

The Blueprint for the Family - The Christian Home

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[0 : 00] If you've got your Bibles, Colossians 3. I know I have ministered on this passage not that long ago,! This is a different message, but a familiar passage is not yet profound.

Colossians 3. We'll get there in a moment. The maker of the family has a plan for how it works best. A Biblical model.

Whatever it be in life will work best if we follow the pattern of its designer. I know I had opportunity to construct something lately and I was very much reliant on the instructions.

They're almost typeset in a very fine font though and I couldn't read them very well. Lately I was putting something else together and it was actually like a gazebo that I bought second hand and I pulled it apart and then I tried to put it back together again.

Thankfully I did number most of the components, but some key components I didn't number. So I had them in the wrong place and it was a real mess. So I had a real disaster with that.

[1 : 47] But having the blueprint is really important, isn't it? When we're putting something together, when we're building a house and when we're making a home, we've got the blueprint here in God's Word.

And the home is under attack. We need to go back to the designer's plan. The enemy of souls wants to destroy families and he's doing well at it. Give him credit.

He's doing a good job of doing bad, isn't he? The enemy of our soul. Destroying families, destroying lives. It's such turmoil and tragedy.

Here we have outlined for us the framework of a Christian home. Important guidelines for a healthy marriage, for relationships, for family life.

And God has a perfect plan for us. It is the perfect plan. God has designed the family and God cares about families. And we can do well to read these words and try to learn God's truth about the family.

[2 : 54] Let us learn how the family can operate in a biblical way. How can we become a better spouse? What does God expect from us in our marriage, in our families?

Are we going God's way? Let's see how has God designed the family to operate. We see that in Colossians 3 from verse 18 through 21.

Colossians 3, 18. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and be not bitter against them.

Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

It goes on to talk about servants. It says in verse 23, And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men.

[3 : 57] Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your word that we can take heart in these truths today. Lord, help us to apply, not just hear it, but put it into action. Lord, guide us, encourage us, Lord, to learn and to live your word.

In Jesus' name. Amen. Now, of course, we know some marriages have ended. And sadly, it might be too late to remedy that.

Yet, we can take the biblical instructions and try to put them into action for those husbands and wives here today. And, of course, we're all children.

So we've all had or have parents that we can honour and that truth too. And we can learn perhaps if we get the opportunity for another marriage to get it right the next time.

But first, the Lord addresses the husbands and wives here. And marriage is a lifelong commitment. That's his design. That's his plan. It's a covenant. A solid covenant.

[5 : 04] And family is important. And yet, do we really show it that family is important? Someone has said, I put a mirror on my TV set.

I wanted to see what my family looked like. You know, so when they're all watching telly, they have the mirror there and they can see what their family looks like. Sad, isn't it, when that's a bit the way it is.

Someone has said, don't brag about your ancestors. Give your descendants something to brag about. So, such that you live and leave a legacy for your children that they can have some memory, some blessing to recall how they were brought up in, under your parenting.

We could all hope for that, can't we, we that are parents here today. Verse 18, let's work through just some, the simple step-by-step components here.

Firstly, Paul addresses the wives. Verse 18, wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands as it is fit in the Lord.

[6 : 15] Now, this doesn't mean that women have a lower status or men are to be dictators or men should always get their own way. Certainly not. That is not the intent. What it does intend is a voluntary submission, a willing and joyful submission to the leadership of their husband, a recognition of authority and here it involves a commitment, a concern, a learning from the husband, a helping him, a working with him and it's been described as the intent of the phrase here as it was penned in the Greek.

It is a military term, this submission. It's military in its term so it's phrased as a command. It's described as a lining up of soldiers under the commanding officer and there are different ranks. The home is meant to have an order and a harmony so it's meant to be orderly and so this is a part of that divine order. The wife has a responsibility to follow the lead of the husband.

The wife is not to be selfish but to take her place as a support and as a help meet for a husband and it says that it is fitting, it is fit, it is fitting in the Lord.

