

Christ Central Families

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[0 : 00] All right, if you would open up your Bibles, if you haven't, to Colossians chapter 3. If you're new here for the first time, I've been preaching through the book of Colossians, and we've entered this section of Colossians called the household rules.

And so a couple weeks ago, I preached on Christ-centered marriages. Next week, I'm going to preach on Christ-centered employment. And this morning, I get to preach on Christ-centered families.

And so if you would look at two verses, verses 20 and 21 of chapter 3, it's on page 1170 of your pew Bible. Hear God's word. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

May God bless not just the hearing, and not just the preaching of the word, but the doing of this word. Do I have an amen? Amen. Okay, kids.

[1 : 09] You're in with us today, and I'm so thankful. I'm going to start off with asking you to draw a picture for me. Do you know what a greenhouse is? Children, if you're in the room 18 and under, say yes.

Glad to know that we have one child 18 and under in the room. A greenhouse is a building with a lot of glass. And a greenhouse has really one purpose, to grow plants.

You grow plants in a greenhouse to send them out to be replanted in other places. And so maybe you've been to Steins with your parents, totally boring, but you might have been in a greenhouse. Breezy Hill, you've got a greenhouse. Greenhouse. And if you're in a greenhouse, you walk into a greenhouse, you are immediately met by a number of things. You're met by the temperature, right? The temperature's just got to be right for a greenhouse. And then you're also, you kind of feel the moisture in the air. It's humid. It's got to be right for a greenhouse. And then all the glass, there's got to be a lot of sunlight.

[2 : 13] And when you have those three things working together, you've got an environment for growth. A Christian family is God's greenhouse for growing godly kids.

A Christian family is a place where children grow up and then are sent out.

And so, brothers and sisters, if we want to grow children who love the Lord, do you know what that means? Jesus Christ must be the controlling center of our families.

And when Jesus Christ is the controlling center of our families, we will find ourselves in a Christ-rich environment.

I've got four points this morning in this sermon. First one is this, vision. I want to cast vision for the families in this room right now for a Christ-centered family.

[3 : 28] A greenhouse. And then I get to address kids, 18 and under. That point is for you. And there's one word you're going to need to hear. It's the word obey.

And then the third point is to dads. Fathers. And you've got one word too. It's lead, brothers. Lead. There's a way not to lead and then there's a way to lead in your homes.

And then finally, I get to speak a word of grace. Because many of us in the room are living in the, but what if? What if I blew it?

Oh, there is grace for you. Christ must be the controlling center of our families. And when he is, and he's the king of grace, not only do children grow, but parents grow too.

So let me give you a vision for the Christian family. And this is point one of the sermon. What needs to be happening within a church family, within a Christian family, in order for children to grow in godliness?

[4 : 41] What needs to be true? Well, I'd like to point you to two things. I want to help you see something. The first is, Christian mom and dad, you've got to see yourself as God sees you.

You've got to remember who you are. This kind of like theological amnesia. You forget who you are? You've got to remind yourself of who you are.

So let me just remind you who you are by a kind of brief and amazing review of the book of Colossians. Mom and dad, you used to be living in the domain of darkness, but you were transferred into the kingdom of the beloved son.

That's who you are now. You have a new king and a new kingdom. King of grace. He is the firstborn of creation. He's the firstborn from the dead. He's the king of all. And not only that, you've got a new identity.

You've died with Christ and you've been raised with Christ. Chapter 2, verse 20. Chapter 3, verse 1. You're united with Christ in his death and resurrection. You've got a new identity.

[5 : 45] And you also have a new aim. In chapter 3, verse 1, we read this. If you then have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above. Where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.

Brothers and sisters, moms and dads, you've got a new aim. For your households. Christ in heaven, who is reigning on high.

We also have a new time frame. Church, what time is it? You're living on Christ's time. We live between his first coming and his second coming.

Which means we're living with a whole new perspective. An eternal perspective. That helps us not to live for the temporary trinkets of the world. And for the timeless treasures of Christ.

