

Colossians 3:18-21

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[0 : 00] Let us all praise God together for the mercy He has shown us in the person and work of Jesus Christ by opening up the Word of God to the book of Colossians chapter 3.

If you have been gone this summer, you probably not have known that we've been studying through the book of Colossians and we had every intention of finishing it up last week and starting something new this morning, but we just didn't quite get there.

There's probably another, oh, I'm going to guess five weeks out from finishing up the book in total. And if you have been here, I hope it's been very rich and good to you for your praise of God and for your pursuit of holiness.

This morning's text is Colossians 3 verses 18 through 21. And I read, Wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

[1 : 09] This is God's Word to us. It was written for His glory and our good. And we would all do well to listen to it in order to believe its promises and obey its commands.

Now, over the past four weeks, we've studied together general exhortations for the new self, for the one whom Christ is all.

You can see there in verse 11 of chapter 3. And we did so from verses 5 through 17. We talked extensively about what it means to put to death those things that are earthly in us.

And to put on then as God's chosen ones the proper things for those for whom Christ is all. Today we're going to look at four specific exhortations to wives, to husbands, to children, and to parents. And Paul gives them to us in a rather rapid fire manner. They're kind of bang, bang, bang, bang, back to back to back with no prepositional transitions between them whatsoever. And I believe he does so in this way because they're all connected to the previous exhortations.

[2 : 26] Because of who we are now. If we have placed our faith in Jesus Christ. If he has sent his spirit into us and changed who we are.

The old has passed away. The new has come. Because of who we are now, we will live differently. Specifically, we will live differently in the way we relate to one another as the church.

That's what 5-17 is really talking about. About putting off these versions of perverted love and perverted hate.

And putting on these righteous acts and how it is that we live together. And Paul now narrows that scope down from the broader sense to more specific relationships within the home.

He notes for the Colossian believers and for us. Particular ways in which the old self manifests itself. And the new ways in which we should walk.

[3 : 33] Now some of you may already be asking the question. Is this the most appropriate text for a Sunday morning when college students return? I ask myself the very same question as we work through.

We don't want to dogmatically work verse by verse through a text. Although this is our normal habit and pattern. Certainly it could be said that we could have stopped today to talk at length about something that seems to more specifically relate to college students.

But through prayer and study. I think this is incredibly applicable to where you guys are in your lives. Because so many of you are so close to this next step.

You're looking right now. I know I remember being in college for that mate that you'll marry and live out your life with. It's applicable because you're going to find many of you college students that you are still children.

And so this text has a lot to say to you concerning that. And so I think very timely for where we are and for this particular Sunday. Four exhortations for the household of the new self are number one. [4 : 41] This will be the outline for our text. An exhortation to wives. Number two, an exhortation to husbands. Number three, an exhortation to children. And finally, number four, an exhortation to parents.

So firstly, an exhortation to wives. Verse 18. Wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. This word, submit, means to place oneself under the leadership of another.

And I want to note this morning five things about the submission of the Christian wife. So these are your five sub points to point number one. If you like to outline, keep up.

Today it might be a little hard. Firstly, it is a submission that is willful. It is a submission that is willful. Sub-translations render this verb, be subject to.

But the Greek literally means to subject oneself. Wives, this is a submission that is given. Men, this is not a submission that is taken.

[5 : 47] It is a submission that is willful. Wives submitting themselves to their husbands. Secondly, it is a submission that does not relegate the value of the wife.

It does not devalue the wife. Now this word submission seems to be a bad word in our day. It doesn't even get uttered amongst us.

I had someone who I love dearly come and talk to me about the way in which I officiate weddings and asked me if I thought it was appropriate to even include the word submit or submission in that ceremony because the turn off it can be to some people to hear the gospel.

And I just simply said I don't know what other word to use. It's a biblical word. I will use it because the Bible uses it and I will labor to explain it well. The word submission or submit even seems to be a bad word in some of our Christian churches.

