Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The New Man Makes a New Home
Scripture: Colossians 3:18-4:1
Code: 2149

Now we're in Colossians, chapter 3,and have come to the very, very practical part of the book, verses 18 through chapter 4, verse 1 Col. 3:18 thru 4:1. Now, this particular section is very, very similar in fact, part of it is verbatim from Ephesians, chapters 5 and 6. The parallel is unmistakable, almost identical. And many years ago 4 or 5 -- when we studied Ephesians, we went through some of these same precepts; we've covered some of them in other studies also. And they keep popping up throughout the New Testament. We saw some of these in the 7th chapter of I Corinthians; here they are again. They have to do with the Christian as he lives his life among men.

Now, we've been talking in the book of Colossians, particularly, about the individual believer. From Chapter 3, verses 1 through 17, Paul has been discussing the character of the individual Christian, and now he talks about the Christian as he lives in his world, or the new man makes a new home, or the new man approaches his world, the society of the new man, if you will. He talks about how Christianity relates itself to society. It isn't enough to be a Christian and that's all. It's only enough to be a Christian in relationship to other people. It's got to work its way out. I think if we were to analyze this, just to get a running start on it, and talk about the impact that Christianity can have on society, we would agree that the major problem in the world is very simple. It's easy to analyze. The major problem in the world is people. I don't think we'd argue about that. If we could just get rid of the people, we could basically get rid of the problem. And the major problem with people is this: people can't get along with people. The problem is people and the problem with people is that people can't get along with people. The inability of man to get along with his fellow man seem to be the No. 1 problem in our society and in any society in our world. And it telescopes all the way from the inability of a brother and a sister to get along without what psychologists call sibling rivalry all the way to the grandiose kinds of problem of the inability of people to get along, so that you end up in international war. But from the lowest level of a relationship between a brother and a sister when they are children to the high level wars that occur in our world, it's all basically the same problem: people can't get along with people! And Christianity purports to do something about that. Christianity enters into the world and says, 'We not only will do something about an individual, but we offer to an individual the capacity to do something about the people around him, in a positive way." Waldo Beech said that man can be characterized by three words. The first one is "anomie." The second one is "anonymity." And the third me is "alienation." "Anomie" means "no norm" -- "a-norm" if you will - without norm, without standards, without rules -- living by a utilitarian ethic. Beech said, "Man governs his good by pleasure." That's anomie. Secondly, he said man suffers from the problem of "anonymity." Anonymity asks the question "who am I?" He has no sense of being and he has no sense of meaning. And

thirdly, the third word that describes man is "alienation." And that defines the fact that man is basically separated. He exists in a world where everybody is basically selfish.

Now, if you want sane other words for this, I'll give you some you might know: immorality, emptiness, and loneliness. Basically, those three things sum up the problem of man. He is immoral; he is empty in himself; and he is lonely because of his inability to give himself to other people. And really, the basic problem of all of this is that he has cut himself off from God. And when he cut himself off from God, what happens is, he experiences that anomie -- that no-norm, no standards -- so no concept of right and no concept of wrong and no concept of self-worth then, because he doesn't know when he's good or when he's bad really, philosophically, anyway.And because he doesn't know God, he is anonymous, because he has nothing to hold onto. He has no invisible mans of support; he has no anchor. He has no being to give identity to his being. And, thirdly, because he does not know God, he suffers from a terrible selfish isolationism and loneliness. As one writer put it, he has cosmic loneliness. He sees nothing in the universe, to which he can lovingly attach himself. And when a man lives with this no norm, no standard kind of immorality, and he lives with the kind of anonymity that gives him emptiness and the kind of alienation that makes him lonely, he soon begins to see everybody against him. He begins to see everybody stealing his happiness. He begins to see all the people around him as people who infringe upon his potential. And very often, he winds up in negativism and despair and he retreats into a further selfishness and a further alienation. And then he can't get along with people. And people who can't get along with people create problems.

We saw a little bit of the 3rd chapter of James this morning. There is a word in the 4th chapter there that helps us, I think. It says, from where come wars and fightings among you; they come out of your lusts that war in your members; you lust and you don't have; you kill and you desire to have; you can't obtain; you fight and war; yet you have not because you ask not; you ask and receive not because you ask amiss..." -- or improperly that you may consume it on your lusts. You adulterers and adulteresses. Don't you know that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever, therefore, will be a friend of the world is the enemy of God." And here he paints the picture of the man who is alienated from God, who therefore alienates himself from everybody else. Here is a man who is cut off from a sense of being and so he cuts himself off from everybody else -- a man who*is* immoral and a man who, because of his immorality, sets his own standards, and therefore alienates himself from other people who have different standards.

But the marvelous thing about being a Christian is that none of those three things needs to exist. Because when you become a Christian, you immediately have a standard, don't you? Immediately, when you become a believer, the Word of God becomes the standard. And secondly, you immediately have an identity - you don't have anonymity. You know who you are - you're a child of God. You're a son, you're an heir, you're a joint-heir. Jesus is not ashamed to call you brother and neither are a whole lot of other Christians all over the world. And that brings you to the third concept; you don't suffer from any alienation or isolation, because you're a part of a family. To become a

Christian means you have standards. To become a Christian means you have a sense of being. You know why you exist -for the glory of God. You have a sense of connection. You're connected up with the divine ruler of the universe and you lose that sense of lonely alienation, because you have those who love you in the family.

So you see, all that I'm trying to show you is that man in our world can very much exist in an anti-social way. And when you become a Christian that ceases to be necessary. Christianity is not just personal; it isn't just a transformed life. It is a transformed life that transforms an environment in which that life lives. No longer do you feel alienated; no longer do you feel everybody's out to steal your potential. No longer do you feel that nobody understands you and that you have to fight for your own square inch. All of a sudden, you realize that there's a great God who cares and there's a great group of people who care and you're a part of something much bigger than yourself.