We live on Christ's time. And then what we've been seeing in verses 5 through 14 of chapter 3 is, you've got a whole new wardrobe, brother. Sister, you've got a whole new dress to wear.

[6 : 48] You are to put off the old grave clothes of who you were when you were dead to God. You don't wear those anymore. And you're to put on the new self, which is being renewed in the likeness of your creator.

Verse 10, chapter 3. That's Christ wear. You're to put on Christ likeness, mom. Dad, you're to put on Christ likeness.

Compassionate hearts. Humility. Kindness. Patience. Bearing with one another.

Forgiving one another. And above all else, you put on the love. Christ-like love. The new commandment love.

Now, if you are trying to parent in your old grave clothes, you know what kind of environment that's going to create?

[8 : 00] That's going to create a toxic environment. What you want to be wearing is your Christ wear. And when you are breathing in Christ-rich air, and you're putting on Christ likeness, you're remembering who you are.

So the first thing in terms of kind of this vision for a Christian family, you've got to remember who you are. You've got to see yourself the way that God sees you. The second thing I want to point you to is this.

It's what's got to be happening in your home. It's not just remembering who you are, not just seeing yourself as God sees you.

It's seeing your home for what it can be. And we can see that from verses 15, 16, and 17. I'll just be quick. Do you remember how a greenhouse, you need the right temperature, you also need the right amount of moisture, and you need sunlight?

For your greenhouse, brothers and sisters, you need the peace of Christ ruling in your heart. That's setting a temperature, a warm temperature to raise children.

[9 : 20] The peace of Christ is the shalom, the peace that Christ accomplished between you and God by dying on the cross for your sins, and now we are able to bring that peace into our homes.

We're to be peacemakers now, ruling our hearts and helping it rule our children's hearts. If you want a good book on how to make peace in your family, there's one that's second to none.

It's Ken Sandy, Peacemaking for Families. I would highly recommend it. So the right temperature is this, verse 15, the peace of Christ ruling in your hearts, mom and dad.

That's, you're set, you're creating a greenhouse for your children to grow in that. Not hostility. Not what you see in verses 8 and 9, anger, wrath, malice, slander, obscene talk, lying to one another.

That's grave clothes. You don't want to raise your kids in that. You want to put on what you see in verse 12. You want to raise them in that. Verse 16, the word of Christ dwelling richly among you.

[10 : 30] If you look back at Deuteronomy 6, verses 4 through 7, it's called the Shema. Hear, O Israel, the Lord your God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all that you've got, and

you're to have the word, his word on your heart and you're going to instruct your children wherever you go, night and day, when you rise and when you fall, when you're driving them to school or bringing them to Meijer, constantly talking about God's word.

It's the saturation of scripture. It's like walking into a greenhouse where you feel the moisture in the air. Your home should be saturated with the scriptures that point to the Savior.

It's a Christ-rich environment. How do you do that? Well, if you want something very structured, the New City Catechism would be a great way to do that.

Another way is, when I was a young dad, I used what I call the King Penguin approach, and that is, I would wake up before anybody woke up in my house, and I would have my nose in my Bible, and I would be reading my Bible, and then, whether it's over breakfast, over dinner, I would start a conversation with my kids, and I would say something like, do you know what I read in my Bible today?

I'm just kind of regurgitating that to them in the best sense. I want to help them digest God's word. So it's coming from me.

[11:59] I'm helping them experience the goodness of God's word. Verse 17, the name of Christ.

Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. Do everything. This is the sunlight. Not S-U-N light. S-O-N light. Let Jesus shine in your homes, brothers and sisters. Make much of him.

Do everything in his name. Help your children do everything in his name. Here's something. You could just kind of huddle up sometime in the morning, and dads, you lead out.

You say something like, Lord Jesus, we commit our day to you. We want to live for you today. We want to do everything, word and deed. We want to do it for your name, for your glory. Do you know why?

