

A Practical Study of COLOSSIANS

How Christians Grow

“Christ is All and in All”

Key verse 3:11b — “*Christ is all and in all.*”

Study Number Ten – Christ in My Family – Colossians 3:18-4:1

Our key verse is Colossians 3:23.

There’s a book by Ken Blanchard. He writes a lot on motivation and business seminars. This is called *High Five! The Magic of Working Together*.

Weatherby had uttered some words that changed Alan’s life forever. The Weatherby family was very successful and Alan had gone to talk to the 85-year-old mother and father who were in an assisted living facility.

(High Five! The Magic of Working Together by Ken Blanchard, Sheldon Bowles, Don Carew and Eunice Parisi-Carew)

Alan knew from the way she had said it that he’d been given a key, perhaps *the* key, to Weatherby’s success.

“That’s the essence of a team, Alan. The genuine

understanding that none of us is as smart as all of us. Remember I said the team experience was humbling? Well, once you accept that none of us is as smart as all of us, you can begin to put your needs, your pride, your agenda on hold and let the team's needs, pride, and agenda become your priority." . . . [She's 85 Years old when she's saying this to him.]

"I'm an old lady cramming for her finals, Alan. I've been in this home long enough to know the signs. My Jack is on the downhill slide now. It won't be long till he goes," Weatherby said as she looked over with love and tenderness at her husband.

"When he's gone, I'll be ready to go too," she said in a quiet voice. Then she turned her head toward Alan and, [and suddenly broke into a] brilliant smile, [and] added, "But Alan Foster, before I go, I'm up for one more championship!"

With that her right hand shot up off her cane. Thin, knobby fingers uncurled and splayed out from her palm as she gave Alan the high-five sign.

"All right!" said Alan with a burst of enthusiasm as his right palm met hers.

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That's the way to go out. Recognizing the signs are there and do the best you can.

One more little story that relates to family because this is family night in the section we're looking at. This comes from Erwin Raphael McManus.

(Chasing Daylight: Seize the Power of Every Moment by Erwin Raphael McManus)

Their situation was so clearly defined in the Scriptures that there was no ambiguity about what they should do. Too often the response was the same: “I need to pray about it.”

A young follower of Christ in a destructive dating relationship is unwilling to end it even when she knows she should not be involved with someone who has not embraced the values and heart of God.

A husband whose business “belongs to God” is working virtually 24/7 while his marriage is falling apart and his children are going astray.

A deacon or financial chairman begins coalescing a mob of inactive members from his church in order to fire their new pastor.

A young couple living together are convinced that being in love overrides the biblical call not to have sex until after they’re married.

It may be hard to believe, but in these circumstances and many others, the response of people who consider themselves sincere Christians is, “I need to pray about it.”

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He’s frustrated because it’s obviously disobedience so it couldn’t be the will of God. Yet they feel that the message needs to be clear, that “I really need to pray about it.” I’m an exception; therefore, I need to pray about it.

There are SIX GROUPS in this study and it’s going to be easy

to follow. He's admonishing these six groups and they're all part of the family.

Someone said:

God created man and then He rested. God created woman and neither God nor man have rested since.
(source unknown)

We're going to start with the WIVES.

Every one of these accounts is occurring in at least **THREE PLACES**.

When the Bible says something once, it's authoritative. When it says it twice, it casts it in concrete. When He says it a third time, there can be no question that it's the right thing.

We start with **GROUP #1—WIVES**.

v. 18 Wives, be submitting yourselves to your husbands as it is fitting in the Lord.

“Wives, be submitting yourselves to your husbands, as it is fitting in the Lord.”

There are so many who take such a dim view of marriage. It is shocking to leaders all over the world to realize that when the family breaks up, everything else is going to break up in the country.

Listen to these verses that have to do with marriage.

Hebrews 13:4

Let marriage be held in honor among all, and then let the marriage bed be undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

Ephesians 5:23

For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church. He Himself being the Savior of the body.

Ephesians 5:33

Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband.

And then these two passages from the Old Testament.

Proverbs 5:15-19—this is in Peter's paraphrase from *The Message*:

Proverbs 5:15-19

Do you know the saying, “Drink from your own rain barrel, draw water from your own spring-fed well”? It's true. Otherwise, you may one day come home and find your barrel empty and your well polluted. Your spring water is for you

and you only, not to be passed around among strangers. Bless your fresh-flowing fountain! Enjoy the wife you married as a young man! Lovely as an angel, beautiful as a rose—don't ever quit taking delight in her body. Never take her love for granted!

And then Shulamith says to Solomon in:

Song of Solomon 8:6-7

Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like a blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.

