

THE PREEMINENCE  
AND  
SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST



Sermon Series Notes



## Husbands and Wives (Colossians 3:18-19)

Danny Hodges – 3480

Intro: Colossians is laid out similarly to Ephesians in that Paul deals with doctrine in the first half of each book, then gives practical application in the last half of each. This little section of Scripture we move into today is full of practical instructions for husbands, wives, parents, children, employers and employees. Since these issues are so important, we will slow down a bit so as not to miss what God has to say to us here. Read vv.18-19.

I really don't want to share much on verse 18. So I've invited a special guest to do so. Would you welcome a beautiful, godly, and submissive wife, Wendy Hodges...

A doctor was addressing a large audience: What we put into our stomachs will one day kill us. Soft drinks corrode your stomach lining. High fat diets can be disastrous, and most people do not realize the harm caused by the germs in our drinking water. But there is one thing that is the most dangerous of all, and most, if not all of us, have already eaten it, or will eat it one day. Can anyone tell me what food causes the most grief and suffering for years after eating it? After several seconds of quiet, a 75 year old man in the front row softly said, "Wedding Cake."

A couple is lying in bed and the man says, "I'm gonna make you the happiest woman in the world...The woman replies, "I'll miss you."

Two friends were sitting in a boat fishing, when one says to the other, "I think I'm gonna divorce my wife - she ain't spoke to me in over two weeks. His friend spits, takes a sip of his Coke and says, "Better think it over - women like that are hard to find."

A woman woke during the night to find that her husband was not in bed. She put on her robe and went downstairs. He was sitting at the kitchen table with a cup of coffee in front of him. He appeared to be in deep thought, just staring at the wall. She saw him wipe a tear from his eye then take a sip of his coffee. "What's the matter dear? Why are you down here at this time of night?" she asked. "Do you remember 20 years ago when we were dating and you were only 16?" "Yes." "Do you remember when your father caught us in the back seat of my car kissing?" "Yes, I remember." "Do you remember when he shoved that shotgun in my face and said, 'Either you marry my daughter or spend twenty years in jail!'" "Yes, I do." He wiped another tear from his cheek and said, "You know...I would have gotten out today."

One wife prayed "Dear Lord, I pray for wisdom to understand my man, love to forgive him, and patience for his moods; Because Lord, if I pray for strength, I'll beat him to death. Amen."

Did you know that a successful society is dependent upon healthy marriages? See Prov.30:21-23. Even the Chinese philosopher Confucius (who emphasized personal and governmental morality, correct social relationships, justice, and sincerity) recognized this truth. He said, "The strength of a nation is derived from the integrity of its homes."

The biblical foundation for the marriage relationship is Christ and the church; bridegroom and bride (II Cor.11:2; Rev.19:7; Eph.5:32). But the picture is an imperfect one, because the earthly marriage union is a union between two very imperfect people. Things went south in marriage early on (Gen.2-3; note 3:16b).

What a challenge for a husband to love a wife who is not naturally submissive. And what a challenge for wives to submit a husband who has a natural (sinful) tendency to "rule over her." But this is the instruction the Lord gives.

I talked with many wives this past week, and they gave me some great examples of the challenges they face in submitting to their husbands: The children, how to discipline, what freedoms they can have. Finances, "My husband is very generous and he would just give everything away"...after they both became Christians he began to include her on his plans. One wife has a husband in prison whom she met and married while he was in prison, and she had to get used to talking with him before she would take a vacation or make an out of the ordinary financial decision; for years as a single person she was used to being "in control." One lady I talked with was a single parent for 12 years, then remarried and had to think about including her husband on decisions. One wife was married for 20 years and has been separated for 7 years; her husband does not know the Lord and makes major dollar decisions without talking with her, sometimes emptying the bank account. She struggles with anger and resentment. One wife had a husband who was on drugs, and after they both became Christians, she struggled with letting him be the leader in the home. One wife said they had their house renovated twenty-two years ago, but today he still has not put baseboards down, etc.

I also asked them if they ever experienced their husband being harsh with them: One said it was alcohol related (Dr. Jekyll, Mr. Hyde). Another said it was cultural (an interracial marriage). One wife said her husband sometimes misunderstands what she says and he reacts harshly. Several said their husbands do not realize when they come across harsh. One husband told me that his wife often reminds him, "I'm a gentle flower."

Generally speaking, men have a natural tendency to be harsh with their wives, and it all started in The Garden of Eden ("rule over her"). The Greek historian Plutarch speaks of Roman men who "rage bitterly against their wives."

William Barclay writes: "Under Jewish law a woman was a thing; she was the possession of her husband, just as much as his house or his flocks or his material goods were. For instance, under Jewish law, a husband could divorce his wife for any cause, while a wife had no rights whatever in the initiation of divorce. In Greek society a respectable woman lived a life of entire seclusion. She never appeared on the streets alone, not even to go marketing. She lived in the women's apartments and did not even join her menfolk for meals. From her there was demanded a

complete servitude and chastity; but her husband could go out as much as he chose, and could enter into as many relationships outside marriage as he liked and incur no stigma. Under both Jewish and Greek laws and custom, all the privileges belonged to the husband, and all the duties to the wife.”

