

Devotion on Book of Colossians (Chapter 3 v18-25) - 29 May 2014, Anno Domini (Ascensiontide)

(Anno Domini, abbreviated AD or A.D. expressly complies with Isaiah 61:2 & Luke 4:19, i.e. "To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD." (Isaiah 61:2))



¹⁸Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. ²⁰Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. ²¹Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. ²²Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: ²³ And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; ²⁴ Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵ But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. (Col 3:18-25)

We might consider today's text to deal with the family – both physical and divine. The issues are so large in all of Scripture that we may only skim the surface in addressing the magnitude of meaning in this devotion. I believe Paul begins with the most important and continues to the lesser. He begins with a role model of the Church – WIVES (and mothers).

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." This verse has, in my humble opinion, been grossly misinterpreted to mean blind obedience

to the husband – it does not mean that! The wife is to submit herself to her husband only insofar as it is *“fit in the Lord.”* An alcoholic or abusive husband is NOT fit in the Lord. The husband should be a man of high integrity who sets the example in love and sacrifice for his wife. Regardless the politically correct crowd, women and men are different in nature and talents. I am free of personal culpability in this matter since I only expound on Scripture. If you disagree, with which part of God’s Holy Word do you disagree?

A woman has a trusting and nurturing heart that is naturally inclined to the sympathies required by children. She believes the best always, and prepares for the worst. In the Garden at Eden, Eve trusted beyond the limits of wisdom. She went before the tree that the Lord had warned against. She stopped before the tree, and then she engaged with the devil there in conversation. She was beguiled (seduced) by the serpent. She trusted without discretion and paid a heavy price for it. *“Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee.”* (Gen 3:16) She truly was deceived while Adam was not deceived. *“But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence. For Adam was first formed, then Eve. 4 And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression.”* (1 Tim 2:12-14) Women are easily deceived because they truly want to trust others. It is part of their natures. This is one of the reasons that women are not called as ordained ministers. They are susceptible to being deceived by smooth talking jackals. But the strength and loyalty of a woman is also in her trusting nature. If her husband is a good man and Godly, she will trust without restraint, and cause her husband to be successful in both religion and life.

Paul is simply restating a principle that permeates Scripture from beginning to end. *“Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.”* (Eph 5:22-24) The role of a wife is to keep the home fires burning and in raising Godly children. I wonder what responsibility could be greater than the latter. The fate of rulers and of nations depends upon it. As old adage goes, *“The hand that rocks the cradle is the hand that rules the world.”* (William Ross Wallace) I will add that only insofar as a man is Godly and respectful to his wife, is the wife to submit to her husband. The wife submits as unto the Lord. That is out of righteous treatment and love that the Lord treats her – so she responds in kind. Notice that Paul does not say for the wife to love the husband. If the man is good and true, that is a given.

*“¹⁹ **Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.**”* I am afraid that the greater liability is laid squarely upon the shoulders of the husband! To begin with, if a man does not love his wife, why on earth did he marry her? True love does not wane. The husband is certainly commanded to love the wife. Why is not the same true for the wife? Think deeply of the institution of marriage as a type of the Church. If you will recall that Christ is the Bridegroom and the Christian Church the Bride, you will see a striking example of what the husband only is required to love the wife. Why would the Church love Christ, and why would a wife love the husband? *“We love him, because he first loved us.”* (1 John 4:19) Manly love of a husband will always be reciprocated by the delicate heart of the wife. Does it not seem as an over-simplification to command the husband to love the wife? It is not. It is the degree of love that makes this commandment profound. *“²² **Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of***

the church: and he is the saviour of the body. ²⁴ *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing.* ²⁵ *Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*" (Eph 5:22-25) Even though we were sinners and enemies of God, Christ died for us. Even if a wife nags and causes discontent, much love is required for the husband to lay down his life for the wife.

I fear that I may make enemies in both the male and female camps through this commentary on husbands and wives. In the case that the husbands are feeling smug and content at the submission of the wives to their moral authority (if it is not moral, it is not authority), allow me to direct your attention to this passage which Paul stipulates in the verse immediately preceding the one which calls upon the wife to submit herself to her husband (in the Lord): "*Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*" (Eph 5:21)

"Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." There are a number of fitting reasons for Paul's counsel here. First and foremost, it is, as Paul stipulates, pleasing to the Lord. It is also one of the great Commandments. "*Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.*" (Ex 20:12) Though this Commandment is the fifth of the Ten, yet it is the deciding Commandment between our duties to God and our obligations to our fellow men. The Commandment has a dual application to our father and mother on earth as well as our Father in Heaven. It also promises a long life to its adherents. The first four clearly direct our duties to God, the last five, our duties to man, and the fifth our duties to both. Is not God our parent if He is our Father? Children learn respect for God by learning respect for their parents. Perhaps this is why the modern church in America is in such a shambles today.

"Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged." God does not tempt His children, and neither should we. God may TRY us in the same way that we TRY our children, but He never acts out of personal animosity or with frivolous abandon.

"Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ." If we are servants, we must act as good servants, knowing that our service and character will reflect well upon the Lord whom we serve. If our masters are also Christian, there ceases to be a master/servant relationship for we are then near kinsmen in Christ. All that we do is to the glory of God, so we will not conduct ourselves immorally or as a sluggard.

Men gain advantage against the law in the political world, but not in the Kingdom of Heaven. God will not look with favor upon backbiting and intrigue of His people. Sins may always be forgiven, but sin creates lasting scars. Our Lord Jesus Christ still bears the scars of the whip, the nails, the thorns, and the nails in His body. It was our sins – yours and mine – that graced those scars upon His sinless person. "*But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.*" Though He loves us dearly, God will not overlook sins of bitterness and revenge among His people. If we persist in these, we may be called home short of our expected time; or we may not be so blessed with a crown of righteousness. Have you made any scars on the soft heart of a child, a lady, or a fellow man of late? Before you go to the Table of the Lord, set that offense straight insofar as in you lieth.