

# Christ Central Marriages

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[ 0 : 00 ] Would you open up your Bibles now to Colossians chapter 3? It's on page 1170. I'm going to start by reading Colossians chapter 3.

I'm going to be preaching on 18 and 19, the roles of men and women in marriage. But I'm going to start in verse 12 in the reading. And I'll read through verse 19.

May God bless the hearing of His Word. Put on then as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

Bearing with one another, and if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, the love.

Which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called into one body. And be thankful. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom.

[ 1 : 11 ] Singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs. And with thankfulness in your hearts to God in whatever you do, in word or deed. Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives. And do not be harsh with them.

May God bless the hearing and now preaching of His Word. There's this one particular scene in the Princess Bride.

Princess Buttercup and the evil Prince Humperdinck are kneeling at the altar. And the priest has his back turned.

And the priest turns and he signals them to rise. And then the priest says, Marriage. Marriage is what brings us together today.

[ 2 : 16 ] It's quite a scene. You have a incompetent religious professional making a mockery of the institution of marriage.

We live in a culture that is terribly confused about marriage. Not just the nature of marriage, but the roles of men and women in marriage.

There's even confusion within the church about the roles of men and women within a Christian marriage. Brothers and sisters, we need clarity.

And God's Word gives us clarity. Biblically speaking, marriage is an exclusive commitment between one man, one woman, to each other, for life, before God.

And we've reached a point in the book of Colossians where Paul has moved from addressing the church to now addressing households.

[ 3 : 34 ] And what we have in 3.18-4.1 is what's called a household code. A household code. It's hard to talk about.

It's even hard to say from the pulpit. Household slaves and masters. A household code is actually a spelling out of the authority structure within a household.

And Paul begins the household code section with instructions to wives and husbands in marriage.

Marriage is not why we've come together today.

Christ is. Christ is. And so what I'm going to argue for this morning from the Bible, from this text that we're going to read that many of us are wondering about. Christ must be the controlling center of our marriages, brothers and sisters.

Christ must be the controlling center. So here's how we're going to proceed. I just want to help you think about Christian household codes.

[ 4 : 55 ] And the nature of authority. And then we're going to look at the call to Christian husbands. And then the call to Christian wives. And then I'm calling you out to the dance floor. Christ must be

the controlling center of our marriages.

Of our marriages, brothers and sisters. We will experience Christocentric resonance in our marriages. The peace of Christ. The peace of Christ ruling our hearts.

The word of Christ dwelling richly among husband and wife. And we're doing everything in word and deed. Our roles played out in the name of Jesus. Do I have an amen?

Amen. Amen. So regarding household codes and authority. Back in the first century, a household code provided clarity to the relationships within a household.

And at that time, it regarded marriage in terms of, and as well as parenting children, as well as relationships with household slaves. This past week, I read three household codes.

[ 6 : 05 ] One written by Aristotle. The other written by Philo. The other written by Josephus. And all three had two things in common. You ready? These non-Christian household codes, they made the man, the head of the home, the controlling center of the household.

These non-Christian codes did. And secondly, these non-Christian household codes, they demeaned those who were in an inferior position.

They were in a subordinate role. And so, all three of the codes, they obviously valued wives, children, and slaves less than the man of the home.

But then when you look at Christian household codes, like we have in Colossians 3, Ephesians 5 and 6, 1 Peter chapter 3, they are revolutionary.

A Christian household code insists on Christ being the controlling center of a household. You can see it in our passage.

[ 7 : 15 ] Wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting to the Lord. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, fearing the Lord, in verse 22.

Whatever you do, as do it as the Lord, you're serving the Lord Christ, in verse 24. And then finally, he turns to masters. And masters of the first century household would have been the fathers and husbands as well.

So, one man. He says to them, Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a master in heaven. Reverence to the Lord Jesus.

Every person in a household is called to make Jesus the controlling center of their life. It's revolutionary.

All the members, here's another difference. All the members of a Christian household are to be dignified. Despite their role, they're to be dignified as having equal value.

[ 8 : 23 ] A husband who leads his home isn't, in God's eyes, more valuable than his wife or his children. No, we're all image bearers.

We are all equally in need of being saved. But one of the things I also want you to notice, and this is debatable within the Christian church, Paul preserves an authority structure that is grounded in the order of creation.

And so, he looks to husbands and fathers to be the unique leader of the home. Having a unique responsibility.

I'm going to come back to that in a little bit. But I just want you to help you see that the purpose of a household code is to bring priests in order to a household.

And we're to do this in a Christocentric way. In a way that dignifies everyone in our home. Now, let me just speak a word about authority.

