

Col. 3:18-21 Discussion Guide

Opening Prayer

Ask God to guide us by his word to understand what union with Christ means for our relationships. Ask Him to reveal our hearts that we may grow in Him and see the glory of the gospel in our marriages and the outworking of grace in our homes. Pray for the strength to live according to his commands, even though ridiculed in our culture, and to be thoroughly devoted to our Savior.

Recap

In Colossians 3:18-21, Paul applies the reality of new life in Christ to our most intimate relationships—those in our home. He addresses the subjection of the wife to her husband, the loving leadership of the husband, the obedience of the children, and the loving authority of fathers over their children. These are challenging commands, especially in a culture that is hostile to them, yet there is hope in Christ to live for him and experience homes that are flourishing in Him.

Understanding the Text

1. How is this passage different from the “household codes” of the day in the way that it instructs wives? Why is the voluntary nature of the wife’s subjection to her husband important to remember?
2. The passage goes on to speak of slavery. How do we know that the wife’s subjection to her husband is not just another cultural practice of the day that is not commanded by God?
3. What pattern do we find in this passage regarding command and motivation?
4. Why does Paul specifically point out bitterness as a hindrance to the husband’s love?
5. How is obedience (vs 20) different from subjection (vs 18)?
6. What does it mean to exasperate a child? What does Paul say will be the result of an exasperated child?

Practical Application

1. Wives—Is your subjection to your husband joyful and voluntary?
2. Do you view your submission to your husbands as a matter of submitting to Christ?
3. Are there specific areas in your marriage where you can show more unreserved submission to your husband and will you pray for God to help you this week?
4. Husbands—Are you loving your wife as Christ loved the church, giving yourself for her? Do you harbor bitterness towards your wife?
5. Are there specific areas in your marriage where you can better love your wife and will you pray for God to help you this week?

6. Children-Are you obeying your parents “in all things”? Are there areas where you hold back your obedience because you don’t agree with their rules?
7. Do you see your obedience to them as obedience to God first and foremost?
8. Will you pray this week for God to help you to God as you honor your Father and Mother?
9. Fathers/Parents- Is your parenting about pointing to Christ or the convenience and peace of obedient children? Do you “pile on” rules and arbitrary punishments or are you prayerfully seeking their good by lovingly disciplining them and pointing them to the Savior?
10. Will you commit to pray this week for gospel focused parenting that emphasizes the seriousness of sin and the Greatness of the Savior?

God Has More to Say

In this passage, Paul specifically addresses Wives, Husbands, Children, and Parents. Here are more passages from God’s word to guide us in these areas:

Wives

Eph. 5:22-24,33

1 Pet 3:1-6

1 Cor. 11:3

Titus 2:3-5

Husbands

Gen. 2:24

Gen. 3:17

Rom. 5:8

Eph. 5:25-29, 33

Children

Ex. 20:12

Prov. 1:8-9

Eph. 6:1-3

1 John 5:3

Fathers

Deut. 6:6-7

Eph. 6:4

Heb. 12:9

1 Tim. 3:4