In other words it's proper. Now again as I say it doesn't mean that the wife is to be under the thumb and dominated in a harmful browbeating way but it is meant to be that orderliness to the relationship that godly order.

[7 : 53] It goes on verse 19 Husbands husbands are now dressed husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them.

Husbands love your wives. The love spoken of here is God's kind of love love that is selfless love that is serving, love that is giving, a giving type of love without thought of return.

It's not a love that is dependent on receiving love back. It's not a love that needs reciprocal love. It's a love that is loving no matter what.

It could be put keep on continuously, supernaturally, sacrificially loving. That's the intent of it. Keep on continuously, supernaturally, sacrificially loving.

Love your wives in such a way. That's in a God dimension kind of love. That's the intent. Here's how someone has put it. Tell her so.

[9 : 00] Husbands tell her so. Amid the cares of married life in spite of toil and business strife if you value your sweet wife tell her so.

There was a time you thought it blitzed to get the favour of a kiss. A dozen now won't come amiss.

Tell her so. Do not act as if she has passed her prime as though to please her were a crime.

If e'er you loved her now is the time tell her so. Never let her heart grow cold. Richer beauties will unfold. She is worth her weight in gold.

Tell her so. Now love your wife and tell her you love her. Someone has put it although the husband is the head he should not tread underfoot his wife.

Eve was taken from Adam's side to symbolise her place by his side. Eve was not to rule but to be a helper and companion. Husbands must love their wife.

[10 : 02] Each is to complement the other. So marriage is meant to be orderly complementary a working in harmony. Husbands are not to be harsh or selfish.

Paul says be not bitter husbands be not bitter against them. Instead of being bitter be forgiving. Now there's always a bit of friction now and again.

There's a bit of difference and disagreement somewhat we can learn to complement one another. Julie's doing such a fine job. She's a blessing. I could say so much to praise her up but she'll get a big head and then she won't be able to leave.

Her head will get so big she won't be able to get out the door. What a state of married bliss husband's are not to be harsh or selfish.

[11:09] Paul says don't be bitter against them. Be forgiving. We could all find things to say I've got a forgiving heart.

I'm such a good husband. Julie said amen to that. Talk about the wives. Talk about the husbands. Now about the children.

This is going to be a short sermon. Verse 20. Children. Obey your parents in all things. For this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Children are to obey.

There is a higher authority we are to respect. Children obey your parents in all things. For this is well pleasing unto the Lord.

Children listen to your parents. It's been said parents are not always right but they are always your parents. So we show them that regard.

[12:08] Edward VIII said this the thing that impresses me most about North America is the way parents obey their children. Parents obey their children in the USA.

It's almost the same today isn't it? It's like the children call the shots and tell the parents what to do. Ma'am I want or dad and the parents are just kowtowing to them and feeding their every fancy.

Ephesians 6 the parallel passage says honour thy father and mother which is the first commandment with promise that it may be well with thee and thou mayest live long on the earth.

We could all have that healthy regard for our parents can't we? As much as for some they might have passed on and have that fond memory of what we've learnt from them and what they've taught us even if they were not such a good parent we can find something to be thankful!

for them. And honour means to show respect to regard them highly think of what we've learnt from them how they've sacrificed for us how they've given for us so we can have what we have

Ephesians 6 1 it says obey them it is right it is the right thing to do Ephesians 6 1 obey them because it is right here we have it's well pleasing unto the Lord in Colossians in Ephesians it says it's the right thing to do then it goes on verse 21 fathers fathers provoke not your children to anger

lest they be discouraged parents are addressed now and especially fathers here they have a responsibility for encouragement for sensible discipline as much is placed at the feet of the father

isn't it being very much accountable and parents are called to this responsibility of encouragement of sensible discipline we know in the parallel passage we might turn there in fact

[14:33] Ephesians if you got your Bibles Ephesians back a few pages to Ephesians we see again the children are addressed from verse 1.

