

This AM we're going to pick up our series in Colossians entitled Masquerade. In this series we've been unmasking cultural Christianity by considering what it means to have a faith that aligns w/ God's Word instead of a settling for a *feel good* faith that seeks out the comforts and conveniences of culture.

So far, Paul has challenged us to live an abiding life that exhibits the qualities of the H.S. instead of attempting to manufacture a faith of good works. He also challenged us to embrace a Biblical Jesus instead of settling for watered-down cultural Jesus. Then two weeks ago, we looked at the necessity of setting our affection and priority on Jesus instead of on the gods of this world so that in everything we say in do in word and in deed, we do it for the glory of God.

In vs. 18, Paul moves from faith precepts to faith practices. As w/ all of Paul's letters, he's consumed w/ putting *faith into action*. Paul expresses that while faith begins in a vertical relationship w/ God, it is executed horizontally as we relate w/ others. He is going to challenge us to clarify through our relationships at home whether or not Jesus is on the throne of our lives b/c authentic faith always proves itself in the most important areas of our lives.

When it comes to relationships Paul says all relationships are bound by (2) principles – **submission** and **authority**. He explains these precepts are the result of a new presence, power, and pattern in the life of the believer – **Christ in you**.

When Jesus is enthroned, the most important place where it should be apparent is in the home. More specifically, it shows in how a husband loves his wife, in how a wife responds to her husband, in how children obey their parents, and in how parents guide and mentor their children.

## I A WOMAN of Faith (Submit Willingly)

*Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

Studies have shown that most women don't like this verse reacting negatively to the idea of *submission*. They associate *submission* w/ ideas like, "slave, inferior, or doormat." But despite a Gallup poll showing that 69% of the public disagree w/ this principle, it doesn't mean we're to discard it. We need to understand it.

submit (*hupotasso*) means to willingly put oneself under the authority and care of another. It is a military term of a soldier who comes under the authority of a superior officer and to accomplish a common mission.

Imagine a Master Sergeant who is older, wiser, and more experienced than a 2<sup>nd</sup> Lieutenant. That Sergeant understands the importance of saluting the Lieutenant and following his orders. If he didn't, there'd be chaos in the military. But if the Lieutenant issues a bad order, the Sergeant is going to take him aside and say, "Sir, you might want to rethink that order, and here's why..." Wives, you may be smarter, wiser, sharper, and better than your husband, but God has placed him as the leader in your family. Don't blindly obey him. And if he makes a bad choice – don't rebel... talk w/ him.

The emphasis is on a wife who willingly makes herself subject to her husband's authority and care – she falls in line under his love. It's a *voluntary* response to God's will.

**Submission doesn't imply inferiority but responsibility –** **1 Peter 3:7** says men are to honor their wives b/c they're the weaker partner. Yet the only way women are inferior to men is in physical strength – meaning most husbands can beat their wives at arm wrestling. But in most every other way, women are equal or even superior to men.

**Gal. 3:28** says there's no difference b/w male and female. Meaning in God's eyes, women are not sub-servient or lessor than men, but that they have a different role. In marriage, a wife is to be her husband's helpmeet and challenger. Thus, she is equal in God's sight w/ a specific role to fulfill w/in the context of the marriage.

**Submission doesn't mean to obey but to align under** – A Christian wife isn't commanded to **obey** (*hupakouo*) her husband, as children are called to obey their parents. Instead she aligns under his commission. A wife isn't a slave to be ordered around or who serves at her husband's beck and call – she is a bride to be cherished, respected, and adored.

This is very much a spiritual issue. If you remember when we recently studied Ephesians, we learned this idea isn't so much about marriage as it is about a woman's spiritual condition and walk w/ God. **Explain (Turn to Gen. 3:16)**

After Eve was deceived and gave the fruit to Adam and he ate, their eyes were open to right/wrong and good/evil and they sinned. God then came over for a visit to find that His favorite tenants had started a new clothing line and had eaten themselves out of house and home. So He cursed the serpent, the woman, and the man. I want to look at Eve's curse.

*The Lord said to Eve, "I will increase your pain in labor when you give birth, and you will **desire** your husband's authority, but he will rule over you." 3:16*

Before the fall, Eve lived under the authority and responsibility of Adam, but after the fall she was cursed w/ a desire for Adam's position under God.

