

# "GOD'S DESIGN FOR THE FAMILY"

## Colossians 3:18-21

The word "*family*" can stir up wonderful memories for some but painful memories for others. A quick survey of the Bible reveals the negative impact of sin on families.

- **Adam and Eve** sinned. He blamed his wife. Their son, Cain, murdered Abel.
- **Jacob** married multiple women, had 12 sons, the older ones sold Joseph into slavery.
- **David** committed adultery with Bathsheba and eventually her husband killed. Absalom, his son, led a coup against his dad and was killed.

Mark this down—*ignoring God's pattern and principles for the family is disastrous!* Raising a family today is difficult to say the least. The culture is aggressively pushing an agenda that seeks to redefine everything that God has ordained. These catastrophic changes threaten the family's survival. Dad and mom, do you have a game plan to combat

the intrusion of this satanic delusion into your family?

Open your Bible to Colossians 3. Paul underscored the fact that the gospel affects every aspect of life, including marriage and the family. If you are looking for a game plan to ensure that your family can survive and even thrive during these difficult days, I want to suggest this . . .

## ADOPT GOD'S DESIGN FOR YOUR FAMILY

His design includes present tense commands for wives, for husbands, for children, and for parents. Let's begin by turning our attention to ...

### 1. THE WIFE'S SUBMISSION

Colossians 3:18 ... **Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**

It is vital that we understand that what Paul records in this letter was based on the initiation of God's design at the creation of Adam and Eve and the

illustration of Christ's relationship with His church.

Okay, let's consider...

**A.) What It Means**

The key verb means literally to "put yourself under."  
It was used to describe soldiers arranged in military order under the authority of a commanding officer.<sup>1</sup>

**This command describes the pattern of a wife's voluntary submission to the leadership of her own husband.**

The structure of authority and submission is evident even in the trinity. . .

**1 Corinthians 11:3** ... But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

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<sup>1</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest's Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), Eph 5:21.

**John 5:30**... "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me."

"As is fitting in the Lord"— Wives have rights and privileges, but recognition of the husband's leadership is essential to a well-ordered home.<sup>2</sup> The Christian wife is to respect her husband and to follow his leadership.

## **B.) What It Doesn't Mean**

Submission does not mean that the woman is inferior to the man. Men and women are both created in the image of God, and both are equally important to Him.

**Genesis 1:27**...God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

**Galatians 3:28**...There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is

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<sup>2</sup> A.T. Robertson, [\*Word Pictures in the New Testament\*](#) (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933), Col 3:18.

neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

The smart and savvy Spirit-filled husband considers his wife to be his companion and his trusted counselor. God's design for the wife is clear.

**Wives submit to your husband. Okay let's look at...**

## **2. THE HUSBAND'S LOVE**

To get the full brunt of Paul's message you've got to grasp the fact that the Roman culture that saturated Colossae was dominated by males. They had undisputed control of their families including slaves, children, and wives. In fact, the wife was a possession of her husband with no legal rights. Into this harsh environment, Paul delivered God's radical design for Christian marriage. The husband's responsibility was certainly clear . . .

**Colossians 3:19...Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.**

The word "love" refers to an unconditional love. A Christian husband is commanded to love his wife...

## **A.) Sacrificially**

In Ephesians 5, Paul made it clear that the husband must love his wife "even as Christ loved the church." Where did Jesus demonstrate His love for the church? It was on the cross where He voluntarily offered His body and His blood as the perfect sacrifice for our sin. Isn't it amazing that the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to take that vivid picture and then apply it to a husband's love for his wife?

**Selfishness destroys more marriages than anything else.** Hey guys, when is the last time you sacrificed to bless and honor your wife? A Christian husband is commanded to love his wife ...

## **B.) Continuously**

The verb for *"love"* refers to an unrelenting kind of love that is driven by our will, *not our feelings*. Paul commanded husbands to never be "embittered" against their wives. That is don't ever become harsh, bitter, or resentful toward your wife. Don't miss this now...

**Men, if your wife does not submit to you as the Bible describes, you must still love her as an act of obedience to the Lord. Ladies, if your husband does not love you as the Bible describes, submit to him is an act of obedience to the Lord. Never base your obedience to Jesus on your spouse's performance!**

Here's the game plan to ensure that your family can survive and even thrive in a topsy turvy world...