And so let me ask you kindly, particularly ladies, if this word makes you uncomfortable to hear me out. Hear what the Bible has to say about submission.

[7 : 00] There's a movement in our world of what's called egalitarianism, which seeks to find genders equal in all respects, in all manner, versus the view that we hold as a church which is called complementarianism.

And that is that we see men and women as equal, but that they play different roles. The second point, it's a submission that does not relegate the value of the wife.

It in no way devalues a wife to submit to her husband, but rather recognizes her God-ordained role as a wife. Let me give you a wonderful example of this.

There's no higher example of anything that's right and proper than the example of Jesus Christ. Jesus subjected Himself to the will of the Father.

He submitted to what the Father had for Him. This does not make Him a lesser part of the Trinity. Rather, and in fact, He has been highly exalted because of the way in which He served the Father.

[8 : 11] And He will be for all eternity. If we're to model this, ladies, there's a specific way in which you are to look Christ-like. And this is one of those ways to submit willingly to your husband.

To understand a bit more of this, it's of great value for us to look at Genesis 1. You can turn there if you'd like or listen carefully to my reading. Women have great value in standing in God's eyes.

We see this first telling of the creation of man and woman where it records, Then God said, Let us make man in our image after our likeness.

The Trinitarian likeness. The way in which the Trinity functions together in relationship. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the heavens, and over the livestock, and over all of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

Verse 27. So, God created man in His own image. In the image of God, He created him. Male and female, He created them.

[9 : 20] So, ladies, you have great value in the eyes of God, and in the eyes of this church. And a willing submission to your husband does not devalue you. Thirdly, the submission of a Christian wife is a submission that is not contingent on the quality of the leadership it submits to.

It is not contingent. It is not dependent on the quality of the leadership it submits to. Notice the simplicity of the exhortation that Paul gives.

He doesn't say, not wives, submit to your husbands when they love you. Or, wives, submit to your husbands when they lead you well.

Or, wives, submit to your husbands when you feel like it. But simply, wives, submit to your husbands. Now, certainly it is easier to submit to loving leadership.

And the next verse speaks to that. We find often in Christian relationships and otherwise, both positive and negative feedback loops.

[10:31] If a husband leads well, it's easy for his wife to submit well. Which makes leading a joy. It makes leading easier if the wife submits well to that.

And so there's this positive feedback. One feeds the other and feeds the other. So often in relationships, one of those proper roles comes to a screeching halt and reverses itself.

And ladies, it's very difficult to submit to a man who doesn't love you the way he should. So many households are disrupted because men are lazy.

They're laid back. They don't fulfill the role they're meant to fulfill. And so women begin to. And the loop heads off in the other direction. Negative feedback. Negative feedback. Negative feedback. Someone has to stop that rotation. As a man, I will put the majority of the blame on men. But wives, you have to recognize that you're not less responsible for your submission when your husband leads poorly.

[11:34] You are 100% responsible for the command of God concerning your role. You will be held accountable for the way in which you submit apart from how your husband leads.

So it's a submission that is not contingent on the quality of the leadership it submits to. Fourthly, it is a submission that bears the fruit of respect.

It bears the fruit of respect. I'll step us away from Colossians for a moment to the parallel text, a very similar text that Paul wrote to the church at Ephesus chapter 5. You may want to go there and put your finger there because we're going to reference it on numerous occasions this morning. Ephesians chapter 5 verses 22 through 24. Paul writes, Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church, his body and is himself its Savior.

Now, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. So here we see this pattern of exhortation. Wives, submit to your husbands. But then at the end of this passage and speaking of this, verse 33, Paul says, However, each one of you love his wife as himself.

[12:50] Exhortation to husbands. And the last part of that, and let the wife see that she respects her husband. So submission, willing submission to a husband, bears the fruit of respect.

Respect, it respects his position as the husband. Whether or not he does this well, it plays to that. You are my husband and therefore I will submit to her.