Now the SIX GROUPS that we have here:

1. WIVES,
2. HUSBANDS,
3. CHILDREN,
4. FATHERS,
5. SERVANTS, and
6. MASTERS—or employers and employees.

First to the wives. Wives are told to be in submission to their own husbands. There's so much difference of opinion on what is meant by submission.

The dominant thing that is said about the word SUBMISSION is it first of all is a military word. There is a mind of authority. This is not a question of superior/inferior nor is it a question of dictatorial leadership. Rather it's the opposite. It's SERVANT LEADERSHIP.

The three thoughts in the word SUBMISSION are:

1. CONTROL—the wife is to be under the control of her husband,
2. OBEDIENCE, and
3. AUTHORITY—God has a divine chain of authority and it's the wife's position to be under the authority of her husband.

Someone has to be responsible for the relationship. The husband is the one responsible for that relationship when it comes time to go to glory.

We as men are going to be held responsible for the stewardship of our family. In our relationship to our Heavenly Father, what is it? “Not my will, but yours be done.” (ref. Luke 22:42)

The perfect picture of marriage is a laboratory of that very thought.

This is a great statement:

The submissive spirit equals the freedom to be creative under the protection of divinely appointed authority.
(source unknown)

Longfellow said:

Submission is the footprint of faith in the pathway of sorrow.
(source unknown)

Paul commands this not only here but also in Ephesians:

Ephesians 5:21

Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord.

This submission in Ephesians 5 is a visible manifestation of the Spirit-filled life.

If you say you want to be right with the Spirit, then marriage is a reflection of the filling of the Spirit. That's the way Paul writes to them.

Carolyn Custis James has written a landmark book on

women's relationships to men. She truly is a women's theologian. She's written a great book on the life of Eve and also on the life of Esther and the book of Ruth. Listen to what she calls herself in her relationship to her husband.

(When Life and Beliefs Collide by Carolyn Custis James)

We are co-partners in serving the King.
(source unknown)

It's not a question of superior/inferior. We both are together in serving Him.

We are also fellow soldiers of the Cross.

The little word in the Old Testament that describes the woman's relationship to the man is when God created woman. He created an *ezer*—E-Z-E-R is the Hebrews word. And that *ezer* means "helper."

A man was not complete until God brought Eve, a helper, to him—an *ezer*.

She comes with the words: "intimate allies." That's what it's really all about when you have a right understanding of the word submission.

1 Peter 3:4

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.

It is the confidence that God will use even the mistakes of those in authority over us to achieve His character in us.

“You wives must submit to your husband’s leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord.” (Ephesians 5:22)

Now, what is the phrase that goes with the command “Wives, be submissive to your husbands”?

“as it is fitting in the Lord.”

What does that mean? Does that mean that a woman has freedom at this point not to submit if she feels it violates her conscience or her commitment in any way?

I hope you all are saying yes. That’s true. Because it is very true and there’s Biblical illustration for it.

First of all in the book of Exodus. Remember the midwives were told to kill all the little Jewish boys in Egypt? And it says in:

Exodus 1:19-21

The midwives answered Pharaoh, “Hebrew women are not like Egyptian women; they are vigorous and give birth before the midwives arrive.” So God was kind to the midwives and

the people increased and became even more numerous. And because the midwives feared God, he gave them families of their own.

God poured out His blessing because they would be a violation of their conscience.

Peter has another illustration of this:

Acts 5:25

...Whether we should obey God or man, are you going to judge?

Listen to these verses:

Acts 5:28-29

“We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in the name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man’s blood upon us.” But Peter and the apostles answered and said, “We must obey God rather than men.

Answer this one question:

Would you die for your convictions because of what you are sensing that you’re asking to violate?

We’re finding illustrations of it all around us. Ladies don’t feel

like prisoners and are held captive. But rather that God delights in creativity and being submissive.

Listen to this:

(When Life and Beliefs Collide by Carolyn Custis James)

One thing is clear, the man *needed* the one God was about to create. God wasn't indulging his favorite creature with a luxury or a perk. God had diagnosed an inadequacy, something the man lacked and could not overcome. The remedy would come from God as well, not a smorgasbord of options but a single perfect answer to man's need: "*a helper suitable for him*" (2:18, emphasis added).

