

The Christian Home

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[0:00] Turn in your Bibles, please, to Colossians 3. Colossians 3, and tonight we'll be reading from verse 18 through verse 21.

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

Well, Paul has been teaching us how to live the Christian life, and tonight we come to what living the Christian life looks like in our families.

And you notice that I just had read this one little part, and that was for a reason, hopefully it was a good reason. I just wanted you to see how succinct and simple and brief and clear God's Word is for you, for us, and our families.

In this very practical topic, the Word is very simple. There's nothing too deep here. God gets down on our level. He looks us right in the eye.

[1:24] He holds our hands like we were toddlers. He uses very simple words. And that's good. So each one of you, or most of you, will go out of here with just one thing to work on.

And if you're a married father, you'll have two things to work on. Two things to do, two things to think about. So I think in a lot of ways, the one thing you want to do if you're preaching this passage is get out of its way and just let its simplicity be there.

And then you take it in and you apply it in your life. And so we'll just have four simple lessons from this passage. And the first is that the Christian life has to be lived at home.

The Christian life has to be lived at home. The gospel faces its most severe test, its greatest challenge, when it enters our living rooms, when it comes into our houses, when it comes into our families.

So if God can change a man as he is in his family, if he can change a woman, a child's family life, the gospel, God can change anything.

[2:40] But if the gospel can't change a man in his family life, then it really does no good at all. Can't change a man at all. Because it's at home, that's where we are what we are.

Isn't it? That's where we are. That's where our most true selves come out. Not here, not even at work, but at home with the people that we live with. It's said when the slippers go on, the mask comes off.

The slippers go on, the mask comes off. And so it's right here, it's in the middle of your home life, that the gospel comes in and Jesus says, this is where you need to live the Christian life. This is where being in Christ needs to change how you're doing and what you're doing.

Now, put yourself in the first hearer's place. You're in Colossae. You're at Philemon's house, probably. Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave, has come in and everyone's shocked and surprised.

I was so shocked and surprised when I saw Mabel. Now imagine that a hundred times over. So everyone sees Onesimus for the first time in a long time. And he's given a letter.

[3:59] Or Tychicus, Paul's messenger, has handed Philemon a short note explaining what's going on with Onesimus. You can read that letter in the book of Philemon. And now everyone is sitting down.

The whole church is seated. And Tychicus begins to read a letter from Paul. And in this letter, Paul is waxing eloquently and magnificently about the glories of Jesus Christ.

Nowhere like this letter do you see the majesty of Jesus Christ. He reaches his hand back all the way to the beginning. And before there was anything, there was Jesus Christ.

And for him, from him and through him are all things. And so he's reached as far back in time as you can go. He's reached far into the future. He's the beginning and the end. He's reached his hand into the deep things of God.

And Christ are the full riches of complete understanding. And Christ, there is neither Greek nor Jew. And so on. Christ is all and in all. This magnificent, glorious theology.

[5:09] That to this day, the church is still getting their hands wrapped around. Their heads wrapped around it. There's been all this high theology. And if you were there, and it was your first time to hear it, I'm sure your head would be bowed in concentration.

And you're listening for all your worth, your intent. And you're thinking, oh man, I don't know. I think I missed some things here. And I think I'm going to need to hear this again. This is some pretty deep stuff.

I think I'm going to have to go through all this again. And I'm really not sure I quite got all of that. And then all of a sudden, very abruptly, Tychicus says, And we're now in the living room, in the family room, in the bathrooms, in the hallways of your house, in the van driving to church, in the bedrooms.

And we're in these very ordinary, small, domestic moments of our lives. And Paul says, that's where the Christian life needs to be lived. That's where all this needs to come down into.

And so there's no good in being nice at church and having a smiling face at church. No good in knowing all the theology if you don't live it out at home.

[6:55] With your wife. With your children. With your husband. With your parents. Now most of you have heard of Mr. Talkative from Pilgrim's Progress.