This bears out in the way in which you talk about your husband, ladies. Are you supportive? Are you building up? Do people see you and say, this is a woman that respects her husband?

Or are you a woman that merely tears down and tears down and tears down? This can sometimes be the problem with women's Bible studies. They become gripe fests about husbands.

This ought not be so amongst us. It's a submission that bears the fruit of respect. And then fifthly and finally, it's a submission that recognizes God's good created order.

[13:58] The last part of verse 18 says, As is fitting in the Lord. As is right and proper for those who are found in Christ.

That's what he is saying. It recognizes God's good created order. This is the way that God intended things to be. The leadership of a husband and the submission of a wife is not a result of the fall.

It was the way things were designed to be before the fall. The fall disrupted it. The fall made it hard. But it was the good thing that God had created. After the first telling of mankind's creation in

Genesis 1, 26-28, we see Genesis 1, 31, And God saw everything that he had made.

And behold, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning. The sixth day. In chapter 2, we see a second telling of the creation story.

And we pick up some details about it. Genesis 2, 15 says, The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it.

[15:07] He gives man a mandate that you are meant to produce and protect the garden. And then in 2, 18, we read, Then the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone.

So everything had been good up to this point in the creation, but now we see something that is not good. It wasn't good that man be alone. And so God says, I will make a helper fit for him.

A sidekick. Someone to come alongside the man and help him in this work that's been given to him. This was the created order. And it was good.

It's good and proper, ladies, to pursue this. To submit willfully to your husband. If your husband doesn't lead you well to pray for him, that he might. To encourage him in that.

To help that negative feedback loop come to a halt and move back in the other direction. Just willingly submit to your husband. Recognize God as the creator of the universe.

[16:15] And gives proper respect and worship to the way he intended things to be. Number two. You with me?

Back to main point number two. It's not fair that I can see it and you can't. An exhortation to husbands. Men, we are most certainly not off the hook.

An exhortation to husbands. Husbands, love your wives. And do not be harsh with them. We get two exhortations.

One stated in the positive and one in the negative. Do live this way with your wives. Do not live this way with your wives. It seems to me that Paul feels the need to spell it out a little more clearly for us.

I mean this. I don't mean this. Fellas. We're to love our wives. And I want to note two things about the love of the Christian husband.

[17:16] Number one. It is a love that is willful. The same way that submission is willful for the wife. Love is willful for the husband. This love.

This word here used for love is the present tense of the imperative verb agapate. It's not referring to a love of passion or emotion. It's not based in how you feel.

This is a love of choice. It is a covenant love. Husbands, you chose to marry your wives.

Therefore, you are to love them. Without condition. Now and in a continuous manner. This is the exhortation Paul is giving to Christian husbands.

Husbands, love your wives. And our culture is destroying the meaning of marriage. And I'm not referring to homosexual marriage. I'm referring to all the messed up marriages that we live in and around.

[18:18] The church is not insulated from this. This is happening within our churches. Marriage is such a flippant thing. It's just the next step in some process of feeling and emotion.

People ought not say, I love you very much, but rather, I lust you very much. Let's get married. They have trashed it up and thrown it out. It is a sacred commitment before God.

It is a commitment to love that woman until death causes you to part. The Christian man does not fall in and out of love.

These are not words that should come out of our mouths. And some of you may need to man up by the grace that God provides and love.

Your wives. When I officiate weddings, I always say this kind of as the close of the preaching component of the ceremony. I say, remember this.

[19:16] Your feelings do not sustain the covenant that you are making today. But the covenant you are making today properly exercised will sustain your love.

And by that, I mean the passionate love for one another. It is a love of volition. We choose to love our wives.

Secondly, it is a love that is sacrificial. Let's look again at the parallel text in Ephesians chapter 5. Paul's a little tougher on the Ephesian church than he is on the Colossian church here.