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour thy father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth.

And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath, but this is what you should do. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

The nurture and admonition. Now I've got this handy little Bible that says what nurture is all about. It talks about raising, of developing, of training, of educating.

This word encompasses that whole range of upbringing, of bringing up a child as in those days they had one who would train and educate the children as a servant in the household.

[15:47] And likewise for parents here, they're instructed to this nurture, this training, this nurturing, this admonition. Admonition has got the intent of warning, of instructing, of directing.

So it talks there, nurture and admonition. A two-fold thing. Nurture as in the encouragement, admonition as in the sensible discipline. And fathers are told, don't provoke your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

We know sadly there's child abuse in the world today. There's child neglect, which can be even worse.

Where children are just left without care, without love, without comfort, and just left abandoned, even in a home with scarcely the attention.

I know at one time I worked in a job where we provided a service to families that were in shambles like that.

[17:01] And it was sad to hear the stories of families where there was a lot of neglect. And these children were at risk of being taken from their mums and dads if they had probably only had one of a mum or a dad.

Or some were just from pillar to post in foster families. And there's such awful things going on. As we know, we've had exposure to such work, even in the secular setting.

We see many families are disjointed, fragmented, and there's such sadness out there. And a lot of it is because parents are not fulfilling the role that they're called to.

I guess on the other side of the coin, you've got children that won't be ruled, unruly, lawless, who won't receive instruction.

And we see that too. I know at times you see that, as I've seen it, in times where you're trying to minister to children and they're just totally inattentive.

[18:18] You can't... I know it must be really hard for the youth ministry, the children's ministry of this church, when you get those children, that their attention span is just so short now.

It's just much more difficult to be ministering to children, it seems. But likewise for being a parent too. It seems that this is the case. And here's what someone has said here.

What is it that exasperates and embitters? In the context here we said, you know, to...

Well, the bitterness was really husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them, but in the sense of fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.

The context here is of that fragmenting, that disharmony in the home. And the context is in the sense of the lack of parenting.

[19:20] And what is it that exasperates and embitters? It may be an unbending demand for obedience in something that the child just cannot see any purpose in.

So that heavy kind of parenting style where it's too harsh, it goes on. It may be treating an older child as if he or she were still an infant, or it may be inconsistency so that something that gets ignored or that gets an amused reaction one day is met with anger and punishment the next.

So we've got to be consistent is what it's saying as parents, that we're consistent with what it is that we're saying to the child. We're not laughing at it one day, thinking, oh, that was funny, they said a swear word.

Some people do that, don't they? They think it's funny when they hear a child say a swear word or such. And then in another setting, they tell them off. They reprimand them for it.

Or it could be, you know, as some parents, they carry on doing something, whether it be smoking, whatever it be, and then when their child copies them later in life, they tell them off and say that's the wrong thing to do.

[20:30] You know, they're just, they're the model. We are the model as parents and it really falls in our lap, doesn't it? We are to have, to set the right example for our children.

And so, be consistent and don't be harsh but be fair, firm but fair. And so, this quote goes on, don't make unreasonable demands that make no allowance for the inexperience and immaturity of the child.

Don't humiliate. Discipline should not be arbitrary or unkind. That will not build up the child. It will lead to discouragement and frustration but do not abdicate responsibility either.

We are to give our children a Christ-centered training for life. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Nurture and admonition.

Now, there's times to admonish, to instruct, to be directive but there's that nurture that we're building them up, we're encouraging, we're uplifting them, we're shaping and moulding them in a godly way.

[21:36] So, nurture and admonition. Here's what someone said about the fact of children, being mindful of children. And, you know, we've got little David here.

He's doing really well tonight, isn't he? Well done, David. Well done. That's good. That's what we should do. Bring them up in the nurture and admonition. And I love it when little children come and they sit quietly and they don't fidget or fuss.