**desire** (*t'shuqa*) meaning to seek control over or to compel.

The curse on Eve was that a woman's desire from this time forth would be to usurp the place of man's headship and that he'd resist her desire and would try to keep her in her place under his rule.

Thus, it might not be a wife's desire to fall in line under her husband's love, but it is her spiritual calling under God to submit to her husband as unto the Lord.

I'm reminded of a quote from Cynthia Heald, "Submission is ducking so that God has a clear shot at your husband."

Just as wives have a role, husbands are to love as Christ loves.

## II A MAN of Faith (Love Sacrificially)

*Husbands, love your wives, and don't be embittered w/ them.*

I like the way the Message reads – *"Husbands, go all out in love for your wives. Don't take advantage of them."*

God has appointed the man to be the head of the household. The word *husband* comes from an Old Norse word meaning "one who holds the house together." Like a "band around a house," a husband's role is to be the leader responsible for holding the marriage and family intact. But sadly, in too many homes today, men aren't stepping up to fulfill God's call on them to be the spiritual leader of their home.

## A Love Your Wife SACRIFICIALLY

love (*agapate*) to unconditionally and continuously love sacrificially. Husbands are to love their wives as Jesus loves them – unconditionally and sacrificially.

Agape love tells men *how* they are to love – Ephesians 5 says a man is to love his wife as Christ loves the church – He laid down his life to give her life. In other words, Love does whatever needs to be done and doesn't consider the cost or keep a tab – whatever is needed it gives. It gives w/out looking for anything in return.

It's easy for a woman to fulfill her role when you're fulfilling your role. She can come under your care when you genuinely show you care for her.

Let there be no mistake – while we can't minimize the importance of a wife's chaste and respectful attitude and gentle and quiet spirit as a catalyst for change, God's priority in change is the husband. If the husband will listen to the Word, the Lord places the welfare of the relationship squarely on his shoulders first. When he becomes "Christ" to her by sacrificially loving her unconditionally, she can become "the church" to him. *Anders*

## B Behave SWEETLY to Your wife

embittered (*pikrainesthe*) to have a bitter taste. Paul tells husbands not to call their wives “honey” then act like vinegar. A Husband isn’t to exhibit a harsh temper or resentment toward his wife. He is to provide loving leadership (not dictatorship) in the home.

When a husband provides loving authority and the wife responds w/ loving submission, there can be mutual concern w/in the marriage.

## III A CHILD of Faith

*Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this pleases the Lord.*

*Children, obey your parents in the Lord, b/c this is right. Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment w/ a promise that it may go well w/ you and you may have a long life in the land. Eph. 6:1-3*

children (*tekna*) doesn’t necessarily refer to young children, but to all children who are still under the authority and care of their parent’s roof – any child still living at home.



Why not longer? B/c when a child gets married, he or she is to leave mom and dad and cleave to their mate. They move out to become responsible for themselves.

The safety net is removed. This doesn't mean that they no longer have to honor, but obedience is now off the table.

Until then, children are to follow (2) simple commands – obey and honor. To **OBEY** has to do w/ action while to **HONOR** has to do with attitude.

## A Children **OBEY**

**obey** (*hupokouo*) – to hear under. Meaning to listen w/ attentiveness and to respond appropriately to what is heard.

It means that a child is to place themselves under the authority and care of their parent's guidance and instruction. Kids are to do as told so long as what their parents ask does not break God's Word or man's laws.

But just as submission doesn't come naturally to a wife or sacrifice to a husband; neither does obedience come naturally to a child. Obedience is a learned behavior that requires supernatural intervention and sometimes a big stick.



Children learn obedience under the guiding and loving hands of their parents. As parent's model obedience to God, it influences children to obey. But even that isn't enough and parents have to provide proper discipline to influence their children to learn obedience. The result is that children are to obey their parents as they would respond to God.

## B Children HONOR

Obedience is a requirement of every child so long as they live under the care and provision of their parents, but to honor is a lifetime requirement.

honor (*timao*) to value highly and to hold in the highest regard and respect.

To honor your parents means to uphold their worth and authority by doing those things that will cause them to be respected in the eyes of others. It means that you love and care for them throughout their lives and that you never neglect them or act like you have never been their child.