We are going to look at verses 25-30 of Ephesians chapter 5. Much of feminism in our day is a response to male chauvinism.

Men, you need to hear this. The way in which you talk about and the way in which you treat women generally. And those of us who are husbands, the way we treat our wives, often feminism is a response to this.

[20:21] Many of you know I was a sociology major at University of North Georgia. Then North Georgia College and State University. I believe I was a sociology major in one of the darkest times in that degree program.

And I enjoyed that. I liked going in and being light in a dark place. I liked having my understanding of the truth challenged at every term. My favorite professor in college was an atheist, an admitted atheist feminist, who had both a husband, excuse me, a father.

I've said the word husband too many times. A father and a brother who were Baptist preachers. So he knew all of the typical arguments. And he would get really mad if you made the typical argument. He would cuss you out if you made the typical argument. And so he forced, by God's grace, he was such a tool used by God, he pushed my face into the scriptures because I knew there had to be absolute truth and that his challenges needed to be answered.

And I had a sociology of religion class with him where he basically took the entire semester to make the case that Christianity was horrible to women. And he loosely quoted, didn't send anybody to any text, but pulled out of context this idea of submission and how horrible this was, the enslaving of women.

[21 : 47] I think it's a response. I think it's a response to things that he had seen. And there were girls in the class that just applauded this. And my heart broke for them.

I don't know the circumstances of their lives, who their fathers were, what they had experienced and seen. But one day he was particularly railing and he actually referenced Ephesians chapter 5, finally referenced something.

And so I simply took my Bible out of my bag and I had it out on my desk and I was just looking at the text, not saying a word. And by God's providential hand, we're getting close to the end of class and boy, they were just going at it.

And I was just reading the text and I was sad for what was going on in the room because they weren't going on. They weren't going on to verse 25. And finally, he's no longer at the school. His name was Dr. Luck. He said, Alright, Nathan. What do you think? In that tone. I hadn't raised my hand. I think I may have grinned at them a few times.

[22 : 49] Maybe this was it. Alright, Nathan. What do you think? I had the great pleasure of turning to the class and saying, you have to hear the rest of the text. You can't stop there.

You can't just stop there. You can't tear it apart and do whatever you want with it. You have to read the rest of the text. And it reads, beginning in verse 25, Husbands, love your wives. And he goes on, As Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.

Jesus Christ died for the sake of the church. This is the kind of love that husbands are meant to show their wives. Verse 26, That He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the Word, so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.

In the same way, 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.

because we are members of His body. So I read that and I just said, I don't know what experiences you've had in life. But if you find a man that is willing to love you this way, I believe that you will want to submit to this man.

[24 : 12] And the room fell silent. And Dr. Luck said, I think that's good for today. And we left. And I don't know what happened, what came of that, but I was thankful that God allowed me to speak truth into this situation.

I think that so much feminism, so much, not all of it, but so much of it, is a response to the way in which men have loved their wives.

And this is meant to be a sacrificial love. We become servants of our wives. We lay down our lives for the sake of theirs.

John Piper has a wonderful definition of love that I'm going to give application to here. He wrote, Love is doing whatever you need to do to help people, insert your wife.

Love is doing whatever you need to do to help your wife see and savor the glory of God in Christ forever and ever. Love seeks the highest good of the object of that love.

[25 : 15] Husbands, we should love our wives in this way. We should lead them to Christ every single day. And then there's the negative exhortation to not be harsh with our wives.

Do not be harsh with them. Different translations render this differently. The NSB renders this. Do not be embittered against them. It could rightly be translated, Do not have the habit of being embittered.

And what Paul means is, Do not display a harshness of temper or resentment toward your wife. To state the same in the positive, Appreciate your wife.

Rightly see her as a gift from God, as a grace to you. Men, even when they're not easy to see in this light. Our wives aren't perfect, but yet still they're given to us as a gift.