[12:58] Because Jesus is the son of our solar system. Everything orbits him. He's the controlling center of our lives. And when you have these three ingredients operating in a household, you've got the peace of Christ ruling your hearts.

You've got the word of Christ dwelling richly among you, and you're doing everything in the name of Christ. Do you know what you do? You know what you're doing? Can you see it? You're creating a greenhouse. Christ-rich place for your children to grow in.

Now, imagine your children growing up in that. That's what you're doing. Before we move on, I just want to say one more thing.

I want you to vision, you parents, you've got to parent a certain way. It's easy to get sucked into the tyranny of the now, but you've got to be parenting your kids with the send in mind.

When they're 18 years old and they're leaving your home, you've got to be partnering as a husband and wife, as a mom and dad. You're thinking like, okay, where do they need to be when they leave our home?

[14:12] What needs to be true of them? What needs to be true of their character and their conduct? How do we cultivate this kind of responsibility?

Mom and dad, you've been called to raise adults, responsible human beings who love the Lord Jesus with all that they've got. And so we parent with the send in mind.

So your greenhouse, mom and dad, that you are building and creating, you remind yourself of who you are, and then you are bringing these ingredients, these components of growth to bear.

It's all to send them to be replanted elsewhere as mature adults who love the Lord Jesus Christ. That's a vision for the Christian family. You're not going to hear that on CNN. You're not going to hear that on Fox News.

[15:18] You're not going to see that and hear that on your podcasts. That's coming from this. It's good. So we move now from a vision for the Christian family, a greenhouse, Christ-rich, Christ-centered, to now children.

What does God require of you? If you're 18 and under, I need you to make eye contact with me. I need you to listen with what I'm about to say because this is God addressing you.

Not me, God's word. God's word. God's word. It says this, children, obey your parents in everything for this pleases the Lord.

If parents are creating this greenhouse, what is the responsibility of a child? And the responsibility of a child is to obey their parents in everything.

What does it mean to obey? It means to do what your parents are telling you to do. It means to do what they're asking you to do. There are two parts of verse 20.

[16:28] There is what you're to do, obey, and the motive to do it. For this pleases the Lord. So obeying your parents is doing what they say.

Kids, did you know that your parents have the responsibility of raising you? They have the responsibility of forming your character, of helping you learn how to obey. obey. Obedience is learned. You grow in it. It forms your character. And so God has given your parents the responsibility of forming your character through obedience, of training you to obey and do what's good and right in God's eyes.

and children, your responsibility is to obey them. There's this passage way back in the Old Testament.

You know the Ten Commandments? The Fifth Commandment is this. Honor your parents, honor your father and your mother. Children, you're to honor your mom and dad because God has given them a responsibility for you to respect what God has given them for you.

[17:40] You are to honor them and the primary way you honor them is by obeying them. Here's what that means. Your mom or dad asks you to do something?

Yes, mom. Yes, dad. Let me run you through some examples. I, I, this may happen in your home. Maybe it doesn't.

Honey, make your bed. Yes, mom. Yes, dad. Clean your room. Yes, mom.

Yes, dad. Do you know what your parents are doing? They're training you to be responsible.

They're forming your character. They're helping you do what's good and right in God's eyes.

Brush your teeth. Yes, dad. Take out the trash. You got it, dad. Dad. Time to wake up. You got it.

[18:46] We, you children, are to obey in everything and here's what that means. You don't get to select what you can and cannot obey with one exception. If your parents are telling you or asking you to do something that God forbids, you may not do that.

your parents may not cause you to sin. Sin against God. But in everything else, you obey them.

Now, if you're a teenager in the room, you're like, well, you know what?

I'm a little bit more mature than an eight-year-old. And chances are if you're a teenager in the room, your parents are giving you a little bit more space to make your own decisions, right? That's good. That's wise parenting.