## IV A PARENT of Faith

*Parents, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.*

**parents** (*pateres*) sometimes translated as *father*, but should be translated *parents* as it is in Hebrews 11:23.

**exasperate** (*erethizio*) to stir up, irritate, or provoke – don't nag your kids.

This teaching was a totally new concept. Most families were in shambles and God's love wasn't in the home. According to the Roman law of *patria potestas* – a father had absolute authority over his children including the power of life and death. He could throw any of his children out of the house without reason. He could sell them off as slaves. He could even kill them if he desired – with no accountability. History records that newborns were placed at the feet of their Roman fathers to determine their fate. If the father picked up the child, he could stay in the home, if not then the child was disposed of.

You might think this was barbaric, but the truth is, there are scores of parents today who would do the same if not worse if they thought they could get away with it. In fact, according to a recent report, the primary reason for foster homes is not divorce or death – it is parental disinterest.

Paul calls parents to engage in the high privilege and responsibility of raising their children opposite of the world's schemes and strategies. The goal is to strengthen and prepare them for life so they can succeed and not lose heart.

lose heart – w/out courage – It carries the idea of being listless and sullen. Parents can cause their children to despair b/c they over or under discipline their children.

What are some ways parents can exasperate their children so that they lose heart?

- Over – **PROTECTION** – Parents have too strict of rules giving their children no freedom to grow.
- Depreciating their **WORTH** – Too many children have been devalued b/c a parent has never given them worth.
- Setting Unrealistic **GOALS** – Never allowing a child to succeed or discover a sense of accomplishment.
- Failing to Show **AFFECTION** – Never communicating or showing that you love your child. (tell/show them)
- Failing to **PROVIDE** for their Needs – Giving children food, shelter, trust, privacy to help them grow.
- Failing to Provide a **STANDARD** and **EXAMPLE** – Children need discipline and a worthy example to follow – be your child's hero.
- Relentless **CRITICISM** – Criticism immobilizes, encouragement mobilizes.

- Emotional and Physical **NEGLECT** – Don't abandon your children, be there for them. Be their greatest fan.
- Excessive and Inappropriate **DISCIPLINE** – It is never right to physically, verbally or emotionally abuse your kids.

You might be saying, well no one ever did that for me – maybe not, but I bet you wished they had – it would've changed many things about your life for the good. You might not have ever turned to drugs, or alcohol, or to a degrading relationship that has stripped you of your dignity. No one may have ever done something like this for you, but you can certainly do it for your child. It is your spiritual responsibility and it is never too late to start living for him.

If a child lives w/ criticism, he learns to condemn.

If a child lives w/ hostility, he learns to fight.

If a child lives w/ ridicule, he learns to be shy.

If a child lives w/ shame, he learns to feel guilty.

If a child lives w/ tolerance, he learns to be patient.

If a child lives w/ encouragement, he learns confidence.

If a child lives w/ praise, he learns to appreciate.

If a child lives w/ fairness, he learns justice.

If a child lives w/ security, he learns to have faith.

If a child lives w/ approval, he learns to like himself.

If a child lives w/ acceptance and friendship, he learns to find love in the world.

The 4/14 window. The single largest unreached people group in the world is children b/w the ages of 4 to 14.

**As parents, grandparents, etc., we need to see our children as our mission field, our spiritual legacy, and as the people we'll impact the world for God's glory.**

Exasperating them only hinders our opportunity to reach them. As parents, we must give our children the best portions of our lives and not the leftovers and frustrations if we hope to instill a hope and a future that involves God.

Prominent man in NYC was concerned about his son. Asked the principal what he should do to help. The principal told him to resign from the presidency of the chamber of commerce and the local club and sign up for something in his son's life. He said, "Leave the positions for someone whose family is grown and does not need as much attention. Your first duty until your child is out on his own, after providing the necessities of life, is to be an intricate part of his life. You should help him w/ his lessons and w/ his interests and hobbies. You should become his comrade. By giving the same amount of time and attention to your son you now give to your own priorities and pleasures, you'll save your son and will probably do more to help your city and club."

Are we aware if we died tomorrow, the company we work for could easily replace us in a matter days? But the family we leave will feel the loss for the rest of their lives.

In Christ we've been made new w/ a new opportunity to do something great for God. Paul says that one of the greatest ways we can reveal the authenticity of our faith is by the way we respond to our families.