So we see, then, that there is in life -- the life of the new man - is alife lived out among men. And there's surely where it has its greatest impact. The new man has his greatest impact when he affects society.

Now this becomes Paul's discussion in chapter 3, verse 18. He has been talking about the new man, and now he talks about the new man in his relationships to other people. And he talks about a new wife in verse 18. What happens when a person becomes a Christian? What kind of wife does she become? A new husband in verse 19. A new kind of child in verse 20. A new kind of father in verse 21. A new kind of servant in verse 22. A new kind of master in chapter 4, verse 1. All of a sudden, his whole orientation to society is dramatically changed because Jesus Christ has entered his life. And many a husband has testified to the fact that when his wife became a believer, she changed. And many a wife has testified to the fact that when her husband became a believer, he changed. And many a mother who wondered about her child has been able to say, "When my child came to Jesus Christ, he changed." And many a child has been able to say, "Mien my parents met Jesus Christ, our home changed." And many an employer has been able to say, "You know that guy who works for me -- something happened in his life. I don't know what it was. It had something to do with religion. But boy, is he different on the job!" And many an employee has said, "Something happened to my boss... when he became a Christian." You see, it has tremendous social ramifications to become a believer, because the new man radiates the newness of that life into the world. Jesus put it this way; He said we are salt and light. We affect society. Paul said we are different. We are not citizens here; we are citizens of another kind of life, but he said we live as light in a dark world. We live holy lives in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Peter said we are models of human behavior.

Now, this is our calling. A Christian is not just called to be an independent, solely existing individual, who cultivates between himself and God a relationship independent of anyone else -- not at all. If he has truly a relationship with God, it's going to have social ramifications. We don't need to suffer from the anonymity and the immorality and the loneliness and the emptiness of the world, because in

Christ, all that's covered and we become social beings. We become relational people.

Now, that's a very important word today. Psychologists are throwing that word around, because man must establish relationships. And society realizes today that what we have in our world is a whole bunch of people who aren't related to anybody. They live in the same house -- they don't have any kind of relationship with the people who live there. They work at a job -they don't have any relation to the people who are there. Why? Because of this terrible lack of standards, because of this terrible feeling of anonymity, because of this threat that everybody's stealing from you and threatening your potential and this isolation and withdrawing. And the feeling that you have to defend your square inch or somebody bigger than you is going to take it away. Christianity cones along and says it doesn't have to be that way, because you can lose all of those anxieties in Christ. Christianity is relational.

And you know, we as Christians need to emphasize that today, because that's where the hurt of man is. I, a week or so ago, signed a contract with a publisher to write a book. In fact, the title of the book is interesting. It's going to be called "The Total Christian." There have been a lot of books about total this and total that and total everything else, and so we kinda think somebody ought to say something about the total Christian. So, anyway, we were talking about this and the publisher said to me, "You know, the one thing that we need to do in the book is make sure that it's relational." People are just reaching out to touch real people. And he said, "When you write it or when you work on it and put it together, try to put as much of your awn struggle and your own hurts and your own anxieties and your own life on the page, so people feel that this isn't somebody spouting out information, but this is somebody who's working through the same struggles as a Christian that the reader is." Because people are desperate for somebody to relate to. And I think that's right in a sense. We're looking for somebody to relate to.

But, when you think about it, Christianity's always been relational. Christians throughout all of the history of the Church have reached out and touched society. It isn't true Christianity that retreats to the monasteries; it isn't true Christianity that puts on funny clothes and hides for the rest of its life. It's true Christianity that moves into the world and rubs elbows and makes relationships and builds bridges to people, because that's the definition we find biblically. Christians have always done that. I want to run by a little history for you to show you this in a very general way. When you look back on the history of social reform in our culture western culture in Europe and here in America you find a great amount of that social reform is directly related to Christianity. For example, the l8th century had many of what was called II evangelical awakenings". One who was greatly instrumental in those was John Wesley. And John Wesley was not just a preacher of the gospel, but he was a man concerned about people and so he denounced the evils of his day. He particularly took his whacks at slavery and he urged in addition to that the reform of prisons, the education of the masses -and, incidentally, that became the cry of many preachers -- in the l8th century, that there had to be education. As a result of these, by the time you got to 1776, all the way through to about 1914, tremendous social reform took place in western culture. And much of it reaped right out of the evangelistic awakenings, with John

Wesley and others. There was a great awakening in America in about 1725 to about 1775, and the result of it was the building of a number of American universities, which at that time were geared to educate the masses, but were built around religious themes. Christianity was at the core.

The second great awakening led to the founding of a school system for the masses in Britain, as well as the founding of hundreds of colleges and schools in America. There was even a revival among Christians, I should say -- in Napoleon's day, and out of that revival in Napoleon's day cane a man by the name of Wilberforce and Wilberforce was one of the engineers of the abolition of the slave trade in Africa. And the result of his work, which was the result of the work of an evangelistic awakening, was that the slaves in the British Empire were freed in 1834 and in the United States, they were freed in 1863. There were certain isolated Christians who had a tremendous impact on society, such as Elizabeth Frye. Elizabeth Frye promoted successful prison reform. There was a man by the name of Fliedner, who was a Christian in Germany, who built hopes for ex-prisoners in order to help give them a halfway house to get them back into society. He built hospitals for the sick, spawned insane asylums, that is, homes for people who were insane, that had somecharacter to them and some quality to them, so that they weren't just holes or hovels where people were thrown until they died. He advocated orphanages for the children, and one of the people trained by Fliedner, trained in one of the schools, was a lady by the name of Florence Nightingale, who became the mother of modern nursing.