They're sanctifying for us. They're helpers to us. They're a helper fit for us. And we should love them accordingly. And I can tell you this, it has been my experience in my short nine and a half years now of marriage, that when I love my wife properly, she responds in kind.

[26 : 31] She so gladly falls into that place of submission and loves and serves and supports me. The more I lovingly lead her, the more lovely she becomes as she fulfills her role.

She seems to come to life in that place. And when I don't love her well, when she's conflicted on how she's supposed to act in our home and with our children, this is when she becomes a challenge to me.

You see that it's not her fault, but it's mine. Love your wives as you should. As I previously stated, your wife is responsible for 100% of the command of God concerning her role.

However, if you want to see the quality of a leader, look to the quality of those who are put under his leadership. Men, this should cause you to quake.

We have a responsibility to our wives. And many of us are too weak as leaders. And I hope that this causes you to run to the grace of God.

[27 : 37] He has commanded that you would do this thing. And He will provide for all that He commands. Now, to wives and husbands, your marriage matters.

It matters to you, but it matters so much more than that. Firstly, your marriage matters because of what it is meant to display. Back in Ephesians 5, verses 31 and 32, Therefore, a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.

That's Genesis 2, 32, I believe. And then Paul goes on to say, this mystery, the fact that they leave and they cleave together, that they become one flesh, he says this mystery is profound.

And I'm saying that it refers to Christ and the church. Your marriage is not firstly and foremost about you.

Oh, do we reap the benefits of marriage. There's so much that is good for us about marriage, but it's not firstly about you. It's firstly about Christ. It's a shadow of a thing to come.

[28 : 48] And it's meant to portray this to the world around us. Your marriage matters because of what it's meant to display. Your marriage also matters because of who is meant to see it.

The world needs to see God's good creation and praise Him for it. They need to see that the way in which God designs things to work, works.

They see that and they go, this is an amazing thing. These Christian marriages are astounding to us. That they may turn and praise God for the things that He has done.

This church needs to see your marriage displayed in a healthy manner. These young people, so many of these young people, married folks, come from broken homes.

Homes that are disrupted. I cannot believe the more we get to know college students, how few college students come from homes that are healthy. It's the exception and not the norm.

[29 : 50] I hear of a young person that has a family that's still intact and I praise God for it. Wait, you mean your mom and your dad are still married? Incredible!

And those that are together and actually walking with the Lord and leading in the household, that are actively engaged in the life of a church, it's so slim. You want to know a way that you can serve the church?

If you're married, husbands, wives, even those of you who are young in this, brand new husbands and wives, there is a ministry for you. Wives, submit to your husbands.

Husbands, love your wives and seek opportunities to share your lives with the young adults in our church. Paul exhorts Titus to this ministry that people often call Titus 2 ministry, which is just this idea that in the church, there should be a passing along of skill set, that older women should be teaching younger women how it is they're meant to live.

And the same for older men to younger men. I encourage you to go read Titus 2 and I won't for the sake of time this morning. Submit to your husbands.

[30 : 59] Love your wives. It has deep and meaningful impact for you and beyond. Now a quick aside concerning dating. You ready? The Bible does not speak to us about dating.

There's no instruction in the Scriptures concerning dating. We believe that this book is timely, that it's inerrant, that it's sufficient. That means it contains everything in it that we need to know for godly living.

How curious that it excludes dating. Some process by which we're supposed to sort through all of the people that we interact with and find the one.

I grew up at a church, a large, large church, where I was actually taught this was the normal and healthy process, that I built my good quality list and my bad quality list by getting to know people of the opposite sex.

Horrible, horrible theology concerning that. Christian dating, we can call it something else. Some people like to call it courtship. Some people have a real aversion to that term.

[32 : 12] I don't really care, so I'm going to call it Christian dating, should look much different than that of the world. It should look dramatically different than that of the world. So much dating today is just glorified divorce practice.