They're just very, very quiet. It's a wonderful testimony. Well done, Nina, as the grandma. Now, that's a wonderful thing, isn't it? And I love it, you know, when, I know when our little ones were still young that, you know, we just, we'd encourage them just to sit quietly, just to, just to be calm and just to maybe have something to occupy them just so they could just calmly learn about church.

And at home, we used to give them church practice. So, just make them sit quietly for a few minutes. So, they gradually started to, yeah, it's church practice. Yeah, great.

And so, they learned how to behave as it were. They learned how to act in church as it were. not that we can't make noise in church. Oh, all right.

[22:57] Yeah, okay. I've got to respect my father as part of the message. All right, yeah. Keep it short. I'll go like this. Okay, yeah. 60 seconds. There was a church.

It wasn't like this one. It was not an independent Baptist church. But the story goes that the minister was preaching on this very subject and he says, right, on my left hand, all the men who can honestly say that their wives are not submissive to them come and stand here.

And they came filing out. This side, I want the ones who can honestly say that their wives are submissive. And there's no one.

And eventually, yeah, Stuart's coming out. No, he's not. But, this man came here and he stood. His name is Bobby. And the pastor said, Bobby, just, not in my, it could be you, but it could be that you can advise these men on this side.

It's a long line. How is it that you can stand here and say that your wife is submissive to you? Here, end of the story. My wife told me to.

[24 : 12] Yeah. Okay. Yeah. No, of course not. All right. So, just again, back to parents and children.

Here's what someone has said. And it's very, these words are very insightful words I've put to you tonight. That we as parents can think about these words.

There are little eyes upon you and they're watching night and day. There are little ears that quickly take in every word you say. You're the little fellow's idol. You're the wisest of the wise.

In his little mind about you no suspicions ever rise. You're setting an example every day in all that you do to the little boy who is waiting to grow up and become like you.

These words are very telling, aren't they? To think of as parents, I think most of us likely are parents here tonight that there's that mindfulness of how can I set the right model?

[25 : 19] How can I be Christ to these ones? How can I display Christ in how I live, in how I act, in my actions, in my conversation?

Because they're going to grow up possibly to become like you, like us. And hopefully they follow the good things we do and trust our Lord as we do.

I pray for my children that they will be strong in the Lord even though at this stage some are not in that place. Just to close, Ephesians 6, 4 it says, and ye fathers provoke not your children to wrath but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.

It says don't provoke your children to anger. Sometimes we can be too harsh, where it's too heavy and too strong in making fuss about things that we don't need to make fuss about.

But may our focus be this, bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Let that be the focus, let that be our goal as parents.

[26 : 35] with the right discipline, with that right instruction and training that our goal is this, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord that we're sowing seeds, aren't we, as parents for our children, for the lives that they will live that hopefully they'll remember the good that we've done and not the bad.

I think of times where I haven't been a good example as a father and I regret those times. I trust that the good example I've set will be what they will remember when I'm long dead and gone.

Amen. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for your word, for this blueprint for the family. We know, Lord, that it's the perfect, it's the goal that we all aspire to.

Pray, Lord, for anyone here that may have had regret, as I have, as a parent, whatever it be, if a marriage ended, whatever it be, Lord, it's happened.

We put our trust in you. In whatever circumstance we find ourselves today, that, Lord, you can guide us to apply these truths in our lives ahead, to be mindful as we're parents of the children that are following our example.

[28 : 05] Lord, help us to use every moment we can to draw people to you, whether it be our own family or others, that we can encourage others to know the Lord.

Thank you, Lord, for your blessing. Thank you, Lord, you're the father of the fatherless, as your word tells us, that you are our great comforter.

Lord, you forgive as well, where we may have failed, in whatever capacity we may have failed, that you are merciful and gracious to us, and you extend your love.

Pray for every person here today that they might find the comfort of your scriptures in whatever circumstance they find themselves today, and most especially that we all would put our trust in you.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Thank you.