[ 9 : 31 ] I'm guessing when you hear the word authority, authority, you think power. The power to tell someone else what to do. Our culture isolates authority as something to be grasped for in order to get your agenda done.

Here's how I want you to think about authority. Authority is the function of responsibility. Authority is an outworking of responsibility.

When God entrusts people to another person, He grants them authority to act on their behalf. For their well-being.

That's Christian authority operating in an understanding of Christian responsibility. We don't divorce authority from responsibility.

We understand it as a necessary function of it. And so the elders of a church are given authority to act on behalf of the members of the church because they have a responsibility before the Lord to oversee the church for the church's well-being.

[10:47] And God gives responsibility, a unique responsibility to husbands and fathers in Christian households for the well-being of their wives and children. And that's why He gives us a unique authority to be used for the well-being of those in our homes.

So we need to be thinking well about these things. A Christian household are to be Christ-centered and dignifying of all. And the God-given authority given to people with a responsibility is for the good of those in the household.

So now let's look at the call to Christian husbands. Verse 19. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Let me just remind you of who's being addressed here. Because this is not a new start in the book of Colossians. This is coming out of what we just read, what we've just been studying, what we've been seeking to apply.

Brother, if you're a Christian married man in the room, God is addressing you here clearly. Husbands, love your wives.

[12:11] These married men have been delivered from the domain of darkness and transferred into the kingdom of the beloved son. These married men have been given a new identity.

They have been united with Christ in His death and His resurrection. Their identity is not so much in their manness as first and foremost in their being in Christ.

They have a new aim. Seek the things that are above, where Christ is. They have a new time frame. They are wanting to live out their lives, realizing they're in between the first coming and the second coming of Christ.

They got a new wardrobe. These Christian men, they are to put off the old self with all of their grave clothes and put on the new self of Christ-likeness, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, and above all else, love.

And so brothers, here's what you've got to understand at the forefront. I want you to feel the weight of this. We see it played out in Genesis 1, 2, and 3. Just as God held Adam accountable for his family in Genesis 3, 9, in a unique way, God is going to hold you accountable for your family in a unique way.

[13:52] It's a responsibility he's entrusted to you. Their well-being. And so brother, as the head of your home, you must love your wives.

The well-being of your wife is your top priority. And the way you show this responsibility, the way you show this commitment, the way you lead your wife, the way that you exercise this authority given to you by God is by loving your wife.

That word love in verse 19 follows on the heels of the use of the word love in verse 14. And above all these, put on the love.

The Christ-like love of John 13, 34, and 35. It's the, you want to flip over to Ephesians chapter 5. It's this kind of love. Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word.

[15:09] This kind of love that we're talking about here is not a domineering love. It's not a tyrannical love. It's not an abdicating love.

It's a self-sacrificing love. It's I'm going to lay my life down for my wife, for her well-being. All unto Christ. For the well-being of her physical body, for the well-being of her mental health, of her emotional health, of her relational health, and of course, her spiritual health.

I'm going to sacrifice myself for her comprehensive well-being. You know what the result is? When a brother's loving his wife like that, do you know what happens?

Your lady thrives. She blossoms. She experiences, through your loving leadership, joy, gladness, safety, support.

Brother, imagine this. You're at the judgment and your wife goes first. The Lord Jesus asks her, so how did Mike do? Jenny's like, eh.

[16:39] I'm anticipating that time. Jesus is going to look at me and I'm going to, hmm. But if Jenny says this, or your brother, your wife says this, Mike wasn't perfect.

He stepped on my toes a lot. But man, he helped me to thrive for you. He helped me to treasure you, Lord Jesus.

He gave himself so that I could treasure you, Lord Jesus. I don't need to hear anything else. What a day.

Brothers, ours is a high, Christ-like call. to love your wives.

There's a qualification. Don't be harsh with them. Let me just put in some other words. Don't be domineering. Don't bully.

[17:42] Don't demean. Don't despise. Don't be impatient. That word harsh literally means to become embittered.

So let's just say your wife comes up to you and she's like trying to help you not to sin. You might become embittered. Don't be embittered because she's trying to help you follow Jesus.

Thank her. This word harsh gives me an opportunity to talk about abuse.

This rules out any physical abuse. It rules out any emotional, verbal, sexual abuse.

Brothers, we may not abuse our wives. It's an abuse of your responsibility. God has not called you to that.

[18:43] You're not to sin against your wives like that. It's the very opposite of laying your life down for your wife's good. I have another qualification.

This isn't apostolic. This isn't written in holy script. I'd put it this way. Paul just said don't be harsh with them.