Now, an aside to my aside. Most of you, and I don't know a lot of you, but I know where you're at in your stage of life, most of you do not possess the maturity to date as a Christian should.

Your desire for a girlfriend or boyfriend is in so many cases an idol for you. You worship yourself or you worship somebody else or you worship some idea before God.

If you cannot be satisfied in Christ, then you are not ready to date. If you look to anyone other than God for your approval, then you are not ready to date.

If your identity is solidified or shattered based on whether or not you were in a relationship, then you are not ready to date. If you do not know if you're ready to date, then you're probably not.

[33 : 27] And let me encourage you, even if you believe that you are, to ask for godly counsel from someone who is married, who's on the other side of all of the silly feelings that accompany single life and dating.

Ask someone who's stepped beyond that and has a little more clarity of head to help you and to examine you and to see if you're actually ready to enter into a godly relationship that ends in marriage.

Enough about that. Number three, main point number three, an exhortation to children. Verse 20, children, obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord.

Now, how do we define a child? Right? A little bit of a difficult thing to do. We get into some cultural issues. Think in the Scriptures, you saw this rite of passage for the Jewish people around the age of 12 or 13.

It was called the Bar Mitzvah. It was a passage into manhood. Many more things were expected. In our culture, we've created a whole category of person that we don't find in the Scriptures anywhere, and that is teenager.

[34 : 41] It seems in so many ways to be the result of young people worship. We worship youth in this country to such a high degree. We want to prolong youth, prolong youth, prolong. Many of your parents wanted to absolve you of all responsibility throughout high school because they just wanted you to have a great time because those are the good old days and you've got to soak everything up out of it that you possibly can.

And so many of you enter into college having no clue how to live life as an adult. That's kind of an aside. I think, if we're going to take what we look at both biblically and for our culture, this is the way I would define a child.

I think that while you're under the provision of your parent, the primary provision, your livelihood comes, your ability to survive as a human being comes from your parent, then you're a child.

This includes many of you in the room today. And I don't mean that as an insult at all. I just mean to say to you, how does this exhortation apply to you? How do you function at your age in this world in your particular context?

Let's note two things about the proper obedience of Christian children. I have, you'll note I said Christian children here. I think this is the exhortation that Paul means.

[36 : 04] It's been writing to believers and writing to believers and writing to believers. I don't think he means to turn aside. So I think that these things are meant to be exhortations to Christian children, obey your parents in everything.

I have a five-year-old and a three-year-old, Cade and Judah, and they cannot obey everything Sam and I ask of them. They're absolutely sinful. They prove it every single day.

We try and we try and we try. And they are bound to be deceptive. They're bound to go around. I asked Judah the other day why he did something and he said, I was just being sneaky.

Exactly. Exactly. So I don't think that Paul, while we should exhort our children to obey, we certainly should, I think Paul means this, to be a command that can be kept by the power of Christ in these young people.

So firstly, it is an obedience that is not contingent on the quality of the leadership it submits to. Obedience is an outflow of submission and it's not contingent on the quality of the leadership. I know that some of your parents don't lead you well.

[37 : 07] I know that some of the things they ask and require of you don't make sense. But it's not contingent on that. Obey your parents in everything. You ought to obey them.

Disobedience to parents marks the ungodly. Paul writes in 2 Timothy 3, 2, for people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy. He goes on in the next verse. Provided that their desires do not contradict the expressed commands of God.

Young people in this room, obey your parents in everything, provided their desires do not contradict the expressed commands of God. Jesus anticipated there would be people that would come to faith in Christ and their family would not be okay with it.

He says in Luke 12, 51-53, do you think that I have come to give peace on earth? No, I tell you, but rather division. For from now on in one house there will be five divided, three against two and two against three.

[38 : 20] They will be divided father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.

We know as a church this is real. We deal with this type of thing, pursuing the Lord and having parents who don't, who want us to live in contradiction to the expressed commands of God.