There was the seventh earl of Shaftsbury in England, a non by the name of Anthony Ashley Cooper. He describes himself in one of his writings as an evangelical of the evangelicals. In modern terms, he'd be a fighting fundie. He promoted legislation to cut the hours of factory labor in half, to prohibit the use of womenworking incoal mines, and of children in factories and farm gangs, and he promoted legislation to transfer retarded people from prisons to places where they would be treated as patients. Agencies cam out of these great awakenings - these great Christian awakenings -- such as the YMCA, the Young Men's Christian Association, the Salvation Army, and many others.

William Carey, a famous missionary to India, secured the abolition of widow burning, which was practiced in India, and child sacrifice. I always remember when I was a boy my dad telling about the natives in the land of India, who believed in the great god of the Ganges River, who would take one of their children and throw the baby when he was alive into the river and watch it drawn as a sacrifice to the god. William Carey went a long way to stop things like that.

In Africa, many missionaries flooding the country, following in the lead of Livingston, discouraged polygamy, fought the slave trade, built schools, and built hospitals. J. C. Wenger says this: "Christianity burst into a corrupt world with a brilliantly new moral radiance. The moral level of society was dismal at the time of the New Testament, and sin prevailed in many form, and into this discouraged world came Christ and his Spirit transformed disciples, filled with holy joy, motivated by a love which the pagans could not grasp, and proclaiming good news, the message that God has

provided a Savior. These Christians lived in tiny communities knit together in the power of the Holy Spirit, little colonies of heaven. They thought of themselves as pilgrims and their way to the celestial city, but they were very much concerned to manifest the love of Christ in all human relationships. These early Christians insisted on bringing all of life under the lordship of Christ." And Wenger says it is men and women of this kind of moral purity who build into society a strong sense of integrity. Life was cheap in the pre-Christian world -- murder, war, abortion, infant exposure -- people died in great numbers without anyone being very troubled in conscience.

The early Christians brought a new concern into society at this very point. End quote. And I think he's right. Ever since Christianity arrived at the time that Christ was here and the discipleswere here, it has continually had an impact on society. It still does. Christians have cared about people. They have always cared about people. We saw that this morning in our definitions of love from I Corinthians that love is not a feeling; love is not an attitude; love is not an abstract; love is acting toward somebody. We see in Matthew 25, for example, where Jesus talks about offering a cup of cold water to somebody in "My name". We see in the book of James where, when somebody has a need in chapter 2,it's not enough to give them a little encouragement, it's only enough to meet theirneed. A very important thing! Christianity has always had great social implications.

You say, "Well, what does that have to do with Colossians 3?" Just this: certainly, we would have to agree that the most obvious, the most strategic, the very bottom line area, where Christianityshould have its social impact, would be in the single most significant social institution in the world, which is what? The home. And that's where Paul is in Colossians 3. He's saying it isn't just a new man. It's a new man who makes a new world. It's a new man who makes a new home. It's a new man who makes an impact on society. Nowhere should the social aspect of the new man be moreevident than it is in the home. A. T. Robertson says this, and I quote, "Real Christianity is both a doctrine and a life. Mere belief is dead without life as proof. Real spiritual life is impossible without vital contact with God and Christ, and our dealings with others become the final proof of our real connection with Christ." End quote. Christianity, he says, is dead unless it's relational. It's dead unless it has an impact with people. And the nitty-gritty -- the place where the rubber meets the road -- is the family ... the home, the basic unit of society. And I wonder whether Christianity can affect society at all if it can't affect its own homes. I wonder whether Christianity is ever going to do anything in a society when it can't do anything in the home. And when, on the other hand, it does something in the home, then it will have an impact on society. Paul hits this right here. And notice how briefly: wives, one verse) husbands, one verse; children, one verse; fathers, one verse; servants, a few more verses; masters, one verse. He's not giving a great long discussion, a great dissertation, on all the features of the home. He's just hitting the issues. There's a head-on confrontation of the main elements, that's going to make the home the kind of relational place it ought to be. Paul is brief; Paul is direct. In each case, he targets in on the sore spot.

Now, if you'll notice this -- you say, is this all the hare yes, you'll notice there are 3 relationships in a home. Now, notice. Now, remember here -- you're talking here about an ancient home, not a 20th century California home. This is the old style home. You have 3 relationships: wives and husbands, verses 18 & 19; children and parents, verses 20 & 21; servants and masters, the rest of the passage. These are the 3 relationships in the hare. In fact, hundreds of years before Christ, Aristotle said that. Aristotle said, "There are three great pairs of mutual relations in the home: husband/wife, parent/child, master/servant." Remember that in those days the homes had servants. Now, maybe you can't pull that into the 20th century. You might be able to pull it into the 20th century by imagining anybody who is at all employed in the home, or anyone who lives in the home who is not a regular family member. But, we Ill see that as we go

Paul wants to show us that Christianity is going to affect the home, that being a new man who puts off the old and puts on the new, that being a new man who, in verse 15, is ruled by the peace of Christ, verse 16, by the Word of Christ, and verse 17, by the name of Christ, that being this kind of man is going to have a tremendous and dramatic impact on the home. Now, as Paul goes through these verses, he really doesn't say anything new. He does not introduce any great new truths. He has the same old 2 principles. What are they? Authority and submission. He says these still maintain. Christianity doesn't add that; Christianity hasn't brought that into the world. That's been in the world for a long, long, tine. Hanes have always been built on authority and submission. That's always been God's plan. And man has always operated on that kind of basis. Somebody rules and somebody follows. So, we can't say that Christianity has introduced a new principle.

But let me show you what it has introduced. You might want to jot these down. First of all, Christianity has introduced a new presence. You say, what do you mean, John. Well, the new presence in the home is the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. And you'll notice at the end of verse 18: "... as it is fit in the Lord..."; the end of verse 20: "...for this is well pleasing to the Lord..."; verse 23: "Whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord..."; verse 24, at the end: "...for you serve the Lord..."; verse 1, chapter 4: "...knowing that you also have a master in heaven..."