But here's a situation that might happen. Let's say you're going out with your friends and your mom or your dad says, hey, where are you going? And you might take that as some kind of invasive line of questioning, but your parents are actually training you.

They're not asking something that is unrealistic. They want to know that you're being responsible. Where are you going?

[20:04] Who are you going with? When are you going to be back? You need to be back by 10.30. These are things that you obey as a teenager. You're being formed.

You're being shaped. And as you do these things and honor your parents, it builds trust. And so they are willing to kind of give you some more responsibility. That's how it works.

But if you defy them, if you disobey them, it causes them to not trust you and it causes them to pull back on the responsibility. That's not their fault. That's your fault. There's a motive in this.

Not only are you to obey children, but you are to obey a certain way to a certain end. It's right there. For this pleases the Lord. When you honor your parents by obeying them, it pleases the Lord.

Kids, do you ever wonder, man, I wonder what the Lord's will is. The Lord's will is for you to honor your parents. It pleases Him. So here's what that means.

[21:12] Check this out. Your parents will drop to the floor and you'll be like, do they need CPR if you do this? Your mom, dad comes up and you'll be like, hey, sweetheart, please make your bed.

And you're like, yes, mom, for the Lord Jesus! Glory! Child, if you did that, your parents would be like, here's 10 bucks.

Dad, I love you. Children, here's what I'm trying to say. You might think that obeying your parents is to please your parents and on one level it is, but the ultimate person you're looking to please in your obedience is Jesus the Lord.

So whenever you're asked to do something or told to do something, you can say, yes, dad, for the Lord! If you want to yell it, yell it! But if they ask you to do something that's sin against God, you say, no, dad, for the Lord!

You see what I'm saying? Now, if you can please Jesus by obeying your parents, then you can grieve Jesus by disobeying your parents.

[22 : 32] And that might be a flat out, no, I'm not going to do that, or it may be something like this, grumbling, complaining, arguing. When you grumble and you complain and you argue, it's not just making it difficult for your parents, you're grieving God in the moment.

You know what this means? Okay, raise your hand if you've been a child in the room. raise your hand if there was a moment in time in your childhood that you disobeyed your parents.

Oh, like there's 4,000 in my, like, 13th year alone I disobeyed my parents. Do you know what this means? Children, you need a Savior.

Kids, you need a Savior to rescue you from the disobedience disobedience that's in you. You need Jesus just like everybody else in the room.

Kids, your parents, they're God's kindness to you, they're in your life, God has given them to you to help raise you to become adults who flourish outside of your, outside of their home.

[23 : 51] Allow them to lead you. Allow them to form you. Honor them. We all need a Savior. So we've gone from talking about a vision to addressing kids and now what God requires of Christian fathers.

Verse 21. Now in verse 20 we see something interesting. Children obey your parents, mom and dad, honor your father and your mother. So both parents have responsibility for their children and have authority to tell them what to do.

But then in verse 21, Paul narrows his focus to purposefully addressing fathers. That is not an accident. Here's why.

Because in God's good and wise design, he has, he has called men men to be the leaders of their homes. We see that in verse 19.

A man is to be a husband who leads his wife. And we see that here in verse 21. The same man is to be leading his children. Dads, we are to create a context in our homes where both our wives and our children are thriving in the Lord.

[25 : 23] If you're a dad in the room, I want you to feel the weight of verse 21 because God is addressing you, brother.

Fathers, dads, do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged. And just to be clear, what God is not saying is that, hey dad, you're the controlling center of your family.

No, no. Christ is. And so what that makes you, dad, is a manager of his greenhouse. You are to manage the greenhouse the Lord Jesus has given you.

You are to be making sure that the temperature is right. that the peace of Christ is ruling in your heart, in your wife's heart, in your children's hearts.

You are to be making sure that the moisture level is right, that scripture is saturating your home.

You are to make sure that the sunlight is shining bright, that you are doing everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.

