

Restoring Marriage

Colossians 3:18-19

Sermon Outline

1. Background

* God's Plan for Marriage (Gen. 2:20-25)

Genesis 2:20-25 *The man gave names to all livestock and to the birds of the heavens and to every beast of the field. But for Adam there was not found a helper fit for him. ²¹ So the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and while he slept took one of his ribs and closed up its place with flesh. ²² And the rib that the LORD God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. ²³ Then the man said, "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man." ²⁴ Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh. ²⁵ And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed.*

* The Problem of Sin in Marriage (Gen. 3:16-17)

- **Independence** – Eve acted unilaterally.
- **Role reversal** – Adam listened to his wife rather than lead her

Gen 3:17 *...because you have listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree...*

- **Shame** (v 7 – “they knew that they were naked and they sewed fig leaves together for a covering”)
- **Running** from God; running from each other
- **Blame** (v 12)
Gen 3:12 *The man said, "The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit of the tree, and I ate."*
- **Control** (16) – the war of the sexes // manipulation // domination

Genesis 3:16 *... Your **desire** shall be for your husband, and he shall **rule over** you." (Gen 4:7 *sin is crouching at the door. Its **desire** is for you, but you must **rule over it**)**

2. Colossians

* God's Plan for Restoration (1:13-20)

God is intent on vertical restoration, and by extension, horizontal restoration

* Paul's Instruction for Relationships (3:5-4:1)

Relationships in the Church (3:5-15 – *emphasis: 12-15*)

Then Paul deals with very specific relationships 3:18-4:1

Wives (18), Husbands (19), Children (20), Fathers (21), Slaves (22), Masters (4:1)

3. Wives

* Submit to your husband (18)

It's not a an order of **worth**, but of **role**. Everyone is under authority.

Galatians 3:28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

What submission is not:

1. *Submission does not mean agreeing with everything your husband says.*
2. *Submission does not mean leaving your brain or your will at the wedding altar.*
3. *Submission does not mean avoiding every effort to change a husband.*
4. *Submission does not mean putting the will of the husband before the will of Christ.*
5. *Submission does not mean that a wife gets her personal, spiritual strength primarily through her husband.*
6. *Finally submission does not mean that a wife is to act out of fear.*

[Piper, *This Momentary Marriage*]

But these verses have not footnotes (Elizabeth Elliot)

1 Peter 3:1-6; Titus 2:3-5

* This is fitting in the Lord (18) **Ephesians 5:22-33**

4. Husbands

* Lead your wife (18)

A few things about what is and is not said about husbands in these Vss.

1. A husband's leadership in the home is certainly implied in Col 3:18 by what it says of the wife's role. That wives are to submit to their husbands *necessarily says something* about the husband's complimentary role.
 2. Other passages clearly teach male leadership in the home (Eph 5 – he is the head)
 3. Yet the thing that's emphasized in Col 3 is not his leadership but his love. In some ways, Paul is saying *"you focus on loving and the leading will take care of itself. Don't focus on your wife's need to submit/follow/honor – you have plenty of your own to keep you busy; you worry about you."*
- Lead by *loving*, not by *lording*
 - Lead by *convincing*, NOT by *commanding* (this takes more work, more thought)

- *If you walk out of here to strut your right to command and control, instead go home and weep that you simply do not understand Christ and his love or his church*
- Headship is never forcefully asserted or demanded
- Headship is never self-serving
- It rarely, if ever, looks like veto power or a trump card

Headship is the God-given role of the husband to be the primary responsibility and directional head for provision, protection, and purity in the home.

Godly leadership is godly, patient, self-controlled, loving, thoughtful, rational, and it has a humble confidence.

Don't emasculate yourself--"My wife won't let me ..."

God calls us men to be tough and tender.

- Some are tough *in all the wrong ways* and never tender.
- Some are tender *in all the wrong ways* and never tough.