Now, what is introduced into the home is not a new principle; it's the same old thing: authority on the part of the husband, submission on the part of the wife. But there's a new presence here. The family has, all of a sudden, a new power, because of a new presence. There's a new energy to realize this old principle. And so, it isn't anything new; it's something very old. But, there's a new presence, and, now follow me. And that new presence makes for a new power.Christ is there; His power is there to make the family what it ought to be. And, I think there's a third thing: a new purpose.Christianity introduces into the home. A new purpose. "Whatever you do..." -- verse 17 "...in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." There's a new purpose. That's the verse that introduces this whole section. Whatever your home is and whatever you do in your home, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus. Do it all to His glory; do it all to His honor.

So there isn't a new principle, but there's a new presence, which means a new power, based on a new purpose and I'll tell you something else. Fourthly, there's a new pattern for the home. You say, what do you mean by that? Well, we needed a model to follow. So, in Ephesians, chapter 5, it says: "Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ loved the church." The new pattern is Christ. You see, before Jesus came, they didn't have that model to follow. But, now we do. And so, there's a new presence, giving a new power, toward a new purpose, following a new pattern, to fulfill an old principle. And that is, God has intended authority and submission to exist in the ham. And while man struggles and struggles with that, it becomes possible in Jesus Christ.

Now, as we look at this home, we're going to get into the text right now, and we'll see how far we can get. There are 3 areas of relationships. We'll cover each one, and each me has 2 parts, so there will be a total of 6. You might say we'll call it "The New Man Makes a New Home. " We have a word to wives, a word to husbands, a word to children, a word to fathers, a word to servants, and a word to masters.

Now, we'll start with the wives. We're not picking on the wives. Just think, once you're done, you don't have to be discussed at all. Five more to go. A word to wives in verse 18. It's simple. "Wives, Now, that isn't too hard to figure out whether it applies to you or not. "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." Now, that's such a simple statement; you would think it would be so very clear. It is absolutely mind-boggling what a problematic area that is today. I don't know how people can confuse that kind of statement. But it's incredible. There are people today who are denying that this needs to be true. There are books being written all the time by supposedly evangelical people, who deny this.

Now, I'll just give you a few ways they deny it. Number one, some are saying that a wife doesn't necessarily have to be a woman. Oh, yes. A wife can be a man. You say, what's that? That's the "gay" church ... the Metropolitan Community Church of Los Angeles. And now they're all aver every place. The Metropolitan Community Church has branches in many, many areas. In fact, my dad called me the other day and told me an interesting thing. They have come to Eugene, Oregon, where he pastors. The Gay Church. They put a big ad in the paper. They wrote him a letter and said, "We're going to have an opening rally. Would you be our speaker?" And so, he wrote them back and told them in two pages why he wouldn't ... not until they repented of their sin, and he gave them the whole Biblical shot. Alright, so the end of it is this. So they ran a big ad in the paper, in the Eugene paper on the Eugene campus, in the Oregon university paper. And it said: "Gay Church has its beginning rally ...." etc. "Invited guest..." -- in big type -- "Jack MacArthur." Oh, he wasn't real thrilled about that. And he called the person up and said, "What's going on?" I forget the word. He uses big words. That was something anyway. Oh, I know what it was. That's complicity, he said. I don't know what it means but that's what he said it was. So, he was very mad. And he said, "I can't do that." They said, "Well, we're Christian people. to "Well, do you practice homosexuality" he said. "Well, only if we're married." Oh,

they perform marriages, he found out. And I said, "Oh, yeah. They do that in L.A. They marry one man to another. One's the husband and one's the wife." You see, it's all here. One submits and it's alright. So that's one point of attack - that wives aren't women anymore.

Another one is this -- that this is not really the Spirit speaking that this is just Paul waxing into his chauvinistic act... that Paul had this thing about women. And he just let it all out once in awhile. It just doesn't belong there; it's just an unfortunate mistake. Well, you know what a problem that is, when some people with their special interests start telling us which verses go out of the Bible. They sit in the seat of authority. They play the role of God and tell us what's in and what isn't.

Now, some others are a little more wily, and they are saving, "Well, actually what you have here is - Paul is actually commenting on Genesis 2, and we all know that Genesis 2 is not an inspired chapter." "Genesis 1 was inspired. Genesis 2 is a traditional rabbinical addition. it was added to the Old Testament. It is not inspired by God. And poor Paul, what does he know? He just picks up Genesis 2 as if it were inspired by God. And this is his comment on Genesis 2." Because, you see, Genesis 2 is where it says, "And her desire shall be to her husband..." and so forth. And that just eliminates Genesis 2. You want to know something? There's absolutely zero evidence for that. That's a lie. That isn't true.

And others are coming along, particularly two women who wrote a book, and they say, "Well, you see, you have to interpret that culturally. You see, in that culture, they didn't want women upsetting the society. And that society was an authority/submission society, but that's all cultural." "Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church." Is that cultural too? I don't need to love my wife - that's cultural. That's not 20th century. That was then. Or maybe Christ only loved the church then... and doesn't love it now. You see, that doesn't make any sense at all. You know, thereare some pastors in our country who have omitted the words "submit" and "obey" from all their wedding ceremonies ... to acquiesce to this. Well, it sews so simple...."Wives, submit..." But I'll tell you something. All the efforts at integrating Women's Lib into Christianity still can't change Colossians 3:18. And if you have trouble with that, you canalways go to Romans 7:2. We don't just have one Scripture. Romans 7:2 don't look them up. Just listen and I'll read them to you. "The woman who hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband..." Well, that's pretty strong language. You say, "Well, that's two for you." Well, here's three -- I Corinthians 14:34: "Let your women keep silence in the churches. It's not permitted to them to speak. They are commanded to be under obedience as says the Law. If they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home. But it I s a shame for womento speak in the church - "There's more in I Timothy 2:11: "Let the women learn in silence with all subjection. I permit not a woman to teach nor to take authority over the man but be in silence. For Adam was first formed and then Eve and Adam was not deceived but the woman, being deceived, was in the transgression." Same idea. You have it again in Titus, chapter 2, verse 5: "The women are to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands." Why? Because it's the culture -- No! "...in order that the Word of God might not be blasphemed." I Peter, chapter 3, verse ... well; there are several verses, but

verses 1 to 6. It says in verse6: "Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord, and Sarah is honored." Now, you see, it's all over the place in the New Testament. It's the standard.