**Harsh** \ˈhärsh\ *adjective*; [Middle English *harsk*, of Scandinavian origin; akin to Norwegian *harsk* harsh] 14th century

**1** : having a coarse uneven surface that is rough or unpleasant to the touch

**2 a** : causing a disagreeable or painful sensory reaction : IRRITATING

**b** : physically discomforting : PAINFUL

**3** : unduly exacting : SEVERE

The fruit of harshness: A loss of intimacy in the marriage relationship, a wife who does not feel loved...respect her husband...love her husband.

The command to husbands here contrasts sharply with the plight of women in the ancient world. The Christian ethic for a husband's love for his wife was light years beyond the formal domestic ethics of most of the ancient world, and much of the world we live in today.

See Eph.5:22-33

Christ's headship of the church has already been described in 4:15-16. It is from Christ as head that the body derives its health and grows into maturity. His headship expresses care rather than control, responsibility rather than rule. The head of the body is the savior of the body.

The wife's submission is not meant to be a forced submission, but rather a willing submission. It is intended to be "unto the Lord," but also in response to the husband's love for his wife...

I John 4:19 We love because he first loved us.

"...her submission is not to be an unthinking obedience to his rule but rather a grateful acceptance of his care...Whenever the husband's headship mirrors the headship of Christ, then the wife's submission to the protection and provision of his love, far from detracting from her womanhood, will positively enrich it." (John Stott, p.226)

Loving my wife as Christ loved the church:

1. A sensitive love

\* Philippians 2:3-4; I Peter 3:7

2. A servant love

\* Mark 10:42-45

\* Jesus washed the disciples' feet. Practical ways I wash my wife's feet?

\* One survey of over 2,000 married adults placed sharing household chores as the third most important factor in a successful marriage, behind faithfulness and a good sexual relationship.

### 3. A sacrificial love

\* What would my wife say is more important to me than her? The TV, fishing, sports...

### 4. A sanctifying love

\* He is to "cleanse her by the washing with water through the word." This is not quoting Eph.5:22 to her, nor is it preaching to her. Cleansing involves grace, mercy, forgiveness, etc. It is when the Word becomes flesh and is lived out toward my wife.

### 5. A singular love

\* Gen.2:24

\* I make an effort to focus my attention/affection toward one woman, and only one woman. I resist imaginations/ fantasies about other women...

\* I make an effort to not let my children be more important than Wendy. When Tanner was just a Toddler, Wendy revealed how I was much more responsive to Tanner than I was to her. I didn't realize it until she said something. I first I was hurt/offended, but as I thought about it I knew she was right...

### 6. A sharing love

\* John 15: I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you.

Now, before my final point, let me share some practical examples with you. These come from the same wives I talked to about submission and a husband's harshness. I asked them what their husbands do that makes them feel loved. Here's what they said: "He treats me different than anyone else." Spending time with me. Saying "I love you" often. Every morning he says "Good morning beautiful." Saying at the end of the day, "Did I tell you I love you today?" He trusts me, believes in me. He makes me coffee. Does things spontaneously like washing the dishes, taking the clothes out of the dryer and folding them, even though he doesn't fold them correctly! Sending flowers when it's not a special occasion. Going somewhere or doing something I like but he does not. Coming and admitting he was wrong and apologizing.

### 7. A supernatural love

\* I Cor.13:4-8a (see notes on this text); We must understand that being a godly wife/husband will not be accomplished by keeping a list of do's and don't do's. Go

back to Col.3 on “How Not To Be Spiritual” and “How To Be Spiritual.” Practical examples may help us to a degree, but the bottom line issue is Christ-likeness, and that only happens supernaturally.

\* Note: Christ knows and has lived out both sides of the issue here. He loved us by denying Himself and dying for us, but He also submitted to the Father’s will despite great struggle in doing so. Christ died to self, and that is exactly what we must do...

## CONCLUSION

\* A woman accompanied her husband to the doctor's office. After the checkup, the doctor called the woman into his office alone. He said, “Your husband is suffering from a serious disease, but with your help I think he can be cured. Each morning make him a healthy breakfast. Be pleasant, even when he’s in a bad mood. Every evening prepare an especially nice meal for him. Don’t burden him with chores or ‘Honey Do lists.’ Don’t discuss any problems with him, you take care of them. And be intimate with him several times per week. If you do these things for four to six months, I’m confident your husband will make a full recovery.” On the way home, the husband asked his wife, “What did the doctor say?” She replied, “He said you’re going to die.”

\* The first step in becoming a godly husband/wife is my attitude of submission out of reverence for Christ (Eph.5:21; I Peter 2&3). My testimony: humbled myself, acted in obedience, Holy Spirit empowered and changed me, learning to love by faith (offer booklets).

\* On a scale of 1-10, what would your spouse say your marriage is right now? Why don't you ask them today? Men must realize that we will usually give our marriage a higher rating than it really is...