And I'm using that phrase very carefully because a common question asked with young people, young people want to go on a particular trip. Typically, it's a mission trip. They want to go someplace with their summer and their parents just aren't comfortable with it.

Unbelieving parents say, I don't want you to go. That could be dangerous. I'm not comfortable with you traveling. I don't want to spend money in that way. And students get so wrecked over that. But God wants me to go.

God has called me to go. Has He? He's called you to obey your parents. That's clear. Your feeling, your desire to go someplace does not trump the expressed command of God in the Scriptures.

[39 : 25] your parents forbid you to have faith in Jesus Christ. Your parents forbid you to meet, to congregate with other Christians.

Your parents forbid you to share your faith with your roommate or your co-worker. Then you have God's permission to go around their command. Because you feel like you want to do something is not a permission to ignore the expressed command of God to obey your parents.

I hope that clears up some frustration for some of you this year. Secondly, it is an obedience that seeks to please God. And the last part of that verse, for this pleases the Lord.

Again, part of His good created order. There's many strict instructions in the Old Testament in the civil law for those children who didn't obey their parents to be put to death.

Civil law, it's passed away. Parents can't do that under our nation's laws. But this is how seriously God takes this. Why? Because He loves His creation.

[40 : 32] Exodus 20.12 in the Ten Commandments says, Honor your father and mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. There goes discipline right now.

Right, Liz? Honor your father and mother that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. It will go good for you if you obey your parents.

Ephesians 6.1 Children, you should know this one with me. We've memorized it. Children, obey your parents and the Lord for this is right. Obedience to your parents even at your age, many of you, is good and pleasing to God.

One other note before we move on to the fourth exhortation. I know I'm running long on time. Notice that the children, at least those old enough to understand the reading of Paul's letter, were there. He doesn't say, be sure to tell the children to obey their parents. The letter itself, Paul specifically addresses the children. Now, I don't know what that means.

[41 : 43] I can't draw a line anywhere in the sand, but I'm just saying to you, it's an interesting place to note that children were part of church gathering. We're glad for that. If you're a total guest

and you've never been here before, we love kids.

We don't see them as a burden, but rather as a blessing to our church. We're glad to have them in our meetings with us. Okay, fourth, an exhortation to parents.

Verse 21, fathers, do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged. You've heard me a couple of times now say there's an exhortation here to parents and this is why. The Greek word for fathers is used specifically for father, but it's used generally for parent.

It's used in a broader sense for parent. So, translators get into a spot here. Well, which way do we go? Who is Paul specifically? Is he talking about the general parent or is he talking about the specific father?

And many have gone the father route and I respect translators. They are much more intelligent than I, but I also respect commentators who tend to disagree with the translators so very often.

[42 : 48] So, let me kind of break this down. The primary responsibility, the primary responsibility of the raising of children falls to the husband. The raising of our kids, our boys, in the fear and admonition of the Lord, rests on my shoulders.

But praise God, I've been given a helper suitable to me, right? A good helper. Someone who I can task out with things that can help in this process as I go off to work and she is at home with the children.

I believe it's more proper to understand Paul to be addressing both parents because of this. Even if, rightly it should say, fathers, fathers still have partners in this process and so I like to say parents.

As children have a responsibility to their parents, so parents have a responsibility to their children and it is a higher responsibility. Children just simply get to obey.

Parents have the responsibility of raising up. Ephesians 6.4 says, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. This means that we are to bring our children up in a way in which they fear God, they understand God, that they get the Gospel.

[44 : 03] And this is a challenge in the raising of children. How to speak to their hearts and not just their minds. How to help them to understand that their disobedience is ultimately an offense against God and not just mommy or daddy.

It's a work in our home. We're always trying to find ways in which we can do this well. I love now that Kay and my five-year-old's little wheels are turning and the things that I've been saying to him since he was a little guy, one-year-old, I'm already trying to use the right language with him, are starting to click into gear.