Mr. Talkative walked with Christian and Hopeful for a while. And Hopeful was hopeful for him. Hopeful was obviously an optimist on all things.

And so Hopeful was encouraged by Mr. Talkative. But Christian said, you know, I think you've misunderstood this man. This man, he talks and he talks. And he knows how to appear godly. He knows the right things to say. He knows how to appear to be a Christian. But this is how you can know what he is. And this is what he really is. Christian says, he is a saint abroad.

And a devil at home. When the slippers go on. The mask comes off. Now that's the first lesson.

[7:58] The Christian life. And all that high theology. And all the glorious things of Colossians. Wonderful things. It needs to be lived out. In your home.

Or there's no point to it at all. And so. I will just leave it here. You be your own judge. You evaluate yourself.

According to the word of God. The second lesson is. Not everyone has the same role. Not everyone has the same role. And I told you these were going to be simple.

When Christ comes into a family and starts organizing it. He doesn't give everyone the same job to do. He doesn't think we are interchangeable. So you can put one in for another.

And it doesn't make any difference. He doesn't make us all the same. Being in Christ doesn't mean that all the differences that we have. By our first creation. Are just suddenly undone.

[8:55] And we become these automatic. Sort of asexual. Amorphous sort of beings. That just you can mix and match however you want. We each have a different role. Husbands.

Wives. Children. Fathers. Others. Now our world thinks it knows better. Doesn't it? And it's. I mean at one time. No one would say this.

But our world has come to the point. Where it thinks it knows better. And so. I think. Our world thinks we're all interchangeable. Men. Women. They're basically the same.

Even. Just a bit of difference in biology. But wisdom is proved right by her children. That's what Jesus said. And what Jesus meant there.

I think is. Now what happens when you do that? Does that wisdom play out? Does it work? Well.

The world's way doesn't work. All the roles. When all the roles are interchangeable.

[9:53] The result is no one does anything well. The result is. Is people act against. What God has called them to do. And called them to be. And so dads try to act like moms. And moms try to act like dads.

And children are confused. And husbands and wives try to act like each other. And the result. Is not beautiful. It is not attractive. It is not workable.

It doesn't bring out a symphony. It sounds more like. The symphony warming up. The cacophony of music. Where each one is doing their own thing. And no one is working together.

It's not. The. Beethoven's ninth. It's the symphony. Getting ready to play Beethoven's ninth. But into that cacophony of noise. That the world is producing.

And you don't have to be a genius. And you don't have to look very hard. Look out your door. Look down the road. Maybe even look into your own family. Into that.

[10:48] Jesus comes to make our families beautiful. And he gives each one of them a role. He gives each one a separate responsibility. And you'll notice that too.

Paul here is not talking about our rights. He's not talking about our privileges. He's talking about our responsibilities. That's where the focus needs to be.

If you're going to live a beautiful life in your family. A Christ pleasing life. You don't first think of your rights. You think of your responsibilities. Your roles. So wives.

Here's your responsibility. Husbands. Here is your responsibility. Children. Here is your responsibility. He doesn't say focus on your rights. On your privileges. He says the way to do the family for each one.

Is not to first think about what they deserve. And what they have coming. And what they've earned. And their rights. By who they are. But what's my duty? That's the question. What's my duty?

[11:46] And the reason that is the way it is. Is because the Christian family takes after her Lord. Or their Lord. They take after Christ. And so Jesus comes into the world.

Not saying this is my right. This is my privilege. He came. Not to be served. But to serve.

Husbands. You have to get that wrapped in your head. Wives. That's the all important question. Am I going into this marriage. To be served. Or to serve.

And that's the first question we have to get. And so Paul starts with our responsibilities. Jesus didn't come into the world saying. Now Mary owes me this. You know that?

He obeyed his mom. He kept his mom together. Because he was almighty God. And yet he doesn't say. Mary you owe me this.

