor. 7:2-5), neither should we allow it to become a source of bitterness and resentment. The husband who loves his wife as Christ loves the church will look out for his wife's needs, interests, and condition over and above his own (Phil. 2:4).

Peter wrote, **“Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered”** (1 Pet. 3:7). The husband that God wants a man to be is one that considers the spiritual well-being of his wife and family over and above all other things.

III. “Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord” (Col. 3:20). As children, it isn't always easy to obey our parents. Sometimes we don't like what they tell us to do—we think we know better. Sometimes it means we can't do what we

want to do. Why should we? After all, lots of kids around us disobey their parents and they're ok. So why should we obey our parents?

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul put it, **“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right”** (Eph. 6:1). We should obey our parents because it is the right thing to do. Our parents know things we do not. They are looking out for us and have experienced things we haven't. Unless our parents instruct us to do things that God condemns (Acts 5:29), it is always the right thing to obey our parents. Paul went on to tell the Ephesians, **“Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth”** (Eph. 6:2-3). Things go better for us as children when we obey our parents. We don't get in trouble as often. Our parents trust us more and will usually give us more freedoms when they know we follow their instructions. In our text in Colossians, Paul tells us that obedience to our parents is, **“well pleasing to the Lord”** (Col. 3:20). All of us should want to please God. He has loved us more than anyone ever has. We should want to do what pleases Him and avoid things that do not.

Children sometimes imagine that obedience to their parents is a sign of being “a baby” and long for when they can do whatever they want. The truth is that obedience to our parents teaches us obedience to God. Christians are children of God. In faith and baptism we become **“sons of God”** (Gal. 3:26-27). This is a great blessing that is bestowed upon us. As mere human beings we can **“be called children of God”** (1 John 3:1). As children of God it means we are entitled to some things. Paul told the Romans that if we are children, then we are, **“heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together”** (Rom. 8:17). Imagine that! We can be **“joint heirs with Christ”** of the glories of heaven! However, if we are children of God, what kind of children must we be? Peter said we must live **“as obedient children”** (1 Pet. 1:13-16). If we obey our parents when we are young it helps us obey God throughout our entire life.

IV. “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged” (Col. 3:21). While the role of headship may, at times, place a special responsibility on the father to train children, the fact that Paul in this text addressed only the

father should not be seen as excluding the mother's responsibility to her children. In some cases a mother may bear much of the responsibility. That was certainly true in the case of Timothy. The fact that his father was a Greek (Acts 16:1, 3), but his mother and grandmother are praised for passing on their faith to him (2 Tim. 1:5), likely suggests that his father provided little or no spiritual influence in his life. In Paul's letter to Titus he specifically tells older women to teach younger women **“to love their children”** (Titus 2:4). Proverbs teaches that neglect of discipline demonstrates hatred, but prompt discipline shows love (Prov. 13:24). It warns, **“The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother”** (Prov. 29:15). This would not be said to shame the mother if the mother held no responsibility in matters of training and discipline. The home will not be what it should if the father and mother neglect their responsibility to discipline and train children.

In his letter to the Ephesians Paul qualifies this instruction by writing that fathers must **“bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord”** (Eph. 6:4b). That tells us some things. First, parents must not raise children based on human theories and ideas. Children must be trained in the principles taught in Scripture. Far too often parents imagine that

their ideas and God's ideas are the same. They are not. We must teach them the things God sets as priorities and the attitudes that God demands. Second, it shows that God considers it the responsibility of parents to shape the direction children take. The modern concept known as "free range parenting" is one thing if the goal is teaching independence and personal responsibility, but another thing if it imagines that children should have no guidance in shaping behavior and attitudes.

Finally, this also shows us that training children must be both instructive and corrective—educational and punitive. The words translated "training" and "admonition" are both used in a positive and negative sense in the New Testament. "Training (Gr. *paideia*)" is found in the "instruction (*paideia*) in righteousness" taught in Scripture (2 Tim. 3:16), but also in the suffering Christians must endure as the unpleasant "chastening (*paideia*)" God allows us to ex-

perience in order to help us grow (Heb. 13:5, 7, 11). "Admonition (Gr. *nouthesia*)" may take the form of lessons learned from studying Old Testament accounts "written for our admonition (*nouthesia*)" (1 Cor. 10:11), or the rebuke that must be given to a divisive man in a "first and second admonition (*nouthesia*)" (Titus 3:10). Training of children that does not have a balanced degree of instruction and correction is not pleasing to God.

We must note, however, while Paul's warning not to "provoke your children to wrath" (Eph. 6:4a), or as in Colossians simply "provoke them" (Col. 3:21) infers a measure of training that may be seen by the child as unpleasant, it also cautions that unrestrained (or harsh) training can leave children "discouraged." The Psalmist explains the nature of God by comparing Him to parents as they should be. He writes, "As a father pities his children, so the LORD pities those who fear Him. For He knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust" (Ps. 103:13-14). We must understand our children's limitations and be patient with them. While we must encourage them to grow, our attitude must not be bitter and harsh. This is seen in the example of church discipline. When a sinful man who had been disciplined repented, Paul told the Corinthians "to forgive and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one be swallowed up with too much sorrow" (2 Cor. 2:7). Training as God would have it shapes the behavior of a child, but avoids harsh words and reactions that can leave a child discouraged and "swallowed up" by the discipline his or her parents have applied. May God help us to shape our homes by the simple pattern God has set for us.



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