But I would notice that the emphasis here is not on the idea of obedience as an authoritative, overbearing, browbeating relationship, but it's submission. Obedience is reserved in this passage for children and servants. The word submission is reserved for wives. And it has a more cooperative concept tied to it. Now, notice that he says, "Wives, submit..." It isn't the idea that he's firing out the orders and you're obeying. It's the idea that you have a spirit of submissiveness. He says, "Submit to your own husbands."

Now, you say, "Why does he say 'your own'? Does he think women are going to go around submitting to everybody's husband? No, I think the idea of "own" here is to emphasize that this is a personal, intimate, inward, vital relationship. He's saying to submit to your own husband. This is the man you own. This is yours. This is your possession. And somehow, that makes the submission all the more possible. You're not just submitting to some indifferent, detached authority. This is your own husband. You possess him; he possesses you. There's something very intimate, very personal there.

Now, we've talked about the kind of submission this means. It doesn't mean inferiority. It doesn't mean you're inferior to your husband. Not at all. Jesus wasn't inferior to God, but *He* submitted, didn't He? That isn't the idea. Women have great dignity in the New Testament. Paul emphasizes it in I and II Timothy and in Titus. Women have a strategic place in the ministry. We've been through that many times. Submission does not man inferiority. Another thing - submission is not absolute. It doesn't mean that you submit to everything all the time under possible situation. In Acts, chapter 5, Luke says you have some times to choose, as did Peter and John, when they said, "You choose *whether* we ought to obey God or men." Your husband may ask you to do something that you can't do in good conscience before God. So the submission is not absolute.

And then, I wouldadd, thirdly, that submission is in love. This is your own husband, assuming the one that you are intimately, inwardly, vitally in love with. There s something relational here. I think a

A Christian wife who loves her husband, who sees him as God's gift to her, who sees him as her own possession, will more easily regulate her conduct in harmony with this particular command. She's not going to join the Women's Lib. She's not going to parade her equality spiritually into equality maritally.

Well, these are things you are well aware of. Notice what be says at the end of the verse. Verse 18: "...as it is fit in the Lord." The only justification for this is that this is the way God intended it. This is the way God invented it. This is the way God designed it. And people, if anything should be true that is true, it should be true in a Christian home. And this is true. "Wives, submit to your own husband." It's got to be true in a Christian home. Christianity has got to work there before it can work in the world.

Secondly, a word to husbands. And we're just hitting ground we've covered before. I'm going to read it to you as the Greek rendering states it. "You husbands keep on loving your wives and stop being bitter toward them." You husbands keep on continually loving your wives and stop being bitter toward them. Now, there are really two commands there. Number one, keep on loving your wives. Now, often, this isn't the case unfortunately. All the love is there before the marriage, and then, when the marriage happens, all the love seems to drain away. And what comes in its place is bitterness. And Paul knows this; the Holy Spirit knows this. You can replace love with bitterness. "Keep on loving your wives..." You loved them before you married them; you loved them when you married them; you loved them for awhile after you married them. Keep on loving your wives. And we've defined love, haven I t we? Don't sink to the level of assuming that love is an emotion again. Love is activity. It is the act of self-sacrifice. And we'll see more of that in our morning studies. But, don't let what was love turn into bitterness. Some have suggested that this word "bitter" should be translated "cross." Don't be cross toward them. Well, either word emphasizes a harshness of tamper. It emphasizes that attitude of resentment that leads to misery and often leads to divorce. I think it's "pikrino" that is the verb here and, if I remember correctly, it could be translated here as "exasperate" or "irritate." Don't irritate your wife. Don't exasperate your wife. Don't be cross against your wife. The word, incidentally, is only used three other times in the New Testa-ment. And you'll find that the only times it is used, it is used in Revelation, chapter 8, once, and chapter 10, twice, and it has there the idea of bitterness...something very distasteful, something very unenjoyable.

What Paul is really saying is, "Don't call her honey and act like vinegar." A husband is a leader and a lover. Howard Hendricks said, "A lot of frus-trated sergeants are running around with biblical clubs in their hands shouting, 'I'm the head of my house,' and they're the only ones that are convinced." And the reason they are not, he says, is because there is no love. Keep on loving.

Now, this is more than sexual love. It's that deep affection that sees your wife as a sister in the Lord, that sees your wife as a weaker vessel to be cared for, that sees your wife as your best friend that sees your wife as the most important human being in the world that sees your wife as your most critical permanent investment and life-long partner. Boy, if some men took care of their wives the way they take care of their money, it would be interesting. The husband is never cross; he's never bitter, never harsh. He only honors his wife and loves his wife. It's kinda sad when love goes out of a marriage; it should always be there. And it's something you have to work on and cultivate. I'm thinking of a verse in Genesis...if I can find it. I like this; here, I found it. Genesis 24:67...this is good..."And Isaac brought her into his mother, Sarah's, tent and took Rebecca and she became his wife." You say, "Yeah, is that all?" No, listen to this: "And he loved her." Isn't that good? And he loved her. He took her

to be his wife and after that, he actually went on to love her. The woman submits, and in that submission, there's nothing humiliating. There's nothing degrading, nothing inconsistent with

intellectual moral and spiritual equality. It's simply necessary for domestic order in God's design and fulfills the woman's nature, as created by God. Such submission has its limits. If it violates her conscience, her conscience toward God, God's revealed Word, those are the limits. And, of course, the real limiter on what the woman is to do in submission is the love of the husband, because if he really loves her, he would never ask herto submit to something that would violate her conscience.