[12:45] He says. Yes mom. And he didn't say. But I'm God. And so Joseph owes me this. No. It says he was obedient to his parents. Because.

He wasn't. Coming in. With his rights. Not saying. What do I deserve? Now the world is always saying that. This is what I deserve. This is what I have coming.

That's what your right as a woman is. That's what your right as a man is. That's what your right as a child. Or a parent is. Whatever. This is your right. And that's how we like to talk to ourselves. Isn't it? When you argue. You don't argue for the other person's rights. Do you? You argue for your own. In your head. Well Christ is the opposite.

He came not to be served. But to serve. And so in a Christian family. In a family where Christ is the head. One should say. What is my duty? What is my role?

[13:40] What is my responsibility? And so I'm not worried about other people. I'm not worried about my spouse. I'm not worried about my.

Even my children. First. I'm worried about myself. About the mission Christ has given me. And so my role is different than their role. But my task is enough. My task is enough for me.

So let me get to that task. So that's the second lesson. We each have a different role. Not everyone has the same role. Third lesson.

Each of our roles is clearly defined. Each of them is clearly defined. Each role is different. Each role is specific.

Defined. And he begins with wives. Not sure why he begins with wives. One pastor said.

[14:38] Because a woman is what makes a home. That could be. He begins with wives. People say this whole business is ancient. And chauvinistic. And has no place in our culture.

But here is. Paul says. The idea. Is that woman. A woman. Should submit to her husband. And so they say.

That the idea that a woman. Should submit. Is an attack on the dignity. And the worth of a woman. But. That is the furthest thing. From Paul's mind. Already here.

He said. That we are all. One in Christ. Christ is in all. Christ is all. No one is bragging about. Their role. Their gender. Their nationality.

Their. We have glory in Jesus Christ. In the book of Galatians. He says. In Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek. Neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ.

[15:35] And so. In Christ. There is no superior place. There is no superior. Special place. Special privilege. That a Jew has over a Greek. And in the same way.

There is no superior standing. No special place. No special privilege. Of a man over a woman. You don't have an extra badge.

An extra step up. You are not better in God's eyes. Just because you are a man. Male and female are different. And yet. In Christ. They have an equal standing. But male and female. In a family. One is the head. And one is called to submit. So male and female are not on different levels.

One is not more important than the other. And yet. Just as God is the head of Christ. And Christ is the head of the church. So. The husband is the head of the wife. Now. The shorter catechism.

[16 : 31] Says that the son is equal. In power. In glory. With the father. Equal in power. In glory. To the father. There's not one bit of difference. In the majesty.

Of the son of God. And his father. The glory. The worth. The value. The treasure. Is the same in both. And yet.

The son. Submits. To the father. Now wives. God calls you. To that same duty. To be one in glory. And worth. As with your husband. And yet. You take the place. Of the son. And submit. To your husband. The word submit. Is the combination. Of two words.

Meaning to order under. So you order under. Your husband. You order your life. Under your husband. Just as Jesus. Ordered his life.

[17 : 25] Under his father. He says. I just do what. I see my father doing. I just do what. My father wants me to do. And his whole life. Was. Was ordered out for him.

He wanted to obey. His father. He wanted to do. What his father. Wanted him to do. And so he ordered. His life. He ordered his steps. He ordered his days.

Under the direction. Of his father. To accomplish. His father's will. And. That's hard. That's hard. That is crushing. To the natural pride. God. And so wives. I just want to give you. A couple things to help. The first is. That he tells you.

To do it. And what I mean by that. Is some. Submission is something. That you do. You are called to do. God is. Men. Men.

[18 : 20] God is not talking. To you here. In one way. This is none of your business. He doesn't say. Husbands. Make your wives submit. He doesn't say.

Husbands. You have to get your wives. On board. And get. Get them to bow down to you. Or submit to you. He doesn't say. Men. It's your right to have this. He doesn't say. Men. Ensure your wife submits.

