**Sermon Title: The Priority of Christ in the Wife’s Life**

**Sermon Text: Colossians 3:18**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the Christian wives and future wives to new creation living.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 4 priorities for Christian wives modeling biblical submission that honors Christ.**

“For the past several hundred years western society has been bombarded with the humanistic, egalitarian, sexless, classless philosophy that was the dominant force behind the French Revolution. The blurring and even total removal of all human distinctions continues to be masterminded by Satan so as to undermine legitimate, God-ordained authority in every realm of human activity – in government, the family, the school, and even in the church. We find ourselves victimized by the godless, atheistic concepts of man’s supreme independence from every external law and authority. The philosophy is self-destructive, because no group of people can live in orderliness and productivity if each person is bent on doing his own will.

Sadly, much of the church has fallen prey to the humanistic philosophy and is now willing to recognize the ordination of homosexuals, women, and others whose God Word specifically disqualifies from church leadership. It is usually argued that biblical teaching contrary to egalitarianism was inserted by biased editors, scribes, prophets, or apostles. And the church is reaping the whirlwind of confusion, disorder, immorality, and apostasy that such qualification of God’s Word always spawns. Many Bible interpreters function on the basis of a hermeneutic that is guided by contemporary humanistic philosophy rather than the absolute authority of Scripture as God’s inerrant Word.”

[**John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Ephesians, Moody Press, Chicago, 1986, p.282**]

**Introduction:**  Paul now shifts his message to direct instruction on Christian living in society. Husband and wives (**3:18-19**), parents and children (**3:20-21**), and masters and slaves/servants (**3:22-4:1**). There are instructions for the wives, husbands, parents, children, slave/servants, and masters.

Nowhere should the social aspect of the new creation/man be more evident and visible than in the home. It is the single most important social institution in the world. Faith in Christ, the pre-eminence of Christ should be modeled by a life that validates saving and sanctifying faith’s reality.

The two basic principles of this section of Scripture mentioned by Paul is authority and submission, which has been a part of God’s plan from the beginning (**Genesis 1 & 2**).

“Christianity introduces several new elements for the family and home.

1. The new life introduces a new **presence** in the home, the Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. (**3:18, 20, 23, 24; 4:1**)

2. The new life introduces a new **purpose**, for the home – God’s Glory. (**3:17**)

3. The new life introduces a new **pattern** for the home – Jesus Christ.”

[**John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary Colossians & Philemon, Moody Press, Chicago, p.166**]

**I. The responsibility for the wife. V.18a**

Paul is providing instruction for all believing wives. The husband, wife, children, slave, and master are all equal in Christ.

**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.

But in matters of role and function there are distinctions. Paul wants to expand the general principle of mutual submission in (**Ephesians 5:21**).

**Ephesians 5:21** submitting to one another in the fear of God.

Mutual submission is demonstrated by each party fulfilling their God ordained role and function for the best of the other party. (Ex. **Philippians 2:6-11**)

A. The wives are to be **females**.

**Genesis 1:26-27** Then God said, "Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." **27** So God created man in His *own* image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

B. The wives are to marry **males**. (**Romans 1:24-28**)

**Romans 7:1-3** Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? **2** For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to *her* husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of *her* husband. **3** So then if, while *her* husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man.

**II. The regulations for the wife. V.18b**

Here as in other passages is described the wives responsibility, follow the regulation of submission. Let’s first talk about what submission is not.

1. Submission does not mean **inferiority**. (**Galatians 3:28**)

Jesus submitted to the Father and yet was not inferior to the Father.

2. Submission is not **absolute**.

Obedience is focused on the children and servants in Scripture. There are times when a wife may need to refuse to submit to her husband’s desire (if it violates God’s Word in a certain situation). Preferences must be submitted.

3. Submission takes place in the context of a loving relationship.

The husband’s authority is not to be exercised in an authoritarian, overbearing manner.