He's starting to get the concept of sin and what obedience to God looks like. He's starting to see that I'm an agent of the Lord to help him walk in the way of the Lord and therefore it's right and proper for him to obey.

We desperately want this to bear fruit in their lives. We want our children to be regenerate. We want them to belong to the Lord and honor them with their lives.

And this is the great call for parents to children. He says in this negative exhortation, do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged.

[45 : 13] This idea of not provoking your children means to stir up or to irritate or to exasperate. Failure to not provoke them can cause them to become discouraged.

NASB renders that to lose heart or to be without courage. And the picture there I think is this constant nagging, nitpicking, beating down.

You can never do anything right in the sight of your parents. Your parents are on top of you all the time. Always hard. Always hard. Always hard. Never encouraging.

Never helping the children see that they have value and that they know that they're trying and they're working at it. Never saying to the children, I'm proud of you. We could get into this for the longest of time, but it's 10 till 12, so I'm going to skip a bit down in this.

Parents, we are not to provoke our children unless they become discouraged. We don't want our kids feeling like they can never do anything right in our eyes. We are to lovingly train our children.

[46 : 22] The opposite of this would be to lovingly train and encourage our children in the right way. To correct them in the same way that God corrects us. His children.

Children need to learn that there are consistent consequences for their actions. Consistent consequences. Like rules need to be made and consequences for breaking those rules and those things need to be followed through.

The writer of Hebrews says in chapter 12 verse 6, for the Lord disciplines the one he loves and chastises every son whom he receives. It is good and right and proper that we discipline our children.

Children need to properly understand grace. We should not dismiss their disobedience but give loving discipline.

I hear this a lot in the talk of Christian parents. I'll tell you now that it's laziness. It's not well motivated. It's just laziness. But the passing over, the sometimes punishing and the sometimes not intending to display the character of God, God did not pass over our sins in a dismissive way like, well, I'm just going to look at Nathan and I'm just not going to discipline Nathan for all of his sin.

[47 : 41] No, God fully, in a way I can never do with my children, God fully punished my sin in Christ. The punishment had to be dealt out.

That was the just thing for God to do. He took all of my sin and he laid it on Christ. The perfect, the spotless, the one who had lived a sinless life.

He gave it to him and then he gave me his righteousness. This double imputation that occurred in that way. So now I can stand justified before God having to have all my sins forgiven because they were punished in Christ.

And I can now be an adopted son in right standing with the Lord. By just ignoring some of the things our children do, we don't accomplish this.

We don't teach them the gospel. The way you teach your children the gospel is that you punish them when they sin and then you talk to them about sin and the ultimate punishment for sin and you tell them that you love them and that they're yours and they'll never not be yours.

[48 : 50] We always reconcile after punishment in our house. Right? After I wear Cade's rear end out and he's done thinking about what he did, we go have a conversation about why he was punished, that he sees it's the consequence for what he did.

It's not because dad's mean, it's because he broke my law and therefore a punishment was necessary for that. And I always tell him that he's my son and I love him and that's why his obedience is so important to me because I want what's good and what's right for him.

That's grace. This is the way that God deals with us. That when Cade is disobedient to me that I don't kick him out on the street and say you're not my son anymore.

I want nothing to do with you. Good luck, five-year-old. The fact that I don't do that is grace. That I love him in this way.

Children need to properly understand grace. And so do we. We need to see that relationship with God and children are so very helpful for us in this.

[50 : 03] And so there's four exhortations for the household of the new self. One to wives, one to husbands, one to children, and one to parents.

The one for whom Christ is all, the one who treasures Christ above all else, will live differently than they once did and will live differently than the world that surrounds them.

We shouldn't take these exhortations lightly this morning because Christ Family Church exists to glorify God by experiencing, proclaiming, and displaying the supremacy of Jesus Christ in all things to all peoples.

Let's pray together.