Ladies. This is yours. This is what he has put. In your lap. And this is what you do. For him freely. Not compelled. Not forced.

Not ground into you. By your husband. But submission freely. Given. Just as Christ. Submits to his father. And the church. Submits to Christ. And so put your plans.

Your desires. Your designs. For your life. Under him. That is your responsibility. The second thing.

[19 : 15] That should help you. Is this. Jesus did this. Jesus did this exact. Same thing. And he has grace. To help you.

He doesn't send you. To some place. Without help. He doesn't send you. To some place. That he hasn't been. And so you have this. Extra hard job. Of submitting.

To a sinful man. But greater. Than sin. Is grace. Greater than your husband's. Sin. Is the grace. Of our Lord Jesus.

Sin. So Jesus is greater than your sin. Your husband's sin. And so Jesus knows. He understands your husband. He understands where he's at.

And Jesus can help. So women. Your role is clearly given to you. Defined. Men. Your role is defined. Love your wives. And do not be harsh with them.

[20 : 10] And if you wonder what this means, you can go over to Ephesians chapter 5. I'm not asking you to turn there, but Ephesians chapter 5 is the sister passage to this passage in Colossians.

And you can read the kind of love that he is talking about here. That's going on. See, when Paul wrote Ephesians, at the same time he, right afterwards or right before he wrote the book of Colossians and the book of Philemon, and he gave them to one messenger.

And so all these thoughts are coming out of Paul's head at the same time. And so if you want to really know what he's talking about, what kind of love is he saying, you can go over and look at Ephesians, and you will see that what kind of love Paul is talking about is the love to die.

To die to yourself. To lay down your life for your wife. Wives, you are called to death.

And husbands, you are called to your own death. And so take your wife's welfare upon you. Do her good. Provide for her. Build her up. You have one thing to do.

[21 : 24] Love her. Love her. Love your wife. Love your wife. Love your wife. Love your wife. And so their submission should be gladly given to you because, you know what, you have their best interest at heart.

And when they submit to you, they are submitting to their own best welfare. Their best good. So their ordering their life under you should be their joy because all of your plans and all of your designs for them are good.

Because you have this beating heart of love, this selflessness that's not saying, what do I have coming? What's in this for me? But it's filled with love and not selfishness.

Not for your own ends, but for their good. Ephesians says, this is how we know. Or John says, this is how we know what love is. Jesus laid down his life for us. You want to know what love to your wife looks like?

This is how you know what love is. Jesus laid down his life for us. Husbands, go and die for your wife. Die to your expectations.

[22 : 31] Die to your rights. Die to your demands. That's what he means when he says, don't be harsh with them. Your rules should not be harsh.

Shouldn't it be like sandpaper? Shouldn't it be like vinegar? Shouldn't it be like bleach? Something you feel and you're like, oh, that's no good. I don't want that on me.

It burns. It hurts. It scours me. And so, is your rule over your wife a sparkling fountain of refreshing life?

Or is it bleach and vinegar? Or is it bleach and vinegar? The rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them. But not so among you. So, men, if you are harsh with your wives, harsh, demanding vinegar, bleach, sandpaper, if that's the kind of rule you have, then you will give an account.

Because Jesus is not that kind of king. Jesus wasn't that way with you. And so, what will you say to him if that's how you treat your wife?

[23 : 38] It reminds me a lot of that parable of the man who was forgiven, and yet he went back and choked his fellow servant. He forgot how much and how his master treated him.

And men, we need to remember how our master has treated us. Children, you're next. Obey your parents. Obey your parents.

You only have one thing to worry about. Obeying mom and dad right away, all the way, with a happy heart. Right away, all the way, with a happy heart.

And I know that is hard, too. I was a child once. Ages ago. You want to do what you want to do.

I know that. You're having fun doing what you're doing, right? You want to play that game. You're in the midst of all this. And mom and dad interrupt you. Don't they?

