

“A Charge to Husbands”
Colossians 3:19
(Preached at Trinity, October 7, 2018)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. **Chapter 3 of Colossians** holds high our union with Christ.
In **Verse 1** he reminds us that we have been raised up with Christ
In **Verse 3** we have died with Christ
In **Verse 4** Paul reminds us that when Christ returns we will be with Him
In **Verse 10** Paul writes of the new man created after the image of Christ
2. Paul's point is that our union with Christ changes everything. Our whole life is lived in the light of Christ.
Colossians 3:17 NAU - "Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father."
3. Beginning with **Verse 18** Paul describes the effect of our transformed life upon the family – wives & husbands, children & parents, slaves & masters.
4. Paul begins with the institution of marriage – the relationship of husbands and wives. Last Lord's Day we began with the charge to wives in **Verse 18**
"Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord."
5. This passage deals strongly with what is known as “complementarianism,” that God created men and women equally in His image, but He also created men and women different and unique. He created them to be compliments to each other, bearing distinct and different roles and functions.
6. This teaching has often been difficult to receive. The thought of women being in submission seems antiquated. But the truth of God's Word remains relevant in every generation and every situation. Man's failure to display God's perfect design in no way implies fault with the design. We must always teach the Biblical pattern for men and women. Men and women have been created to function in distinct roles. Both men and women are essential to carrying out God's purpose for the family. Both must labor to faithfully discharge the duties God has placed before them.
7. After charging the wives to be subject to their husbands Paul turns our attention to the role of husbands: "Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them."
The best commentary on the passage is Paul's own words. As with the previous verse, as we look at the charge to husbands I'll also incorporate Paul's words in his Epistle to the Ephesians.
8. The Gospel has brought God's redeeming grace upon marriage. Christians seek to reflect Christ in everything. Paul maintains this Christological emphasis in this passage.
Colossians 3:17-19 NAU - "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father. ¹⁸ Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them."

Paul adds in Ephesians:

Ephesians 5:25 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her"

9. Jesus Christ is the focus in everything. The husband is to love his wife with Christ as the model.
 - A. Paul doesn't tell the husbands, "Husbands, be the head of your wife, or husbands, rule your wives, but husbands love your wives." This is the husband's duty towards his wife.
 - B. It would be easy to underestimate this charge. "Oh, is that all? All I have to do is love my wife?" Not so fast. Do you understand the nature of love? Love is denying yourself for the sake of another.
 - C. As we'll see, this is a high charge. Where the church's subjection to Christ is given as the example to wives, Christ's love for the church serves as the model for husbands. Jesus died for His Bride. Husbands must consider this carefully.
10. Love is the key element in the marital relationship. John Woodhouse notes: "It is important to see that wives are called to put themselves under husbands who are called to love them. The idea, in its context, is not first and foremost for wives to place themselves under the *authority* of their husbands, but to place themselves under their *love*."¹
 - I. The husband's love for his wife is a particular love
 - A. Paul describes the unique distinction between husband and wives
 1. In **Verse 18** Paul describes the duty of wives towards their husbands is that of submission, a particular subjection to their own husband.
 2. Now in **Verse 19** husbands are charged to love their own wives. It is unique and particular. Of all the women in the world it was your wife who captured your heart. While as Christians we are commanded to love one another, the love you have for your wife is unique and particular.
 - B. In Ephesians Paul uses the model of Christ's unique love for His church – it is a particular love for His own Bride
 1. There is a sense in which Jesus loves all men.
 - a. We've seen this with the Rich Young Ruler
Mark 10:21-22 NAU - "Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me." ²² But at these words he was saddened, and he went away grieving, for he was one who owned much property."
 - b. God shows great mercy to the wicked. He showers the earth with His goodness. He sends rain to both the righteous and the wicked farmer. He sends temporal blessings upon the families of the wicked.

¹ John Woodhouse, *Colossians and Philemon: So Walk in Him*, Focus on the Bible Commentary, (Ross-shire, Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2011), 222.

- c. His offer of salvation to the wicked is a genuine offer of grace. He pleads with all men to repent.
Ezekiel 33:11 NAU - "Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord GOD, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"
- d. John 3:16 is testimony to God's general love for the world.
- 2. But Christ has a unique and particular love for His church
 - a. God has loved His own from all eternity
Ephesians 1:4-5 NAU - "In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will"
Ephesians 2:4-5 NAU - "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, ⁵ even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved)"
 - b. Jesus came to save His people particularly
Matthew 1:21 NAU - "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."
- 3. Christian husbands should have a general love for his fellow man. We are even commanded to love our enemies.
- 4. But we are to love our own wives with a particular, undivided love. Our love for our wives must be unique and special. Your love for your wife should be unlike any other love you have, with the exception of the love you have for Christ. It exceeds you love for your children or your extended family. Some men are never able to leave their mothers. Others have their hearts drawn in so many directions they don't really have place for their wives.
- 5. You are her protector – you would die for her. You defend her. She feels safe because of you. You guard your heart from abusing her, loading her up with responsibilities that belong to you. You are her provider – You are to see to her needs, emotional, psychological, physical. You see her needs as having priority over your own. Many husbands are most concerned for themselves—their own needs, desires, interests.
- 6. Just as Christ's love for His church is particular and undivided the husband should love his wife.