Now, this is the basic key to the home husband and wife. That's where it all starts. Now, you've got to cultivate this. My wife and I talk about this all the time. It isn't easy for us; it's no easier for us than it is for anybody else. People think, "Oh. Your home must be paradise." Paradise lost. We have our times; believe me, like everybody else. We have a happy home and there s love in our home and we work at it because you have to work at it. I mean, when was the last time you prayed with your wife? And didn't fall asleep while she was praying? When was the last time you took her out? Mien was the last time you bought each other a gift when it wasn't a special occasion. When was the last time you sacrificed something you really wanted for something he or she wanted but never said so? Now, you see, you've got to work on it. Christianity ought to affect the home. And to affect the home, it's going to have to be at that level husband and wife.

Let's go to the second section. The second dimension, which has two other words, relates to the children and the parents. The first is the word to "children." Now, some of you here are young people and you're saying, "Well, what is a child? How far do I go before I stop being a child and then I won't have to do this?" "Children," "ta tekna," is a very general word for child, an offspring. It can be any age. What it basically means is that it's a general word for anybody who is still under parental guidance. You stop being a child biblically in terns of this word, you stop being a child when you go out to establish your own independence and your own life. As long as you're in the home, as long as your parents are responsible for you, as long as you're under their leadership and control, you have one command. Look at it in verse 20: "Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the lord." Again, you have it in the Greek: "Keep on obeying." Thisisn't anything new. It's Ephesians 6:1; it's Exodus 20:12; it's Exodus 21:15 & 17; it's Leviticus 20:9; it's Proverbs 1:8, Proverbs 6:20, and who knows where else? This isan old thing in the Bible. It's nothing new. In Proverbs, chapter 30, it kinda emphasizes this concept of all things, you know, obey in all things. It says in Proverbs 30:11: "There is a generation that curses their father and does not bless their mother. There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes... "- you know, they have all the answers -"and yet they are not washed from their filthiness." "There is a generation, oh, how lofty are their eyes..." -- they think they're hot stuff.

Now, he's either describing junior high school people or high school people; I'm not sure which. But anyway, "...and there is a generation whose teeth are like swords and their jaw teeth like knives to devour the poor from off the earth and the needy from among men." "They are like a horse leech that has two daughters, crying 'Give, give'..." A horse leech has two teeth that sink into the horse and suck the blood out. And he says there are children like that who are only trying to get what they can get.

They are leeches. In verse 17, "It is the eye that mocks at his father and despises to obey his mother and that eye the ravens of the valley shall pick it out and the young eagles shall eat it."

Now, God is very upset about that kind of attitude. That's pretty vivid language -- clawing out- their eyes and eating them. That's what God says about the kind of generation that is- disobedient. Listen to this. There is only one command in the entire Bible given to children or young people living in their home with their parents. That me command and the only command is to obey your parents in everything. That's it. You know, it's amazing to me how some young people will have such a difficult time defining their Christian life in all of its dimensions, when they don't even start at this very point. In Romans, chapter 1, when it characterizes the vices of paganism, one of them is disobedience to parents. In II Timothy, chapter 3, verse 2, when it catalogues the evils of the last days, it says one of these evils is disobedience to parents. And today, you know, the very word "authority" is anathema in some educational circles.' Children are supposed to be able to develop along their own paths. But it says, "all things." In all things wee are to obey.

Now, again I would add that this is limited. It is limited to that which doesn't violate God's standards. It is limited to that which doesn't step cross-grain to God's leading and God's will. I think at that point the young person or the child has to say what Peter said, "You judge whether we ought to obey God or men." I've had young people come to me and say, "My father wants me to do things for him in his business that are dishonest. What should I do?" Well, my answer is that you can't do them. In Luke 14:26, it says this: "If any man come to me and hate not his father and mother and wife and children and brother and sister and his own life, he can't be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his cross and come after me can't be my disciple." Jesus knew that sometimes a child or young person would come to Christ and it would have to be in violation of his parents. The authority again is limited to that which fits into the category of allowable by God.

Now, notice at the end of the verse, he simply says, "This is well pleasing..." Again, the same purpose. The reason to do this? Because this is the way God set it up. This is God's standard. This is God's pattern.

Now, that leads us down to verse 21, where he talks about fathers in the King James. Let me say a word about the word you can draw a line through the word "fathers" in your Bibles if you want and write "Parents" because that's that the word means. It is translated in Hebrews 11:23 as "parents" or should be translated that way because there it say-, "Moses was hid three months by his pateris." And there it's a plural. He didn't have more than one father, but it's used there to speak of parents. So, what you really have in verse 21 is: "Parents, provoke not.. or 11 ... stop provoking your children, lest they be discouraged." Stop - literally -- irritating your children, that they may not lose heart. Stop nagging your kids. This refers to the irritation that comes by the emotional explosion on the part of parents.

Now, I was thinking about this and looking back on some of the things that we taught you before,... How can a parent really irritate his child? It says, "Don't irritate your children." Now, how can you irritate them? Let me give you some ways. Here's a list of ways. If you really want to irritate your children, do this:

1. Overprotection. I hear the "Amen" corner over here really going at it. A couple of overprotected people over here. Overprotection. No trust. All rules. All deprivation. You never ever allow them any liberty. You draw the lines so narrow and the boxes are so closed that they soon feel that you do not believe in them. You do not trust in them. No matter what they do to earn that trust, they never experience that trust. Consequently, they give up and say, "What's the difference anyway?" Then you've got that seething rebellion. You can really irritate your children by overprotecting them. Give them a sense of trust. You don't have to cover every single detail of every single thing they've ever done. well, what did you do? What did you do after that? Well, then where did you go? Well, when you got back from there, where did you go? Why did you go over there? let them live. You know, when they're born, they're born with an umbilical cord and they're connected. And from then on, their whole life, you're just letting it out. And it ought to sometime be cut and the kid ought to be so far out that he doesn't even know he's not connected anymore, it's just so natural.

