**A Marriage That Honors the Lord**

Colossians 3:18-19

**Introduction**

As we prepare to consider Paul’s exhortation regarding Christian marriage, consider this quote by Oliver B. Greene: “There are not enough adjectives or words in all the world to express the happiness of a true marriage in the Lord—a marriage according to God’s divine formula for marriage and the home, a marriage which is of the Lord according to His Word, recognized by God the Father—entered into by two born again believers who are one in hope, one in love, one in faith, one in discipline, one in service, one in spirit, and (according to the Genesis account of marriage) one in flesh. They pray together, worship together, eat together, play together, sing songs together. Neither conceals anything from the other, neither willingly avoids the other, neither is a burden to the other. When one is sick, the other is sick also because of deep compassion and love. One sacrifices for the other—and to sum it all up, EACH lives for the OTHER! Such a union in marriage is of the Lord—and where HE is, there is joy unspeakable and full of glory. Such a home is a suburb of heaven.” By following God’s plan, you can have a marriage that honors the Lord. Whether married or single, it is vital that we all understand and support the Christian home as designed by God.

1. **Paul applied the Lordship of Christ to the home.** 
   1. By this point in the letter, Paul has established Christ’s Lordship and is making application.
   2. False teachers troubled the home.
      1. They questioned the sufficiency of Christ.
      2. They emphasized involvement in spiritual things and may have de-emphasized the importance of spiritual living in the home.
         1. Paul’s admonition to set your affections on things above does not translate into neglecting things in the home.
         2. Their spiritual family did not remove their relationship with their physical family.
         3. Rather, new life in Christ makes life different first in the home.
         4. What we have in this passage is “guidance for the way Christians are to bring all of life under the Lordship of Christ.” (Moo)
         5. Christ’s Lordship is mentioned or referred to 7 times in 9 verses. (v. 18, 20, 23, 24a, 24b, 25, 4:1)
         6. It is not enough that spiritual living is evident in the church life of believers. They must honor the Lord at home.
      3. It is possible for a Christian home to dishonor Christ—by fighting, bitterness, division, and isolation.
      4. The Christian home was designed by God to be a place of order, mutual respect, harmony, growth, and joy.
   3. Paul begins his application with the most intimate and permanent relationship: marriage.
2. **A wife who honors the Lord is submissive to her husband. (v. 18)**
   1. This is more than his personal opinion or an application that Paul makes based on his culture.
      1. This admonition transcends time and culture; it is based on God’s order in creation.
      2. “This, according to the biblical testimony, is the only way in which human society can work without disintegration.﻿﻿ To announce that the modern mind cannot accept this is unhelpful and misleading, since it is evident that sinful human nature has never liked it, in whatever century…God has so providentially ordered human affairs that a measure of authority must needs be exercised and recognized if human society is to hold together…Normally the vacuum created by authorities overthrown (of whatever kind) is quickly filled, so often by a new power more tyrannical than that dreamed of under the old…we may disregard this order and refuse this authority. But if this structure is part of the given nature of things as God has made them, we shall do so only at the cost of destroying the thing itself; the family will cease to exist as ‘family’….We shall then begin to see the ‘new family’, a secular version (or versions, probably) of the unique divine invention…deprived children whose parents lived independent lives with no binding concept of the loyalty and love that make a true home possible.” (Stott)
   2. It is a voluntary submission on the part of the wife. (Ephesians 5:22-24, Titus 2:5, I Peter 3:1,5)
      1. To submit is to put yourself under the authority or leadership of another.
      2. She is not submitting to being a slave or a doormat; she is not to submit to a tyrant who lives without restraint; she is not being encouraged to submit to a bully.
      3. She is submitting to being who God created her to be. Thus, it is a place of great honor and respect in the sight of the Lord.
      4. It is “fit in the Lord”; it is proper and what should take place. “True spiritual submission is the secret of growth and fulfillment. When a Christian woman is submitted to the Lord and to her own husband, she experiences a release and fulfillment that she can have no other way….joyful submission is an evidence that the wife belongs to Jesus.” (Wiersbe)
   3. A wife who honors the Lord respects her husband.
      1. She appreciates his desire to lead the home. She encourages him to lead, is gracious when he makes mistakes, and is patient while he is making decisions. She values his insight, and listens when he offers advice. She respects his authority.
      2. She appreciates his desire to work and provide, and to achieve things in life.
      3. She does things with him, even some things in which she may not have a great interest.
      4. She prays for her husband. She understands when he needs time alone.
      5. Are you honoring the Lord by respecting your husband?
3. **A husband who honors the Lord loves his wife. (v. 19)** 
   1. “The husband’s love of the wife must be given full weight, even as the need for wives to recognize the headship of their husbands is upheld.” (Moo)
   2. It was not common in Paul’s day for a husband to love his wife. Following Christ required for these men to go counter-culture and elevated the status of a wife; she is not a piece of property—she is created in the image of God to be loved and protected.
   3. He is to love his wife as Christ loves the church.
      1. This means he is interested in his wife’s life.
      2. He is to be close to her, to pay attention to her, to be concerned about her well-being and happiness, and to try to be understanding to her needs and desires.
      3. He is open with her. He is loyal to her—with his eyes and his actions.
      4. He esteems her above all others. He praises her. He encourages her.
      5. A loving husband prays for his wife and with his wife.
   4. He is not bitter against her.
      1. God knew the husband would be inclined to be bitter against his wife. He can harbor bitterness toward his wife for her disrespect. It is dangerous when a husband holds on to bitterness rather than extending loving forgiveness and making the effort to show love.
      2. A loving husband is tender and caring to his wife. He does not deal harshly with her, or deal with her in anger. He does not make her feel as though she can’t do anything right.
      3. He does not have unrealistic expectations of her.
      4. He does not resent who she is, but lovingly accepts who she is. He doesn’t compare her to others.
      5. He does not retaliate against her, or vent his frustrations on her.
      6. She needs your forgiveness. She needs you to admit when you are wrong.
      7. She longs for your spiritual leadership. She wants to feel loved!
      8. Are you honoring the Lord by the way you are loving your wife?

**Conclusion**

When a husband and wife follow God’s plan for love and respect, it is energizing. Each is to do their part regardless of the actions of the other. A marriage that honors the Lord is one in which the wife is submissive to her loving husband. A final quote by Oliver B. Greene may help to drive home the significance of this passage:

“God first dwelt in the home (the home of Adam and Eve); but Satan broke the union between God and man in the home. It takes godly homes to make churches; it takes godly churches to make a great nation. The devil does not begin his destruction of a nation in its capital among the leaders of that nation; he begins in the homes—on the hillsides, in the valleys, in the cities. If Satan can wreck the home life he can undermine any nation, whether it be Greece, Rome, or the great United States of America!”