[26 : 35] I know, brothers, that when you can hear this stuff that you will be either like, hey, bring it on, let's do it. Or you start thinking like, ah, and you can start making excuses.

Well, my dad was, doesn't matter. Or you start thinking, well, my wife is like three times as spiritually mature than I am.

Doesn't matter, brother. God's calling you to this. And when you step into this, he has grace for you, he's going to grow you, and you know what?

You're going to say something like this, hey, this kind of responsibility is hard, but it is good and I delight in it. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for entrusting this responsibility to me.

Remember, your authority as the dad is an outworking of your responsibility given as a dad. man. So in verse 21, we see two things.

[27 : 38] Brother, you're told what not to do and why. Do not provoke your children. In Ephesians 6, 4, it's the parallel passage.

It says, do not provoke your children to anger. You're not to embitter your children. You're not to make them resentful.

Now the question becomes, well, how do you do that? How do you make a child resentful? It's not rocket science because we've all experienced this before in other venues.

What angers or embitters a child is when you are exercising your leadership, dad, in a way that is more drill sergeant than ambassador for Jesus.

It's when you are exercising your leadership in your home with some kind of authoritarianism. You do it because I said do it. That's not how you lead, brother, not in your home.

[28 : 45] That's grave clothes leadership in the home. That's not Christ wear. No, you are constantly building your children into Christ.

You're serving Jesus in your leadership in your home. You're the manager of the greenhouse. Jesus is the owner. And he's going to hold you accountable some day. Dads, we can make this error of thinking that we are the controlling centers of our families when we're not. Christ is.

And so we serve him and our families in that. So the first mistake is this mistake of authoritarianism. But there's another mistake on the other side of the spectrum.

And do you know what it is? Abdication. It's still self-serving. Like authoritarianism is a kind of self-serving.

[29 : 46] my children exist for me. Or abdication is this idea of I am rejecting the responsibility and authority that the living God has given me for the welfare of my family.

That's abdication. And that will embitter your children too. When you check out. I have a picture. It's not an original. But a print of a Norman Rockwell painting. That's called Sunday Morning. And in the middle of the living room is a dad wearing a red bathrobe reading the sports page shrunk in his chair as his wife and children leave prim and proper for church.

It's a picture of abdication. It's a mistake. We are not to be authoritarianism.

We're not to make the mistake of abdicationism. We are to be ambassadors of Jesus Christ in our homes, brother. That's what you're being called to.

[31 : 05] And we're given a reason why. lest they be discouraged. Do you know what a failure of leadership does?

It deflates people. It discourages people. It leaves people wanting. What happens with an authoritarianism is often children like, I want to get out of this house and I want to stay out of this house.

it's a mistake. There's a better way. Brother, you know what you need? You need Jesus.

You need to treasure him above all else. You need to rest in him and the grace that he has for you today. You've got a new identity. You've got a new aim. You're on a new time frame.

You've got a new wardrobe. You've got a new aim. Christ above. And we bring that into our homes. There's this quote, J.C.

[32 : 13] Ryle. It says, hey, how do you heat a church? You put a furnace in the pulpit. How do you heat a Christian home?

Put a Christ centered brother in the middle of it. I need to tell you something, brother. You are a target.

The devil knows that you leading in your home is going to advance the kingdom of God. And he will do everything he can to discourage you, to distract you, to disqualify you.

these are the stakes. Don't give him opportunity, brother. Step into this good responsibility that God has given you.

Do you have any hidden sin in your life that's keeping you from leading in a way that you know pleases Jesus? Confess it. Repent of it. Have you been exercising your leadership in an authoritarian manner?

[33 : 24] Confess it. Repent of it. Have you been abdicating? Confess it. Repent of it. If you need to tell your wife and children, do with it. But don't let these words fall to the ground.

This is for Christ. What God requires of you, Christian father, is not to be an authoritarian, not to be an abdicator, but to be an ambassador for Jesus Christ in your home.

Now, there's a series of what ifs, right? But what if point four?