Rather than explaining this to Adam, God used a simple object lesson to cause him to feel his aloneness. As God passed all the creatures before Adam to see what he would name them, a consistent pattern emerged. Every creature had its partner, another creature who corresponded—all of them except Adam. Aloneness settled over him. It was a beautiful first enactment of the words Jesus would speak millennia later: "Your Father knows what you need before you ask him" (Matt. 6:8). Already God had planned what he would do. And so while Adam slept, God took a rib from his body, fashioned it into a woman, and brought her back to his side. Then for the eighth time, the refrain sounded with greater resonance than ever, "God saw all that he had made, and it was *very good*" ... pp. 180-81

The neatest story is the love that C.S. Lewis found in his wife

Joy. He was an old bachelor and a great philosopher and student. You may have heard of the *Chronicles of Narnia* and some of those treasures that still live on. *Mere Christianity* was the book that brought Chuck Colson to the Lord. Everywhere you see him, he speaks so beautifully. Carolyn Custis James included this in her book:

(When Life and Beliefs Collide by Carolyn Custis James)

LATE IN LIFE, C. S. Lewis, a confirmed old bachelor, met and married a Daughter of Eve. Four brief but intensely happy years later, she was gone. Cancer had severed Lewis from his beloved Joy [was her name]. With pen in hand, he cataloged his grief and the emptiness of his heart, [now get this, this is so great] paying eloquent tribute to the love of his life. [Here's the way he describes the wife] "For a good wife, contains so many persons in herself. What was [she] not to me? She was my daughter and my mother, my pupil and my teacher, my subject and my sovereign; and always, holding all these in solution, my trusty comrade, friend, shipmate, fellow-soldier. My mistress, but at the same time all that any man friend (and I have good ones) has ever been to me. Perhaps more. . . Did you ever know, dear, how much you took away with you when you left?"³

3. C. S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed* (New York: Bantam Books, 1961), 55-56, 70.

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Carolyn Custis isn't too far off in what she has to say in speaking from a woman's perspective on this whole business of submission.

Men, women are RESPONDERS. When women are served and their security is assured and their self-image is praised, this precedes submission.

Men it would not be painful at all if you fulfilled your job description. You would do well to note the recurrence of the phrase “in the Lord” in this section.

It’s the happy, healthy, harmonious family relationship. Too many marriages fall apart.

Marriage begins with a SERVING RELATIONSHIP. We cannot out-serve when we’re dating.

Then we get married and SELFISH DEMANDS take the place of serving. That’s where all the marriage counseling comes in and all the struggles and the problems.

Do you pray? You might say “Yeah I do but I pray in private.”

Men, have you ever thought that the greatest witness you have is by praying in front of your wife or in front of the kids? To realize that’s part of your legacy and that’s also earning the right to be the leader in the home. When the wife sees her husband dependent upon the Lord and praying regularly, seeking His face for wisdom and guidance, all the other pieces fall together. A wife has no problem being submissive when she sees her husband submissive to the Lord and spending time in prayer.

Notice, just as the wife has learned to be submissive to her Lord, she lives out that principle in being submissive to her husband.

A good illustration of this is Mary. Remember when the angel of the Lord came in Luke 1:38. He told Mary that she was going to be the mother of the Lord Jesus the Messiah.

Luke 1:38

...be it unto me according to thy will.

Wives find their greatest fulfillment in being submissive to their husbands.

The word “fitting in the Lord” means PROPER or APPROPRIATE.

Gromacki is one of my favorite Greek commentators and he said:

(Stand Perfect in Wisdom: An Exposition of Colossians & Philemon by Dr. Robert Gromacki)

The imperative [which is translated “submissive”] can be translated in two possible ways: “submit yourselves” or “be submissive.” In either case, the present tense stresses constant, daily submission. [It is a present imperative so it’s never out of style. And then he describes it.] The word comes

from the military world where soldiers were to be in order ...
under ... the directions of their officer.
p. 147

It does imply personal inferiority or dictatorial rule.

John MacArthur said:

(Found: God's Will: Find the Direction and Purpose God
Wants for Your Life by John MacArthur)

Picture a young man who is very earnestly wanting to know God's will for his life's work. He's so dedicated to God that he's even willing to be a missionary, which seems to be the ultimate sacrifice in the eyes of some people.

But our young friend, despite his dedication, has some problems. He is a little headstrong. He seems to have trouble getting along with those in authority over him. His reasons for rebellion are very good, of course, at least in his eyes.

Finally, our young seeker-after-God's will takes his problem to a wise old pastor. "I believe God wants me to be a missionary," he says, "but I'm not sure whether He wants me to be a home missionary or a foreign missionary."

The pastor looks him straight in the eye. "Young man," he says, "what you need to be first of all is a 'sub-missionary.' You need to learn what submission means."

pp. 37-38

Learn to live under divine authority before you even think about trying to be a foreign or a local missionary.

Susan Lenzkes in her book used Proverbs 20:6 in this piece:

(Life is Like Licking Honey Off a Thorn: Reflections on Living Wisely in this World of Pain and Joy by Susan Lenzkes)

Because God Gave Me Herb

MANY A MAN CLAIMS TO HAVE UNFAILING LOVE, BUT A FAITHFUL MAN WHO CAN FIND?

