

The MYSTERY

Hidden for Ages

Is Now REVEALED

A Study of the Book of Colossians

LESSON 20

This Week's Passage:

Colossians 3:18–21

New International Version (NIV)

- ¹⁸ **Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**
- ¹⁹ **Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.**
- ²⁰ **Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.**
- ²¹ **Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.**

Memory Verse: Colossians 3:12

¹² Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

Our world has been broken for ages. Thus, most of our examples of relationships in scripture, in history, and even in our own families point to our need of a Savior. Because of what Christ has done and who we now are in him, our whole way of relating to others is reordered. Even though we might not all be wives or mothers, this week's lesson helps us to see that our identity in Christ transforms all of our relationships.

Day One: Read Colossians 3 and then reread verses 18–19.

1. Who created marriage, the one-flesh relationship between a man and a woman? (Gen. 2:22–24; Mk. 10:6–9)
2. Because we live in a fallen world, we don't have many examples of what a godly marriage should look like.¹
 - a. What does scripture say characterizes a godly marriage? (Eph. 5:21–33)
 - b. What does scripture say about all relationships that adds to our understanding of how we should relate in marriage?
3:12–14

Jn. 13:14–15, 34–35

1 Cor. 13:4–6

Phil. 2:3–7

Day Two: Read Colossians 3:18–21.

3. What does Paul exhort wives to do? (v. 18)

To submit, **hypotássō** in Greek, means “to subject oneself.” It has the concept of putting oneself under..., not by compulsion, but willingly. ...Paul’s word to wives is be submissive to **your** husbands. They do not submit to some detached, impersonal authority. Rather, they submit to the man with whom they have an intimate, personal, vital relationship ... [S]ubmission does not imply inferiority. Galatians 3:28 clearly affirms that spiritually there is no difference between male and female. Jesus submitted to the Father during His life on earth, yet He was in no way inferior to Him.”²

4. Read 1 Peter 3:1–6.
- What characterizes a wife’s submission to her husband?
 - Where is a wife’s hope to be found? (v. 5)
 - How does placing her hope in God, who has proven himself trustworthy, enable a wife to submit to an imperfect husband and “not give way to fear” (v. 6)?
5. “Scripture doesn’t prescribe many details about what the husband’s leadership and wife’s submission looks like.... each marital partnership needs to hammer out, even *forge*, their own specific relationship details. The goal is unity, harmony, mutuality, love, partnership -- with the husband’s leadership exercised *exactly* towards these goals.”³ For those of you who are married, reflect on your own marriage and consider what submission to your own husband looks like.
6. Is there ever a time when a wife should *not* submit to her husband? (Acts 5:29)

What should her attitude be as she does this? (Eph. 4:1–3)

Any form of abuse is sin, be it physical, sexual, emotional, or verbal. Spousal abuse goes against everything God intended for marriage, breaks civil law, and “is not to be indulged but disciplined by the Church.”⁴ In some cases, legal measures may also be appropriate and necessary. While repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation are the desired goals for broken relationships, they are not always possible. Steps need to be taken to protect the abused spouse while seeking to restore the abuser. If you are struggling with abuse in your relationship, please seek help.

Day Three: Read Colossians 3:18–21.

7. In a culture where wives were often considered property, Paul called husbands to view and treat their wives differently. What exhortations does Paul give to husbands? (v. 19)
8. Read the parallel passage in Ephesians 5:25–33. What is to be the husband’s attitude toward his wife? (📖* 1 Pet. 3:7)

How does Christ model this attitude?
Mt. 20:25–28

Jn. 15:12–13

Rom. 5:6–8

9. Pray for the men you know who are husbands, that they may be given power from the Spirit to serve out of love.

Day Four: Read Colossians 3:18–21.

10. What are children called to do? (v. 20a; Eph. 6:1–3)

11. What should ultimately motivate a child to obey? (v. 20b)
12. What are fathers (or parents) called to do and not do? (v. 21; Eph. 6:4)
13. What kind of parenting do you think embitters and discourages children?

What kind of parenting does *not* embitter and discourage children?

Pray for yourself as a parent to be transformed into Jesus' likeness.

Day Five: Read Colossians 1—4.

14. Think of specific relationships in your life. How has this lesson helped you understand how to relate in a way that pleases the Lord?

Read Paul's prayer for you in Ephesians 3:14–21. Pray that God would do "immeasurably more than all [you] ask or imagine" (v. 20) in your relationships, for his glory.

* Indicates verses for further study

¹ John Piper. "A Metaphor of Christ and the Church." Desiring God. <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/a-metaphor-of-christ-and-the-church> (accessed February 8, 2017).

² John MacArthur, Jr., *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Colossians and Philemon* (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1992), 168.

³ Mark Moser, Pastor, New Life Glenside

⁴ John Piper. "Clarifying Words on Wife Abuse." Desiring God. <http://www.desiringgod.org/articles/clarifying-words-on-wife-abuse> (accessed February 22, 2017).