[24 : 43] They interrupt your game. They interrupt your plans. And they say, now go do this. Now, no one likes that. Your mom and dad don't like that. But Jesus calls you to not only do what you agree to with your mom and dad.

It's not agree with your parents. It's obey your parents. Obedience is not doing what they say when you want to do what they say. It's doing what they say when they say it with a happy heart.

So do you need help with that? Children, I know you need help. Because I need help with that kind of thing. I really do. And Jesus can help you.

When I find things that I don't like to do, the first person I go to is Jesus. And Jesus gives me grace and help and strength and mercy. And he understands that hard.

You know, because Jesus was a little boy one time. And he was playing games. And his mom said, now go do this. So he knows what it is to have your plans pulled up short.

[25 : 51] And he can help you. And it's impossible to do it any other way. It's impossible to do without Jesus. So Jesus is the kind of Savior that can help you when your mom and dad tell you to do something and you don't want to do it.

Now fathers, don't embitter your children. Don't turn them bitter. Don't turn them sour. Don't discourage their hearts.

Don't turn them bitter towards the things of God. Don't turn them bitter toward you and your role. If you are a dad and you have this adversarial role with your children, where you're just like that sandpaper and you're after them and it's all the grit and everything like that, that will discourage them.

So men, who's in charge of how your children are brought up? Well, you are. Not your wives. You are. And of all the things that Paul could have said, I mean, there's been books and books and books about what we need to do to be a Christian dad.

But what's the one thing that he says? He says, guard your children's hearts. Don't let them turn bitter. Don't let them get discouraged.

[27 : 10] Don't break their spirits. Don't hurt their hearts. Don't make living in a Christian home a terrible, difficult thing, where you are always getting picked at, where nothing you do is ever good enough, where no fault is too small to overlook.

We have to realize that the demands of a Christian home are higher. But if they are higher, so should the kindness and the love and the patience and the compassion of you, of us fathers. In men, it's easy. I don't know if I'm speaking for all of you, but I'm sure I'm speaking for some of you. Men, it is easy for us to be drill sergeants. We love to see our little soldiers marching all in a row, doing exactly what we tell them to do.

But I just want to remind you, they didn't sign up for your army. They didn't sign up for your army. They were born into your family.

They didn't ask to be there. That's something to remember. But God gave you children. Not soldiers, not robots, but little children with little hearts.

[28 : 26] And he gave you easily discouraged children. And so Paul's word is, be careful with them. Honey catches more flies than vinegar. And so there you have it.

Each role clearly defined. If you're a wife, order your life under your husband. If you're a husband, the call is to love your wife.

If you're a child, obey your parents. And if you're a father, don't embitter your children. So each of us have one thing. Dads, if you're married and you have children, then you have two things.

Now here's the fourth lesson. There's a different reason attached to each thing, to each role. Not all the reasons are the same. Each one are specifically tailored to the person involved.

So wives, for you, when you are submitting, what will help you to do that? Well, it's this, that it's fitting in the Lord. It's what's beautiful. It's what's good.

[29 : 27] It's what goes together. It's just the thing to do. So Christ is putting together a beautiful puzzle. And he's making this beautiful picture. And a picture that reflects his glory, his beauty.

He's doing this. And so do you want to have a part in what the Lord Jesus is doing? Well, here's how you can fit in. Here's how you can get involved with what Jesus is doing.

You submit. And if you don't, you are undermining what Jesus is doing. You're sticking out like a sore thumb. And so, you won't make the teachings of God our Savior attractive.

Instead, you'll make it ugly. But humble, willing, submission makes Jesus and his ways and his wisdom and his salvation attractive.

It's what's fitting. It's what's beautiful. beautiful. So you like beautiful things. Here's how you can make a beautiful picture out of your life. Husbands, Paul doesn't give you a reason to love your wife.

[30 : 35] If you want the reasons, you can read Ephesians 5. Paul gives all kinds of reasons in that passage. You are one body with your wife. You're one flesh.