PROVERBS 20:6

- My heart found a home outside its own skin.
- I know that faithfulness is a man, not just a word.
- I had a dearly loved friend by my side for thirty-two years.
- I am the mother of three incredibly unique and precious children.
- I know how it feels to share laughter, tears, unspoken thoughts, intimacy, change, struggles, and inside jokes that go way back.
- I've experienced the luxury of being cherished and nourished.
- I know that greeting cards are recyclable, and brown paper bags a superior gift wrap.
- I've learned to respect, and even delight in the differences.
- I have learned that, given enough time and love, tact can be acquired.
- I learned that salsa is breakfast food.

- I discovered that “engineer” is not a profession, but a personality type.
- I know how many miles a full bladder can still go.
- I’ve come to understand that flowers aren’t as important as faithfulness.
- I’ve learned that God loves a woman very well through a godly man.
- I’ve shared the challenge to grow and become.
- I am a better, stronger person, even separated from him, than I ever would have been without him.
- I am rich with shared memories.
- I will be eternally grateful.
- Because God gave me Herb, and then took him home before me, part of my heart is already in heaven.

Tribute I shared at Herb’s Memorial Service on March 3, 1995.

pp. 149-50

When you hear tributes like that you realize it really works when we do it biblically.

Well that’s enough for wives isn’t it?

Onto the husbands—GROUP #2:

v. 19 Husbands, be loving your wives, and do not have the habit of being bitter against them.

“Husbands, be loving your wives, and do not have the habit of being bitter against them.”

Now guys say this is easy. Women say that's a piece of cake just to love your wife.

You need to understand that the word for love is *agapé*. This is self-sacrificing love produced by the Spirit of God where your needs are second to hers. In other words, servant leadership comes right out of that word love.

Agapé.

The fruit of the Spirit is *agapé*.

In 1 Corinthians 13 verses 4-7 we see 15 characteristics of *agape* love.

“and do not have the habit of being bitter against them”—is the thought.

How do you love your wife? **THREE WAYS:**

1. You minister to her **SECURITY** by the statements that you make that you'll always be there no matter what.
2. You minister to her **SELF-IMAGE** by always telling her how beautiful she is.
3. You minister to her **BEING A GOOD SERVANT** for Jesus' sake. You are that good servant.

Loving your wife. It's **LOVING LEADERSHIP**.

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It's a POSITIVE and a NEGATIVE.

POSITIVE—"be loving your wives," and

NEGATIVE—"do not have the habit of being bitter against them."

How do you get into that habit?

UNRESOLVED ISSUES LEAD TO A BITTER SPIRIT.

When you don't take time to have a date night once a week, to keep up to date on the bitterness agenda, it's going to become something very serious.

So Peter, when he speaks about the husband/wife relationship, says:

"Husbands are to live with their wives according to knowledge." (1 Peter 3:7)

That means that they need to study and understand what those needs are and be faithful in fulfilling them.

Recognize the need for love and security on the part of your wife and give it freely.

Men, if you're loving your wife you are living by the FOUR C's:

1. CARE,
2. COMMUNICATE,
3. CONCERNED, and
4. CONSIDERATION.

A really good book to couples to read is Gary Chapmans' *The 5 Languages of Love*.

This helps us understand the way God made us and how we communicate. Happiness and fulfillment comes from that understanding.

Men, your relationship as husbands is to continue to create memories and make love a vital part of your weekly endeavor. Date nights are a great example.

Someone said: "I'm together when we're together." That's true and we need to build on that. Husbands it's not just loving your wife physically but emotionally and spiritually.

"do not have the habit of being bitter against them."

Now how does that happen? FOUR WORDS:

1. RESENTMENTS that are not talked out,
2. JEALOUSY because of the lack of intimate time together,

3. UNFORGIVIGN SPIRIT—“I just don’t want to forgive you in this situation”—and

4. FAILURE TO YIELD UP ONE’S RIGHT IN THE RELATIONSHIP.

It’s all I—ME—MY. Selfishness leads to demands over and above the call of duty.

When you’re loving your wife, you’re turning SELFISHNESS to SACRIFICE and GETTING to GIVING.

That protects that stewardship.

Now our stewardship of course expands to our children and all the others.

A. W. Tozer wrote so many great books and he never went to seminary but God really used him. He has a legacy in the books that he’s written. What he says to husbands is so strong:

(The Best of A. W. Tozer: Book 2 compiled by Warren W. Wiersbe)

If the husband would get himself straightened out in his own mind and spirit and live with his wife according to knowledge and treat her with the chivalry that belongs to her as the weaker vessel, remembering that she is actually his

sister in Christ, his prayers would be answered in spite of the devil and all of the other reasons that he gives.