## **ADOPT GOD'S DESIGN FOR YOUR FAMILY**

**Wives submit to your husbands. Husbands love your wives. God's design also includes...**

### **3. THE CHILDREN'S OBEDIENCE**

In the culture of that day, the father had the right to sell his children as slaves and even to kill them with complete impunity. Into this bleak environment, the gospel brought radical change. Here's God's design for children...

**Colossians 3:20...Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.**

I want you to see...

### **A.) The Instruction**

The verb—“be obedient”— literally means “*to hear under.*” It is a present imperative. Therefore, it commands a pattern of obedience *in all things.*<sup>3</sup> It addresses any child who is still living in the home under parental guidance. When children are no longer under the protection and care of their parents, obedience is no longer expected. However, “respect and honor” are still appropriate (*Jesus on the cross honored his mom*). Why is this important?

**Proverbs 6:20...** My son, observe the commandment of your father And do not forsake the teaching of your mother.

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<sup>3</sup> Kenneth S. Wuest, *Wuest’s Word Studies from the Greek New Testament: For the English Reader* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1997), Eph 6:1.

**Proverbs 23:22**... Listen to your father who begot you, And do not despise your mother when she is old.

The child who does not learn to obey his parents is prone to grow up disobeying and disrespecting *any* authority—teachers, police, employers, etc. The breakdown of authority in our culture can be traced back to the breakdown of authority in the family. It is a sign of a depraved culture.

**2 Timothy 3:1–5**... But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. **2** For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, **3** unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, **4** treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, **5** holding to a form of godliness, although they have denied its power; Avoid such men as these.

Children must be taught to obey their parents in all things. Next I want you to see...

## **B.) The Incentive**

Paul insisted that when a child learns to embrace the authority of the parents and to obey them it pleases the Lord. I want every child and every teenager to listen carefully. Every time you obey your dad and mom you please the Lord. Can anything be more important than that?

## **ADOPT GOD'S DESIGN FOR YOUR FAMILY**

**God's design is your best hope of counteracting the shock waves of a world embroiled in chaos. So, wives submit to your husbands. Husbands love your wives. Children obey your parents. Here's the final aspect of God's design of the family . . .**

### **4. THE FATHER'S RESTRAINT**

Fathers are addressed because they had ultimate authority over children. This does apply to moms also because she is involved heavily in the raising of kids, and, in some families, she is the only parental authority. Hear the Word of God...

## Colossians 3:21...**Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.**

I want you to see here...

### **A.) The Duty**

The word "exasperate" means *to stir up, to arouse, to provoke*. The verb is a present tense imperative, so the instruction is a command and a pattern to live by.

- **Don't keep on provoking your children.**
- **Don't keep on being too hard on them.**
- **Don't keep on harassing them.**

Look at the next part of the verse. It presents . . .

### **B.) The Danger**

Paul warned of this danger—"so that they will not lose heart." He's talking about breaking their spirit. Discouraged, broken-hearted children are fair game for Satan and his evil world system. Make sure that you avoid...

**Smothering your child** –According to their age and maturity, you must give them some opportunities to make some decisions.

**Favoring one child over another** – Read the story of Jacob and Esau.

**Pushing extreme achievement** –Don't push your kids to be what you never were!

**Constant discouragement** –Make sure you balance correction with encouragement.

**Making children feel like an unwanted intrusion** – Parents must be willing to sacrifice for their children.

**Using love to reward or punish**– Love should be a constant in the family.

**Ridiculing them in front of others**— especially their peers.

**Physical or verbal abuse** – Don't use your physical superiority or your words to cut your child to shreds.

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Here's a great parenting goal—I **WANT MY CHILDREN TO BE COMMITTED FOLLOWERS OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST!**

## **CONCLUSION**

You need a good game plan to combat the persistent shock waves that are reverberating across the world today? I've got a good one for you and your family...

### **ADOPT GOD'S DESIGN FOR YOUR FAMILY**

The radical nature of the gospel enhanced families in the first century and it can do the same in the twenty-first century. God's design includes...

- 1. THE WIFE'S SUBMISSION**
- 2. THE HUSBAND'S LOVE**
- 3. THE CHILDREN'S OBEDIENCE**
- 4. THE FATHER'S RESTRAINT**

Being an authentic Christian in your family is your first responsibility. What adjustments is Jesus calling

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you to make as a wife, a husband, a child, a father/parent? Will you obey Him?

Are you a part of the family of God? To be a full-fledged member of His family you must admit that you have sinned against the holy and righteous God. Then you must be willing to repent of your sins. The next step is to trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord. Are you ready to become a Christian and to enter the forever family of God?

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