I would say brothers, don't be hiding from them. Don't be checking out. Harshness is a distortion of your responsibility by way of tyranny.

Checking out and hiding is a distortion of your responsibility by abdication. It is an abdicating of the responsibility given to you, brother, by God himself.

You might say to me, oh Mike, she's more spiritual than I am. She's more mature than me. Okay, that's fine. That doesn't relieve you of the responsibility of laying your life down for her good.

[19:51] Mike, she's more effective than I am. She gets things done. Great, utilize it. That doesn't relieve you of the responsibility God has given you.

Mike, I'm compromised by my own sin. I've been hamstrung. I think that there's a wicked scheme of the devil out there right now.

Hamstringing men, Christian men from leading in their homes because they know they've disqualified themselves. Brothers, whatever sin it may be, don't be hiding.

don't be hiding from your wife. She's part of the solution to you living an uncompromised life.

A life of integrity. These are weighty issues, aren't they? But there's goodness to this.

[21:02] Brothers, responsibility is good. It's good. you might be asking right now, what do I do?

What do I do? Here's what you do. Treasure Jesus above all else. Treasure him.

Make him center of all that you are and you bring that to your wife. You bring that to your marriage, brother. That's what you do. I'm going to give you some dance instructions and a little bit of some steps you can take.

The first thing is the most important thing and that is to make Jesus your first love. More than you love yourself, more than you love your spouse. Having said that, the call to Christian husbands now look at the call to Christian wives.

I know everybody in the room wants to know what submit means. Submit means. Submit means. But let me just remind you, sister, of who you are. If you're a married Christian woman, God is addressing you directly.

[22:16] Wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. The women being addressed here are married women who've been transferred from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of the beloved son.

The women that he's addressing here are women with a new identity. These women have been united with Christ in his death and resurrection. So their identity is not being in a wife or being the wife of this particular man.

First and foremost, their controlling identity is that they've been united with Christ in his death and resurrection. Ladies, do I have an amen? Amen. They have a new aim to seek the things that are above where Christ is.

It's Christ that you serve. New time frame. You live in between the first coming and second coming of Jesus.

Church, what time is it? It's Christ time. Ladies, you've got a new attire. It just so happens to be the same attire as your husband's. To put off the old self and to put on new Christ-likeness, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, love.

[23:33] Did you hear what's going on here? We've got husband and wife adorned in Christ dancing the dance of marriage.

So now we come to this word submit. Sister, when you read that word submit, that despite what our culture may say and despite what you may feel, that word submit doesn't mean you're inferior. That's not what it's getting at. We fully embrace the equal value of men and women in our church. God's given different roles.

That's why this word is here. But you need not fear it. You're not inferior. Kevin DeYoung is one of my favorite preachers and one of my favorite thinkers.

He wrote an article. I got it somewhere. Here. Here it is. Let us reason together about complementarianism. That's a huge word. But that's kind of what's behind what we're talking about. [ 24 : 42 ] If you want to learn about this, there are 30 copies of this article outside in the Connect Desk. Grab one. But in this article, he makes a case that the 38 times this word submit, hypotasso, is used in the New Testament, it's always referring to one party, always in a relationship with one party in authority over another.

The party in the subordinate role is called to submit. to the authority of the one who has a responsibility. So, here's how to think about submission.

Submission is a willing coming under, a willing coming under the God-given authority and responsibility of someone else. That's what submission is.

Willingly coming under God's good design of something. It's a wife saying, my husband has a God-given responsibility, for me, and I will entrust myself to him.

That's what submission is. Now, this isn't done blindly, because I'm guessing in many of your minds right now, you're saying, well, what about this? What about that?

[ 26 : 05 ] I'm not trying to be Pollyanna here. I'm not trying to see things in rose-colored glasses. What we do need to hear clearly, though, is what God is saying to you. What God is, just imagine this.

If a Christian wife is thoroughly convinced by her husband's actions that he is sacrificing himself for her well-being, do you know what that does?

Do you know what that does? that makes submission a joy? That positions her to respond well. She has confidence in you, brothers. At the heart of responsibility is trustworthiness, and at the heart of trustworthiness is character, integrity. If you want to look at Ephesians chapter 5, 22 through 24, we read this.

Wives, submit to your own husbands, not to somebody else's husband. 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 himself as Savior.

[ 27 : 41 ] That's an actual argument from the order of creation. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. Do you see what's going on here? Our marriages are living parables of Christ's relationship to the church. It's a dance we get to dance, brothers and sisters. Some of us husbands, we are demonstrating Christ-like love and initiating with our wives in a certain way and our wives are demonstrating a church-like response.