The main idea is the wife’s voluntary “subjection” to her husband as a fundamental responsibility of the married women. (Other roles and functions are described in **Proverbs 31:10-31; Titus 2:3-5**) Hupotasso is the Greek word, which means “to subject oneself.”

The wife is to voluntarily submit to the leadership role and function of the husband, as ordained by God in Scripture. This does not mean that the wife is inferior to her husband by nature!

In marriage, the two become one through the joining of their intellect, emotions, will, purpose, pattern, and presence. Wives are to understand their role and function in terms of service to Christ.

A. The principle of submission. (**Ephesians 5:22-24**)

**1 Corinthians 11:3** But I want you to know that the head of every man is Christ, the head of woman *is* man, and the head of Christ *is* God.

**1 Corinthians 14:34-35** Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but *they are* to be submissive, as the law also says. **35** And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church.

B. The picture of submission. (**1 Peter 3:1-6**)

C. The practice of submission. (**Titus 2:3-5; 1 Timothy 2:11-15**)

**III. The relationship for the wife. V.18c**

The believing woman of the Old Testament who hoped to be the human channel for the Messiah to come into the world made themselves beautiful by being in subjection to their own husbands. This is illustrated in Abraham and Sarah in the Old Testament. A Christian wife is called to demonstrate grateful voluntary acceptance of her husband’s care and leadership. This does not mean she has no identity, purpose, possession, or value. But her identity is found in Jesus Christ, her purpose is His Glory, her value is the bearing and raising of godly children, and loving support of her husband, and her passion is to be well pleasing to the Lord, her husband, and her children.

These factors moved women from a passive view and understanding, to an active partner with Christ and their husband in expressing Christian love and maturity before a wicked and perverse world divided by gender, age, social status, politics and social movements.

**IV. The rationale for the wife. V.18d**

(Aneko) “as is fitting in the Lord” communicates the idea of an acceptable standard, necessary, obligation, duty. This is what marriage “legally binds” a woman to.

Wives are instructed to do what Sarah and women like her have done, to be in subjection to their husbands, even when they did not obey God’s Word (1 Peter 3:1). Why do this you may ask? 6 reasons:

1. It follows the example of Christ and the church.

**Ephesians 5:22-24** Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **23** For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body. **24** Therefore, just as the church is subject to Christ, so *let* the wives *be* to their own husbands in everything.

2. It follows the example of daughters of Sarah, by modeling submission.

**1 Peter 3:5-6** For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, **6** as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

3. It follows the example of a Spirit-filled life.

**Ephesians 5:18** And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit,

4. It follows the example of a new creation/new man behavior. (**Colossians 3:12-17**)

5. It follows the example of a life that can lead a husband to salvation.

**1 Peter 3:1c-2** Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, **2** when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear.

6. It follows the example of behavior that is precious to the Lord.

**1 Peter 3:3-4** Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward-- arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel-- **4** rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

**Conclusion:** “Throughout History, Christianity has had a positive influence on society. J. C. Wenger wrote of the early church,

Christianity burst into a corrupt world with a brilliantly new moral radiance. . . The moral level of society was dismal, and sin prevailed in many forms. . . Into this discouraged world came Christ and his Spirit-transformed disciples, filled with holy joy, motivated by a love which the pagans could not grasp, and proclaiming Good News – the message that God has provided a Saviour. . . These Christians lived in tiny communities knit together in the power of the Holy Spirit, little colonies of heaven. They thought of themselves as pilgrims on their way to the celestial city, but they were very much concerned to manifest the love of Christ in all human relationships.

These early Christians insisted on bringing all of life under the lordship of Christ. . . It is men and women of this kind of moral purity who built into society a strong fabric of integrity and strength.

Life was cheap in the pre-Christian world: murder, abortions, infant exposure, war: people died in great numbers without anyone being troubled in conscience. The early Christians brought a new concern into society on these points.”

[**Ibid. p.165**]