- II. The husband's love for his wife is an unmerited love
- A. Jesus loved us when we were most unlovely
1. God described His love for Israel
Ezekiel 16:4-6 NAU - "As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing; you were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths.
⁵ "No eye looked with pity on you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather you were thrown out into the open field, for you were abhorred on the day you were born. ⁶
 "When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you *while you were* in your blood, 'Live!' Yes, I said to you *while you were* in your blood, 'Live!'"
 2. There was nothing in us to merit the love of Christ. In fact, everything about us screamed for Christ to turn away.
Romans 5:8 NAU - "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."
- B. Husbands should love their wives according to grace
1. The woman God gave you is imperfect. Adam cried out to God because of Eve's imperfections. **Genesis 3:12 NAU** - "the woman whom You gave *to be* with me, she gave me from the tree, and I ate."
 As if to say, "God, it is Eve's fault that I ate."
 2. Your wife has many imperfections. I stated last time, your wife married a sinful man. The same is true for you. You married a sinful woman. She is a sinner, just like you. You must be gracious towards her.
 3. Paul commands, "do not be embittered against them."
 The word literally refers to bitter or sour. But figuratively, it refers to becoming angry or resentful.
 - a. A man's wife may not meet his expectations, but he must be gracious towards her. Paul's words refer to patience, gentleness. He must be gentle towards his wife, never harsh or cross.
 - b. This is Christian behavior:
Colossians 3:12-13 NAU - "put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; ¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you."
 - c. Peter repeats this charge:
1 Peter 3:7 NAU - "You husbands in the same way, live with *your wives* in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered."
 - 4.. There will be many times she will not do well at submitting to you. The text doesn't say love her when she is deserving of your love. Truth is you are not deserving of her love. This is the nature of grace.

III. The husband's love for his wife is a sacrificial love

A. Genuine love is sacrificial love

1. The problem some have with these verses is the presumption that the husband is free to pursue his desires, his interests, and his needs while the wife submits. This is erroneous.
2. The balance to any sense of self-centered assertiveness by the husband is found by the charge to love.
The husband is to live sacrificially before his wife. Anything else is sin.

B. Jesus is the model

Ephesians 5:25 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her,"

1. Jesus left His throne in glory for the sake of His bride
Jesus laid down His life for His bride
John 15:13 NAU - "Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends."
2. The perfect Christ who knew no sin became sin. He took our place in the most horrible death ever experienced.
3. And He did it all in spite of what we were
Romans 5:8 NAU - "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

C. A husband must give himself sacrificially for his wife.

1. Christianity is marked by self-denial – the death to self
Colossians 3:3 NAU - "For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God."
 - a. In our lost state everything was about self – it was the beginning and end of all that we did.
 - b. With salvation comes a humility that allows putting others ahead of ourselves.
Philippians 2:3-4 NAU - "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."
Ephesians 5:21 NAU - "be subject to one another in the fear of Christ"
3. No place should this be displayed more than in marriage.
Yet, sacrifice and self-denial is always difficult.
Love demands much grace. The fruit of the Spirit is love.

Conclusion:

1. Men, how do you view your relationship with your wife? Are you always seeking to be served? Do you always want things your way? Or do you see yourself as a servant?
2. Paul says, look to Christ as your model.
Ephesians 5:25 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her"
3. Paul says live with your wife as a Christian.
Colossians 3:19 NAU - "Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them."
4. Paul charges husbands to love their wives. The model is that of service.
Philippians 2:3-8 NAU - "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others."
How shall we fulfill such a life of sacrificial love? It demands much grace.
5. Perhaps you aren't married. Perhaps you are a woman and will never be a husband. Perhaps you are thinking this has nothing to do with you.
This is for all of us. We must love one another, serve one another, be gracious towards one another.
How shall we fulfill such a life of sacrificial love? It demands much grace.
6. Next week we'll look at some of the practical aspects of Paul's charge to husbands. How does the Godly husband imitate Christ in loving his wife? What does self-denial look like? We naturally want to be served. How can we look to the needs of our dear wives, even when it means denying our own selfish desires?