The first one that comes to mind is if you're a single mom. But what if I'm a single mom? Sister, have you heard of a battlefield promotion?

Here's what happens. On a battlefield, leadership gets decimated, and there's a vacuum of leadership. And you know what happens?

[34 : 29] Someone who may not be the most qualified is necessarily put in place because they need to lead. Sister, we are, I wish we were living, I don't.

wouldn't it be great if we were living in a sinless world? If we were living in a sinless world, you would not be a single mom.

But we live in a sin-riddled world. So, sister, guess what? You're promoted to leadership of your home.

You are the one, sister, to create a greenhouse of a Christ-rich environment, the peace of Christ in the word of Christ, in the name of Christ, permeating your environment of your home.

That's yours. God has grace for you. Single mom, do you know that God's grace is bigger than your circumstances? He's bigger, way bigger.

[35 : 36] His grace is sufficient. And do you know what? Do you know Timothy? His mom, it's likely a single mom, at least his dad was not a believer, and Timothy's mom raised him in a way that pleased the Lord.

You can do that with God's help. But what if I'm a single mom? Sister, if you're a single mom, God has grace for you.

Enlist the help of brothers in the church, brothers in the church, godly men, step into your children's life as well. We'll do this together.

But what if my kids aren't Christians? Well, brother, sister, you still are trying to create a greenhouse of grace.

It doesn't change that. Don't get distracted. Preach the gospel. Pick your battles. But continue on allowing the peace of Christ and the word of Christ and the name of Christ to be permeating your home.

[36 : 48] Find other brothers and sisters in your life that can encourage you because that's hard. Love them long. Maybe you're a child in the room and you're like, but what if my parents aren't Christians?

Or what if my parents embittered me? They've sinned against me. Well, God calls you to honor your parents. No matter what they're like, find ways to honor them, to obey them, to make it easy for them.

You're going to have to forgive them if they've sinned against you. Because that's the way of Jesus. But what if I am a blended family? God has grace for you.

You and your wife, you might have children from different past relationships, but that doesn't stop you from creating a greenhouse where the peace of Christ is ruling your hearts and the word of Christ is saturating and the name of Christ is being exalted.

God has a lot of things. But it's this last question. But what if I've blown it? What if I've blown it with my kids?

[38 : 04] What if I've sinned against them and they resent me for it? What do I do now? You throw yourself on the mercy of Jesus. You know what that points to?

You still need Jesus. So you confess your sin to him and as opportunity affords, you own it with your children.

Ask them to forgive you. But realize this. If you have grieved your children to such an extent, it may require time before you're reconciled with them.

You might suffer the consequences of past mistakes. So you wait on the Lord. You pray regularly to him.

You ask him for help and ask him to change you and change your children, trusting that one day he will bring about what you so long for. And children, what if you've blown it?

[39 : 10] What if you know you've disobeyed your mom and dad? What if you know right now you're hiding something from them? Well, you need a savior too. You own it.

You confess it. You ask God to forgive you and make right with your parents to rebuild trust. It'll take time, but it's so worth it. And when you have people who recognize that they're sinners in need for God's grace, get what you got.

You got a greenhouse where the peace of Christ and the word of Christ and the name of Christ can be exalted.

A greenhouse has a specific purpose to grow plants, to be sent out and replanted elsewhere.

The Christian family is God's Christ-rich greenhouse to grow God's grace. And parents. And parents. Vision, Christ's central family.

[40 : 15] Children, obey. Dads, lead. And for the but-what-ifs, grace abounds for us all. Do I have an amen?

Amen. In order for our homes to be Christ-rich greenhouses, Christ must be the controlling center of our lives.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we need you. We sin against our children, and our children sin against us, but your grace is greater.

Father, would you pour out your spirit upon the parents and children of our church, that there would be this work that you continue in which, Lord Jesus, your name is magnified in our homes, that you're the controlling center, and we are delighted in that.
Have your way, Lord. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.