It's a beautiful dance. And when Jesus Christ is the functional center of a marriage, marriage, this dance has a Christocentric resonance to it.

The peace of Christ ruling hearts, the word of Christ dwelling richly among them, and the name of Christ being exalted in all that they do. That's what we're being called to.

[ 28 : 51 ] Don't settle for less. Let's aim for more. There's a qualification. to this wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord.

Christian wife, there is only one person in your life who has unconditional, unilateral, indefinite, authority over every aspect of your life.

Do you know who it is? It's not your husband. It's the Lord Jesus Christ. Your husband's authority is a derived authority from God himself, and he is to exercise that authority out of his responsibility for you, for your well-being in Christ.

Christ. So here's what that means. Your willing submission to your husband is a means to magnifying Christ.

It's for him. He's your new aim. Your husband must not take the place of Jesus Christ in your life. He can't.

[ 30 : 17 ] but you can follow him in a way that is for Christ. He's seated in the heavenlies right now.

Set your sights on what is above. Here's another thing that this means, this qualification as is fitting in the Lord. Sister, you willingly submit to your husband in so far as it pleases Christ.

if your husband is demanding you to do something that grieves the Lord Jesus to lie in a tax form, to go rob a bank, you say no.

With full authority knowing it doesn't please Christ and it's Christ who matters most. Now you may be able to have to say something like this, honey, I'm happy to follow you as long as Christ is exalted but I will not lie for you.

I will not deceive others for you. I can't. Jesus Christ is your ultimate Lord sister. Brothers, are you hearing me? Are you hearing me? Sister, here's something else this means.

[ 31 : 42 ] You're not trapped in your husband has been given a God-given responsibility and authority for you, yes, but he's accountable.

He's accountable to God himself and to the elders of our church. church. We're not going to tolerate abuse in Christ the King church.

You know why? It's not Christ-like. In all of this, I would say one thing, sisters. Don't grab the reins. Let your husband lead. With all this said, let your husband lead. In fact, encourage him. Say, you go brother.

Lead us unto Christ. How can I help? Now you may be asking this question, what if I'm married to an unbeliever? Non-Christian.

[ 32 : 47 ] Do you know what you do? You submit to your non-Christian husband in what you can as unto the Lord. And look at 1 Peter 3.

Now, if you're a sister in the room who's married and you sense God addressing you and now you're asking the question, what do I do, Mike? How do I respond?

Do you remember what I told the husbands? Treasure Christ above all else. Make him central to all that you are and walk in a manner worthy of the Lord and what he's called you to as a wife.

And then we bring in this Christ-like wardrobe into our marriages. Which now brings me to the call to the dance floor.

Next month, I told you this last week, the Salvati's are heading out to Iowa City, Iowa. I don't think we would go there for any other reason other than my nephews getting married.

[ 33 : 58 ] And I know what awaits. What awaits in Iowa City is a dance floor. And I'm planning on bringing Jenny out on the dance floor. I'm going to draw her close and we're going to lead her as the music plays and we're going to work together.

I am a lousy dancer. I am a boring dancer. I know that's hard to believe. It's true. Here's the mistake I make. I just start doing a circle move.

I think I'm doing pretty good and then Jenny's like, oh. I also step on Jenny's toes.

And I love it when she tells me, Mike, you're dancing in circles. Okay. Mike, you're stepping on my toes. Oh, I'm sorry, sorry. Brothers, take your wives out on the dance floor.

Dance, brother. Bring them out. Lead them. It's okay you dance in circles. She'll tell you. It's okay you dance on her toes. Dance on her toes. She'll let you know. But better that than do nothing.

[ 35 : 24 ] So let me give you five steps. You ready? Christocentric resonant dance moves. The first three happens before you even greet your wife in the morning and wife before you greet your husband.

Move number one. Treasure Christ above all else. every day. Seek him. Behold him.

And your beholding of him become like him. Put off the old grave clothes. Put on Christ like this.

That's where we start. Treasure Jesus more than yourself, more than your spouse.

It will go well with your marriage. Second, this is before you get out on the dance floor. Kind of warming up. Thank God.

Thank God for your spouse. Thank God for this calling on you. Thank God for your marriage. When you are thanking God for these things, there's this goodness.

[ 36 : 27 ] It's this graciousness that brings into, God brings into a marriage. God, thank you so much for Jenny. Thank you, God, for calling me to be her husband.

Thank you for the responsibility you've given me. Thank you, God, for this marriage. Third, ask God for help.

For yourself first, before your spouse. God, would you please, please help me lead Jenny in such a way that Christ is exalted.



Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.