A husband's spiritual problems do not lie in the Kremlin nor in the Vatican but in the heart of man himself—in his attitude and inability to resist the temptation to grumble and growl and dominate!

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That's strong but we need to hear it because it's so close to the way we are in our relationships.

v. 20 Children, be obeying your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing in the Lord.

“Children,”—GROUP #3—“be obeying your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing in the Lord.”

Notice the little word “ALL” over and over again:

“obeying your parents in all things,”

The REASON you're doing this is because it's:

“well pleasing to the Lord.”

It's easy to say you want to please the Lord, but obedience from the children's perspective is what pleases Him. No picking and choosing. We learn to obey our Heavenly Father and we learn by obeying our earthly father.

“this is well pleasing to the Lord.”

It’s an expression of that opportunity to please Him.

Ephesians 5:10

try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord.

1 Samuel 15:22

And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord?...

Now he turns to FATHERS—GROUP #4:

v. 21 Fathers, do not be irritating your children, in order that they may not lose heart (become discouraged).

“Fathers, do not be irritating your children, in order that they may not lose heart (or become discouraged).”

It’s a father who is constantly hounding the child. So Group #4 are the “Fathers.”

OVER-CORRECTION leads to DISCOURAGEMENT.

COMMENTATION and CORRECTION go hand in hand.

Ephesians 6:4

And now a word to you parents. Don't keep on scolding and nagging your children, making them angry and resentful. Rather, bring them up with the loving discipline the Lord himself approves, with suggestions and godly advice.

When Paul wrote to the Thessalonian Christians he said:

“I have treated like a father would treat his children.” (ref. 1 Thessalonians 2:11)

He then gives **THREE WORDS** that characterize Biblical fatherhood:

1. **ENCOURAGING** his child,
2. **EXHORTING** his child, and
3. being an **EXAMPLE** to his child.

When you put those three words together, that's the Biblical ingredients for fatherhood.

You encourage and affirm. You're not always criticizing and condemning. You're exhorting them with positive principles and you're showing them by example that it's caught more than taught.

Love, patience, kindness, meekness, unselfishness and spiritual devotion—“show me how to do it dad!”—is the way

the child would speak.

How do you irritate the child?

“in order that he might not lose heart (become discouraged).”

You irritate the child by setting standards too high and expecting too much when the child is already at peak capacity.

Here’s an illustration of how a father and son work together as believers to accomplish some great things:

(Growing Up Colt: A Father, a Son, a Life in Football by Colt McCoy & Brad McCoy with Mike Yorkey)

- 1. Prepare your children for the path, not the path for your children. ...**
 - 2. Prepare your children to do their best.** [his dad was a football coach and that helped in preparing him for that.] ...
 - 3. Prepare your children to be leaders. ...**
 - 4. Prepare your children for open and closed doors.**
- ...
pp. 7-9

Teach them about the realization that the door is not always going to be open. It’s not always going to be what you want. There are going to be closed doors in your life and you have to trust in the sovereignty of God at that particular point. He doesn’t go any further than just to say those four things.

It was Charles Haddon Spurgeon who said:

(Exploring the Mind & Heart of the Prince of Preachers: Five thousand illustrations under one-thousand topical headings from the works of C. H. Spurgeon by C. H. Spurgeon)

Be ready to forgive your children. 2276.474
p. 336

Brethren, if you wish to give your children a blessing when you die, be a blessing to them while you live. If you would make your last words worth the hearing, let your whole life be worth the seeing. 3540.566
p. 337

Parents, realize the impact you have on your children. Listen to this little snippet he put at the end of one of the chapters on grace:

(All Is Grace: A Ragamuffin Memoir by Brennan Manning with John Blase)

One Christmas—I must have been ten years old—I spent some time walking the creaky wooden floors of Woolworth’s five-and-dime searching for a gift for my mother. I happened up a little notepad, the kind people used to keep beside telephones. It was multicolored, pastels of pink and green and blue. I’d never seen anything like it. I thought it was gorgeous, surely something that would thrill my mother. Christmas

morning came, and we were all there—my parents and grandparents, my brother and sister and me. As my mother began opening my gift, I held my breath in anticipation. She tore the wrapping paper away and just stared at the notepad. “What in God’s name am I gonna do with this? What a waste of money!” After what felt like an eternity where all eyes in the room were on me, my mother tossed me the pad, and the Mannings moved on to other gifts. I felt like I’d purchased the Hope Diamond for her, but it wasn’t enough. I just didn’t understand. I was crushed.

pp. 57-58

God’s grace is adequate in every situation. Be careful in the way you rear your children.

v. 22 Servants, be obeying in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice as men pleasers, but with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord.