* Love your wife (19)

Remember these lines from Eph. 5

V 25 *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*

V 28-29 *husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church*

Love her like Christ loves the church – How? [Several S's]

- Selflessly
- Sacrificially
- Securely, steadily
- Safely (protection and provision)
- Sanctifyingly

* Do not be harsh with her (19)

1 Peter 3:7 *Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an **understanding way**, showing **honor** to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are **heirs** with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.*

Neither a wife's submission, nor a husband's love is to be dependent on the performance of the other spouse

- I would if he/she would first...
- Husbands, it doesn't say to love her if she's acting loving or when she looks lovely.
- It doesn't say to not be harsh when she's not being harsh
- It doesn't say to not be harsh when she's being submissive.

"The woman was made from a rib of the side of Adam, not made out of his head to rule over him, nor out of his feet to be trampled upon by him, but out of his side to be equal with him, under his arm to be protected, and near his heart to be beloved."

--Matthew Henry

"Would you have a wife that obey you as the church loves Christ? Then care for her as Christ does the church. And if it be needful that you should give your life for her, or be cut into a thousand pieces, or endure anything whatsoever, refuse it not. Christ brought his church to his feet by his great love, not by threats or any such thing..."

-- John Chrysostom

Introduction

This is a good week to separate the men from the women for discussion. To the singles, listen and learn--you have the benefit of years of struggle in relationships to learn from.

Below you will find separate but similar questions for the men and women. Note that we are specifically focused on the "logs in our own eyes" rather than the splinters in our spouses'. Leaders--Do **not** allow this to focus on "their" problems. If this becomes a problem call all to immediate repentance.

**Extra topic is included (guide only, not handout) in case sin is exposed about a spouse. Please make sure this is not a topic of discussion for the group--it should be handled privately by drawing a mature couple (e.g. CG leader and spouse) into a Matt 18 process as described below.*

Men:

Discussion 1: Leading your (future) wife

- *Characterize how a husband should lead his wife* [Ref. the sermon...]
- *As you lead, are you listening and respecting the wisdom of your wife?* [She is neither an idiot nor a doormat. *Leaders--lead out in repentance.*]
- *If we interviewed your wife, how would she say you are doing?* [Assuming she would be forthcoming... Notice what we didn't ask. *Leaders--do not allow this to be about the wife's jaded perceptions....*]

Discussion 2: Loving your (future) wife

- *Characterize how a husband should love his wife* [Ref. the sermon...]
- *Do you put her needs & desires ahead of your own?* [We're called to a sacrificial love. *Leaders--lead out in repentance.*]
- *Are you harsh with her?*
- *If we interviewed your wife, how would she say you are doing?*

Discussion 3: Manning up

- *Are you in sin here and refusing to confess and repent?* [Where are you struggling the most? *Leaders--lead out in repentance. Heads up for the next question.*]
- *Are there men in this CG that are blind to their sin here? It is time to let them know.* [If people need to be taken aside from the larger group, do it. *Use wisdom with respect to the kind of sin exposed and before whom.*]

**Extra Topic: Your Wife*

- *Is your wife persisting in sin with no one else aware of it? ---How to handle it.*

[*This is not the place to discuss your wife's shortcomings.* If your wife is persisting in sin, this is a matter of church discipline.]

^{ESV} **Matthew 18:15-17** "If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. ¹⁶ But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷ If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as ^ca Gentile and a tax collector.

- Have you confronted the sin? ... without repentance?
- You need to "take one or two others," preferably the CG leader and wife (or CG coach or elder and wife if CG leader is inappropriate/unavailable).

Women:

Discussion 1: Submitting to your (future) husband

- *Characterize how wives should submit to their husbands*

[Ref. the sermon...]

- *Are you submissive and respectful to your husband and his leadership?*

[Leaders--lead out in repentance.]

- *If we interviewed your husband, how would he say you are doing?*

[Assuming he would be forthcoming... Notice what we didn't ask. *Leaders--do not allow this to be about the husband's jaded perceptions...*]

Discussion 2: Accountability and Repentance

- *Are you in sin here and refusing to confess and repent?*

[Where are you struggling the most? *Leaders--lead out in repentance. Heads up for the next question.*]

- *Are there ladies in this CG that are blind to their sin here? It is time to let them know.*

[If people need to be taken aside from the larger group, do it. *Use wisdom with respect to the kind of sin exposed and before whom.*]

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- * This is fitting in the Lord (18) **Ephesians 5:22-33**

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- * Love your wife (19)
- * Do not be harsh with her (19)

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