2. Favoritism. The second way you can really irritate your children is by favoritism. Make sure you always compare them with the other kids in the family who do better than they do. Why can't you be Like Albert? He always does his homework. It's very irritating for a child to be less than an individual. It's very irritating for the child to be a lemon on the assembly line. Favoritism. Favoritism means you constantly compare the child with the other child.

3. Depreciating his worth. A third way you can irritate your child is by depreciating his worth. One good way to really depreciate his worth is whenever you have company, have him eat in the kitchen. That'll really let him know that he just really isn't worth having around anything important. or else, when he comes in and has something to say, you say, "Hush up and go back an the den. Go to your roan." And then you get the autistic kind of child who finally tries to communicate and gives up and so then he can't communicate at all and he won't. And then you get that ultimate kind of autistic person who doesn't say anything anytime, because he never did get listened to when he tried to. We were talking about this with Howard Hendricks when we were back at the conference last weekend, you know. And he was saying, "Look -- if you come to my house for dinner, you've got to get ready. They're all going to be there, staring you right in the eye. The whole bunch. When we have Company, the kids are all there, looking right dawn your throat." Because they're part of our family. They have every right to be a part. Don't depreciate their worth. Don't tell them to shut up and go to bed. There are boundaries -- yes.

4. Discouragement. A fourth way youcan irritate your child is by discouragement. Don It ever -reward him for anything. Make sure that he never feels like he's succeeded. I know a girl that killed herself for that reason, because no matter what she did, it was never enough. No matter what her grades were, it was never enough. No matter how well she did, it was never enough, let's face it. A parent who feels that way about a child is trying to get a child to he something theparent never was. That's not fair. And this girl couldn't handle it, so she killed herself. That's sad. Discouragement -- no rewards, no honors.

5. No affection demonstrated. Another good way to irritate your child is never demonstrate any affection for him. Don't ever go out of your way to love him or hug him or kiss him or pick him up...squeeze her or be gentle or thoughtful in a physically affectionate way. Very, very discouraging. So if you want to discourage your child, don't reward your child, don't honor your child, and never demonstrate any love or affection. So the child just begins to feel totally alienated, totally unacceptable, can't do anything right, isn't worthy of your love, isn't worthy of your affection -- he gets very, very discouraged.'

6. Not providing his needs. Another thing - this is kind of practical. You can irritate your child by not providing his needs. You know what a child's needs are? Believe it or not, in our society, do you know what a child needs? A room. Yes, he does. He needs a room, a little privacy. That would be good. Now, you can overcome that, maybe your economics don't make it possible for every single child to have his own domain, but provide some place for him. Your child needs a place to play and if it can't be at your place, then take him to the park, because he or she needs a place to play. Another thing is clean clothes. That's a good thing to provide your children. And when they get a little older, somewhere to study - you know, I think that one of the reasons that some children never do well in school is because they don't know where to land when they some home. They sit down at a table and you say, "What are you doing in here with that homework?" "Get out of here and go to your room." And they go to their roan and they get backaches from sitting five minutes on their bed, because there's no where to sit. Provide some place for them to study. Another thing is to give them something that belongs to them -- whatever itis. Another thing is to feed them good meals. Let them know that you've prepared something special just for them. These little practical things, where a child begins to know that you are concerned about him and about her as a person.

7. Lack of standards. On the other hand, you can irritate a child by a lack of standards. You know, there are children and young people, and when I use the word child, I mean anybody who is still in the home, but you can really irritate your young people by not giving them any rules. Because then they are totally left on their own and they can't handle that kind of liberty and they are constantly getting into problems that they really can't cope with. Cross somelines; make somefences.

8. Criticism. Another way to irritate your children is by criticism. A well-known doctor, Dr. (Haim Geno) says this: "The child who lives with criticism does not learn responsibility. He learns only to condemn

himself and find fault with others. He learns to doubt his own judgment, disparage his own ability, distrust everybody. Above all, he learns to live with continual expectation of impending doom." End quote. Now that is no way to live. Criticism. Don't irritate your child with criticism. Create a positive environment, an uplifting, up building one.

9. Neglect. And then I think another way to irritate a child is by neglect. You know what a classic illustration of that is? Absalom. Absalom was a tragic young man, who tried to kill his own father, David. And Absalom is a classic illustration of a son whowas neglected by a father. You can really irritate your child by indifference, neglect. Play with your children.

10. Over-discipline. And then, of course, and this is the last one I'll mention, you can really irritate your child by over-discipline. This is where your discipline is hurtful, you know, when you haul off and really hurt them. Or it can be when you just scream at them all the time, or holler at them or yell at them, or shut them in their rooms. Or you're actually some people even discipline their children in a show of their superior strength, if you can believe it. You talk about battered children, or whatever. But the idea is that of over-disciplining children. You can do it by yelling and screaming at them for every single thing they do. You know, they can knock -- this happens all the tine -- bang! Over goes the milk at the table. You stupid... Or you can say, "Well, here we go again. Laugh about it. You can over-discipline them. I man, he didn't do it on purpose. You can over-discipline them by actually using your brute strength to show your superior power over your child. I've often thought that we say things to our children we'd never say to anybody else, don't we? Don't ever discipline them in anger.

Well, those are just some practical things to help you see that you don't want to irritate your children. Now, he comes back with verses 22 to 25, and I'm not going to spend very much time on them, becausewe've covered these thoughts recently in our study on-God's plan for labor. But this is category 3. The homes in those days had servants, and they needed to know how they should be relating to those servants. The master and the servant idea. Just let me go by these quickly. Incidentally, your servants are not employees. Servants were slaves. They were the actual property of their masters, but the principles that apply to them certainly apply to employee/employer relationships throughout history. Verse 22: "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eye service as men pleasers, but in singleness of heart fearing God." Now's here is a home where you have some slaves.