“Servants, be obeying in all things”—there it is again. No choice!—“your masters according to the flesh,”

It’s important that you’re to be obeying the Lord in all things according to the Spirit.

“not”—NEGATIVELY—“with eyeservice as men pleasers, but with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord.”

GROUP #5 is EMPLOYEES or SERVANTS.

“be obeying in all things”

One of the hardest things to do is to submit to authority.

GROUP #6: MASTERS.

But you “be obeying...your masters according to the flesh” in all things. Not just when the boss is around.

“Eyeservice” is such as is rendered only when you are under close inspection and scrutiny by the boss. It makes a false show of industry and a great pretense of diligence. It’s the dishonest service meant to impress.

“sincere...fearing the Lord.”

It’s an HONEST HEART.

Galatians 6:9

And let us not get tired of doing what is right, for after a while we will reap a harvest of blessing if we don’t get discouraged and give up.

In the book *Life on the Highest Plane* Ruth Paxson said:

(Life on the Highest Plane: A Study of the Spiritual Nature and Needs of Man by Ruth Paxson)

If to some a walk in habitual obedience to the will, the

ways and the Word of God even in the power of the indwelling Spirit still seems impossible, let us remember that a walk is taken *step by step*. It is a step at a time. And each step taken in obedience makes the next step easier.

p. 372

Sarah Young said:

(Take My Heart, O God: Riches from the Greatest Christian Women Writers of All Times by Sarah Young)

But what if we decided to submit to God’s will in every situation?

What if, instead of doing what comes naturally, we obeyed God? This is what that might look like: We’d show love to our enemies and pray for those who persecute us. We’d submit to our husbands, even when we disagree. We’d honor our parents, even when they’re difficult. We’d pray instead of worry. We’d forgive instead of holding a grudge. We’d confess our self-reliance. We’d submit to God’s will.

p. 4/9

“Servants, be obeying in all things...”

“Children, be obeying your parents in all things...”

Do it POSITIVELY, “not with eyeservice as men pleasers”—NEGATIVELY—“but”—POSITIVELY—“with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord.”

v. 23 Whatever you are doing, be working from the heart, as to the Lord and not to men;

“Whatever you are doing, be working from the heart, as to the Lord and not unto men;”

There’s your KEY VERSE. That’s the key to the whole thing.

What the apostle is commanding we do is to be done to the Lord because we honor Him.

We’re submissive to each other as wives as to the Lord.

Husbands we love our wives as we love the Lord.

As He continues with servants here, he tells them “be working from the heart” rather than for an employer “as to the Lord and not unto men.”

Don’t get into conflict. That takes us back to:

Colossians 3:17

And all whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Our KEY VERSE for “Christ in the Family”—we’re in a spiritual family and a physical family. The family is merely a laboratory.

We are to be “working from the heart, as to the Lord.” Giving it everything that we have.

We’ve seen what yielding is. It’s the transference of our ownership and control of the life from SELF to JESUS CHRIST.

Remember Anne Graham Lotz:

(Take My Heart, O God: Riches from the Greatest Christian Women Writers of All Times by Sarah Young)

God has chosen you and me for the purpose of bearing much eternal fruit . . . fruit that is simply the character of God’s Son coming out in us.

—ANNE GRAHAM LOTZ

p. 1/2

Elisabeth Elliot went back to the Auca Indians after her husband Jim was martyred along with those five in 1956. Listen to what she says:

(Take My Heart, O God: Riches from the Greatest Christian Women Writers of All Times by Sarah Young)

A prayerful heart and an obedient heart will learn, very slowly, and not without sorrow, to stake everything on God himself.

—ELISABETH ELLIOT

p. 9/10

Here's a great statement we need to remember:

[Your name], trust Me, I have everything under control.
-Jesus

A. W. Tozer said:

(The Best of A. W. Tozer: Book 2 compiled by Warren W. Wiersbe).

In this world where men forget us, change their attitude toward us as their private interests dictate and revise their opinion of us for the slightest cause, is it not a source of wondrous strength to know that the God with whom we have to do changes not? That His attitude toward us now is the same as it was in eternity past and will be in eternity to [future]?

p. 18

KEY VERSE: “Whatever you are doing, work from your heart as to the Lord and not unto men;”

WHY?

v. 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as a reward.

“knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as a reward.”

Your wonderful reward is going to come. It's your inheritance.

Here are a few verses:

Colossians 1:5

Because of the hope that is laid up for you in heaven, which you heard before in the word of the truth of the gospel, that has come to you,

1 Corinthians 15:58

...you will not labor in vein...