And so, who doesn't love and care for his body? When you are loving and caring for your wife, you are loving and caring for yourself. So there's something of your own self-interest here that Paul would call on.

He says, Christ died to cleanse his bride. He gave himself up for her. He gave himself up for you to love you. And so, picture, husbands, picture Christ on the cross.

And amidst all the things that he was thinking about, he was thinking about his bride. And this was a love offering, a love gift to them to say, I love you.

And I love you so much, I will have my heart broken. I'll be destroyed for you. And so, a heart gushing love for his wife.

[31 : 38] Now go and do likewise. Children, obey your mom and dad. Why? Because it pleases the Lord. It makes Jesus happy.

Jesus likes to see you obey and it makes him happy. And you understand that, don't you? Just like you want to please your mom and dad. You know, your obedience actually pleases Jesus.

So maybe mom and dad don't give you some good reasons to obey. Maybe they don't ask you in the very nicest way. Maybe they are thoughtless and demanding.

Because your parents are sinners and that's what they do sometimes. And I'll be the first to admit that it's hard sometimes for parents to remember what it's like to be a child and have your own agenda and your own things to do.

And so here's a reason that doesn't depend upon your parents at all. Whether they're being good or bad parents or whether they're being helpful or not helpful or anything like that, here's a reason that doesn't depend upon them at all.

[32 : 43] Because you make Jesus happy when you do it. Just that. Dads, why not embitter your children? Because they'll get discouraged.

They'll lose heart. You don't want to do that to your children, do you? Grind them down. Discourage them. And Jesus doesn't want you to discourage your children, dads.

Jesus doesn't like that. Jesus welcomed little children. When he wanted to talk about what kind of people go to heaven, you know what he did?

He took a little child and said, now you have to become like one of these things. And he didn't like it. He didn't like it at all when people discouraged little children from coming to him.

So Jesus is the greatest king of all. Men, you need to understand this. And we, all of us need to understand this. Jesus is the greatest king of all. He is so glorious.

[33 : 53] He compels angels to fall down and worship his majesty. He crushes kings. He raises his voice and the earth melts.

He wades into battle. Read Revelation 19. He wades into battle and the blood of his victims is all the way up to his knees, all the way up to the bridles.

He's wading in the blood of his enemies. He is fierce. He is powerful. He is awful in his glory. And yet, he is the most childlike of all.

He is the most humble of all. And his heart doesn't echo with the violent and the mighty. His heart echoes with the child's heart. And he cries out, Abba, Father, not my will be done, but your will be done.

His heart's a child's heart, so don't discourage that in your own children. Dads, do you know how to encourage your children?

[35 : 03] Do you know how to cheer them on? Maybe you need to start to figure that out. Look to Jesus. Jesus takes the lambs in his arms.

He doesn't march them into heaven. He carries them into heaven. And so, don't embitter them or they'll be discouraged. So, four lessons.

The Christian life has to be lived at home. Not everyone has the same role. Everyone's role is clearly defined. There's different reasons attached to each one, each role. So, there's four lessons, but there's just one Savior, Jesus.

Jesus. The one Jesus who is with us, the one Jesus who loves us, the one Jesus who is for us, and so, may the grace of our Lord Jesus be with you all.

Amen. Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you that you do concern, you are concerned about the little things in our lives, the little domestic moments of our lives, and thank you for this helpful and clear and succinct word.

[36 : 17] I pray that you would give each one of us one or two things to think about and continue to remind us of them, and Holy Spirit, write them upon our hearts so that we willingly obey.

thank you, Lord Jesus, that your grace is enough to change a man, a woman, his children, to change them and to transform a home, and so I do pray that you would give us homes that are pleasing to you, that you would save children here, that you would save young and old, that they might be drawn to you in your wisdom and your kindness and your goodness.

There is no Savior like you, help us to live for your glory tonight and this week. In Jesus' name, Amen.