Now, maybe you don't have that in your home -- I'm not sure you don't. Maybe you have a maid; maybe you have somebody who does your garden; maybe you have people who come and go, fixing things, doing things. Maybe you want to look at this from the standpoint of your job or your employee/employer relationships. Christianity has some principles on which thisthing is to function. And it's very simple: if you are an employee, you are to obey everything. Notice -- not with eye service, that is, not just when the boss is looking, as if you were to please him. But with a single heart --really, you're pleasing God. The Greeks and the Romans -- there were just slaves everywhere. This

was a tremendously important thing in the home, that the slaves realized that they were to be submissive, even if they were Christians. They were to be submissive. According to the flesh, their masters ruled them. Not that they were ruled by them spiritually. But in a fleshly relationship, not a superior relationship intellectually, or spiritually, or morally, or any other way, but just the flesh -- they were in a position to obey. And they were to obey, verse 23 says, --whatever they did, they were to do heartily as to the lord and not to men. Totally committed to serve as if the master were the lord Himself. Enthusiastically "working from the soul," the literal Greek says.

Now, then he gives two reasons: negative and positive. The first is positive: "knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the lord Christ." Now, listen. The Lord is going to pay you back. Robert G. Lee's favorite sermon, "Pay Day Some Day." You may not be getting your due now. You may be underpaid and overworked, but some day God is going to equalize. Verse 24: "The Lord will give you the reward of the inheritance, because it's Him that you serve." As an employee on the job, as a servant in the home, whatever it is, wherever it is, for whomever you'reworking, you are really working for the Lord. You are serving the Lord. And, whatever inequities there are, don't let them condition your behavior. You serve with a full heart; you serve whole-heartedly; you serve all-out; you serve with total commitment, because the Lord is the One you're really serving and the Lord will pay you back.

And then, he says there's a negative reason in verse 25: "And he that doesn't do this shall receive for the wrong which he has done and God will not respect persons." If the slaves fails to heed the admonitions, he'll be punished. The Lord will discipline. And God is impartial. Don't think because you're a Christian or because you know the Lord in a unique way that you have any special favors. The Christian slave is not to presume on his Christianity as a justification for disobedience s a slave. And when the apostle Paul was writing this letter to the Colossians, no doubt he had in mind the case of Philemon, the slave -whom he sent back and asked Philemon to receive with love. If the slave has wronged, the slave has to pay for the wrong. He's not exonerated because he's a Christian.

So you see the two sides of that: servants obey. Obey as if it were the Lord. Whatever you do, do it with your whole heart. A positive reason: you'll be rewarded by the Lord whom you're really serving. A negative reason: if you don't, there will be a chastening.

And then lastly, a word to the masters. "You give your servants that which is just and fair, knowing that you also have a master in heaven." In other words, do unto others as you would have the Lord do unto you. Treat them fairly, as God, you would hope, would treat you. Now, in this simple thing --and I've just run it by. We haven't gone into any great depth. But let me just say this: when you add this whole chapter together, what you have is the new man making a new home. In the world of the New Testament, a wife with this attitude, a husband with this attitude, children with this attitude, parents with this attitude, slaves with this attitude, and masters with this attitude, would absolutely be a dramatic, shocking reality in a society. And it still should be true in a society today where homes are

falling apart, where marriage is a joke, where people in our communities can't believe that there's anybody who's happily married, or that there's any home with peace, or that there's any home with love and fun and unity and all of these things the Bible talks about. There ought to be some that we can lay out there and say "Look here. Here's one." If Christianity is to affect our world, it will affect the world from the vantage point that it affects the home. And it all goes back to the same thing. Verse 1 of chapter 3: if you're risen with Christ, live it. Put off the old man; put on thenew man. Verse 15: let the peace of Christ rule. Verse 16: let the Word of Christ dwell in you. Verse 17: let the name of Christ guide you. And the result is going to be that you're not only going to be a new man, but a new wife, and a new husband, and a new child, and a new parent, and a new slave, and a new master. And I really believe that if homes can become what God wants them to be, they can become the catalyst to change a messed-up world. And Christianity will continue to go on in history as the agency that has brought about great social reform.

What are we going to do in America? We had a discussion on Tuesday with our entire staff. What are we going to do about divorce? How are we going to deal with the mass of divorced people? How are we going to deal with single parents? How are we going to deal with children who don't have a father? What are we- going to do in the future? Is it going to get better? No, it's going to get worse. I'll tell you one thing we'd better do ... if we're going to have anything to say about this, we'd better get our homes together, don't you think? And if we can get our homes together and they can become a testimony to the world, maybe we can affect this world before it's so far gone that we've lost it all together.

Well, Father, thank You for our time tonight. It's just practical things we've shared and just reminders of things we should know. I'm thankful so thankful -- for the patience of the people who come week by week and are willing to sit and share and hear and learn and open their hearts to what Your Spirit says. Father, there's a great courage in that. There's a great courage when people will come and say, "Preach to me. Tell me what I need to be." And they'll come back week after week and hear it. Father, there's a great openness in that and I thank You for that spirit in these people. I thank You that You've given us answers that can make a difference. Father, we thank You tonight for our good time-. Thank You for again reminding us of what we really know already, but just hitting us with it again. Thank You for helping me to think these things through. May they linger in our hearts, that our homes might become what You would have them to be, that we might be new people who make new homes that can have an impact to nuke a new world. We can't give up, Father. We have to try. We have to continue to preach, with our living and our speaking, that Jesus can be exalted. We pray in His wonderful name, trusting that You'll bring those that You want to come into the counseling roan, and the rest of us, that we shall go, charged up to minister for You, first in our home and then in our world. In Christ's name, Amen.

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