Ephesians 1:14

...we have been sealed by the Spirit, guaranteeing an inheritance...

1 Peter 1:4

to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you...

Revelation 22:12, 13

“Behold, I am coming quickly, and My reward is with Me, to render to every man according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning

and the end.”

John MacArthur said:

(Found: God’s Will: Find the Direction and Purpose God Wants for Your Life by John MacArthur)

Do you see what the Spirit-filled life is? It is being saturated with the things of Christ with His Word, His Person.

You might say, “Well, you know I’d like that. I’d like to be saturated with Christ. How do I do that?”

The only way is to study the Book that discloses all He is!
pp. 27-28

v. 25 The Master, Christ, you are serving; for the one doing wrong shall receive back that which he did wrong, and there is no partiality.

“The Master, Christ, you are serving; for the one doing wrong shall receive back that which he did wrong, and there is no partiality.”

Realize that He gives the command to recognize “The Master, Christ, you are serving.”

And “the one that does wrong” is going to be paying a price.

Joni Eareckson Tada said:

(Take My Heart, O God: Riches from the Greatest Christian Women Writers of All Times by Sarah Young)

Once we give an inch, God will take a mile. He'll take a million miles. He'll soar on the wings of the wind from heaven to here to show you who He is, to embrace you with His love.

—JONI EARECKSON TADA

p. 9/1

Gary Thomas in his book on marriage said:

(The Glorious Pursuit: Embracing the Virtues of Christ by Gary L. Thomas)

There was great freedom in this for me, and transformation. When I insist on control, my anxiety level rises; frustration reaches a boiling point, and my wife and children are most likely to become my victims.

p. 70

Listen to the Puritans in *Voices from the Past*:

(Voices from the Past: Puritan Devotional Readings edited by Richard Rushing)

Our God is a suitable portion. No object is as suitable to the heart as he is. He is a portion that is exactly suited to the condition of the soul in its desires, needs, wants, longings and prayers. All the soul needs is found in God. There is light to enlighten the soul, wisdom to counsel the soul, power to

support the soul, goodness to supply the soul, mercy to pardon the soul, beauty to delight the soul, glory to ravish the soul, and fullness to fill the soul.

p. 33

4:v.1 Masters, be displaying justice and fairness to your slaves, knowing that you also are having a Master in heaven.

“Masters,”—these are the EMPLOYERS—“be displaying justice and fairness to your slaves,”—or your EMPLOYEES—“knowing that you also are having a Master in heaven.”

In all six of the groups he puts the LORD FIRST before he gives us the command.

1. “Wives be submissive to your husbands as to the Lord.”
2. “Husbands love your wives as you would love the Lord.”
3. “Children obey your parents as you would obey the Lord.”
4. “Fathers, be those who are loving your children and not over correcting them.”
5. “Servants” and now
6. “Masters, be displaying justice and fairness.”

And you know who’s in the audience when this letter is first

read? There's a runaway slave by the name of Onesimus from the Lycus Valley. Philemon was his master and he stole some things from his house and went to Rome. He was put into jail right next to the apostle Paul and came to know Christ. Paul sends a letter, the book of Philemon. While Philemon is sitting in the audience, the book of Colossians is read to these saints because that's where they lived—in the Lycus Valley.

That had to really touch him. Not only the letter, but then for the book of Philemon to be put in the hands of the master Philemon. Then God did a miraculous work in that situation.

Listen to Joni Eareckson Tada:

(A Place of Healing: Wrestling with the Mysteries of Suffering, Pain, and God's Sovereignty by Joni Eareckson Tada)

I will add my voice of praise to his. [This is Joni wrapping up this last book.]

Thank You, God, for this life You have given me. Thank You for the many opportunities to serve You, even in my pain. *Thank You, God, for this wheelchair. For it's been granted to me to not only believe on Your Son, but to suffer for His sake. Oh joy!* [Then she quotes that great verse, Isaiah 25:1]

*. . . For in perfect faithfulness
you have done marvelous things,
things planned long ago.*

p. 197

Thirteen lessons that come out of our text.

LESSON #1: God has designed the family for the preparation of the child for adult life. Let us accept as good our Heavenly Father's design for our lives.

LESSON #2: A submissive Spirit is the one that has the freedom to be creative under the protection of divinely appointed authority.

LESSON #3: Longfellow said: "Submission is the footprint of faith in the pathway of sorrow."

LESSON #4: This submission in Ephesians 5 is a visible manifestation of a Spirit-filled life.

LESSON #5: In the presence of sacrificial servant leadership, there is no problem in the area of submission.

LESSON #6: The husband's responsibility in loving his wife is to focus on security, self-image, and servant issues. The husband's place is not to rule in a cold dictatorship, but to be loving his wife. It is loving leadership.

LESSON #7: If I am loving my wife I am living by the four C's: (1) Care; (2) Communication; (3) Concern; and (4) Consideration.

LESSON #8: Listen to Shulamith as she lectures Solomon: "Let us catch the foxes that ruin the vineyard" (SOS 2:15).

Those foxes are bitterness, resentment, jealousy, an unforgiving spirit, failure to yield one's rights in the relationship, selfishness, distance, and coldness.

LESSON #9: If I'm loving my wife and this love is a growing thing, it will move from selfishness to sacrifice, from getting to giving.

LESSON #10: Thomas á Kempis said: "No man doth faithfully rule but he that hath learned gladly to obey."

LESSON #11: Notice carefully that obedience is pleasing to the Lord.

LESSON #12: Overcorrection leads to discouragement. Commendation and correction go hand in hand.

LESSON #13: Whatever you are doing, be working from the heart as to the Lord and not to men.

This last story comes from *Faith & Doubt* by John Ortberg:

(Faith & Doubt by John Ortberg)

A guy by the name of Bill Moore, who grew up in poverty, got drunk one time and shot a man for five thousand dollars. He ended up on death row. Lee Strobel met Bill and writes about him in his book *The Case for Faith*.

A couple of guys went into prison (because God prompts people to go into prisons) and told him, "Bill, there is a man,

Jesus, who loves you, and he gave his life on a cross. He died for you. He went to death row for you.” Nobody had ever told Bill about Jesus before. He’d been sitting on death row for years. He turned his life over to Jesus, and it changed him so much—changed the darkness and bitterness and hatred inside him so much—that other people began to be drawn to him. People started meeting Jesus through this guy on death row. He became known as “The Peacemaker.” His cell block was the safest place in the penitentiary because so many people were coming to Christ through Bill Moore.

Churches found out about this, and when people needed counseling, no kidding, churches started sending people to the penitentiary to get counseling from Bill Moore. Can you imagine calling a church to ask for a referral and hearing, “I want you to go over to death row. There’s an inmate there . . .” What does that? Jesus does that.

Bill Moore was changed so much that he won the love of the family of the man he killed. It changed him so much over the sixteen-year period that all kinds of people wrote letters for him. Eventually, the authorities not only canceled his death sentence; they not only commuted his sentence, which was unprecedented; but they paroled him. Bill Moore now serves as head of congregation in a couple of housing projects in a desperately poor area. When Strobel met with him, he asked, “Bill, what in the world turned your life around? Was it a new medication? Was it some kind of rehab program? Was it a new approach to counseling?”

Bill said, “No, Lee, it wasn’t any of that stuff. It was Jesus Christ.

pp. 167-8

Father thank You for Jesus. Thank You for the fact that we have the challenge and the opportunity as we study this book and walk through all of these stages with the Lord Jesus. We've now been through ten of them and thank You for this one that helps us to realize that we're in a family, a spiritual family as brothers and sisters in Christ. You have provided the laboratory of marriage and family for us to learn well how to relate to one another and how to love one another. We ask Your Holy Spirit to speak to us and help us to be aware that You've met with us through this text. In Jesus' name we pray Amen.

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A Practical Study of EPHESIANS

HEAVEN'S PLAN for Life on Earth

“What It’s Like Living According to God’s Plan”

Key verse 3:11b — *“Christ is all and in all.”*

STUDY NUMBER TEN – CHRIST IN MY FAMILY – COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:1

KEY VERSE 3:23

v.18 Wives, be submitting yourselves to your husbands, as it is fitting in the Lord.

v.19 Husbands, be loving your wives, and do not have the habit of being bitter against them.

v.20 Children, be obeying your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing in the Lord.

v.21 Fathers, do not be irritating your children, in order that they may not lose heart (become discouraged).

v.22 Servants, be obeying in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice as men pleasers, but with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord.

v.23 Whatever you are doing, be working from the heart, as to the Lord and not to men;

v.24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as a reward.

v.25 The Master, Christ, you are serving; for the one doing wrong shall receive back that which he did wrong, and there is no partiality.

4:v.1 Masters, be displaying justice and fairness to your slaves, knowing that you also are having a Master in heaven.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read Colossians 3:18-4:1 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What do you think Paul means by the phrase “as it is fitting in the Lord” in verse 18?

3. How would it be possible for a husband to have “the habit of being bitter” against his wife?

4. Why are children commanded to “be obeying their parents” in verse 20?

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5. How can a father irritate his children?

6. What are we commanded to do in verse 23?

7. What does Paul mean by the phrase “receive the inheritance as a reward” in verse 24?

8. What are “masters” asked to do in verse 1?

9. What verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

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