

CRACKS IN THE PLASTER—*OUTLINE***Spotting Family Problems Before the House Falls Down**

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I. Introduction (Colossians 3)**A. The Context.**

1. All admonishments are saying the same thing to different members of the family.
2. Whatever you say or do, be expressing thanks to God. (Colossians 3:17)
3. Whatever you do, do it from your heart to the Lord, not to others. (V. 23)
4. There are built-in consequences for what you do in relationships—no matter what others do or don't do. (Vs.24-25)

B. The Context to the Context.

1. God has accomplished great good for us, and He wants to do even more good.
2. The creative and redemptive orders reconstitute the cosmos.
3. As you have received Him (and all He has done), so live responsively to Him.
4. Keep seeking things above, not here on earth.
5. You have been chosen by God to be different.

II. What Submission Is...

- A. It is the basic life-force of the kingdom of God. The world was made and redeemed through Jesus' submission to God, the Father. His work is always accomplished by submission.

- B. A voluntary choice to arrange yourself within an existing order established by someone other than yourself. 'Being subject' is placing yourself in a subordinate role, not in a commanding position.
- C. The opposite of a self-focused determination to maintain your own life with your own resources, trusting in your own strength. Submission counteracts the sinful tendency to carry out your own desires, thinking primarily of yourself.
- D. Hypotasso from hypo = under, through, in, with = arrange, set, situate (in an orderly manner). Submission is the choice to live your life in relationship to an already established order, fitting in with the coming under it, rather than forcing it to come under you.

III. What Submission Is Not...

- A. A statement about a wife's inferiority to her husband. Submission is an arrangement, not a commentary. In character, quality, giftedness, ability, intelligence, spiritually—in everything except physical stature—women are equal to men as wives are as endowed as husbands are.
- B. A backdoor encouragement for husbands to be dominate. Nowhere are husbands told to be commanding, domineering, order-issuing, 'kings-of-their-castles.'
 - 1. Submission is not deciding who gets to lay down the law and who must obey it.
 - 2. Submission is not a fatalistic endurance—putting up with abuse, violation, infidelity or danger to your person or your child.
 - 3. Submission is not a place or a confinement to hold you captive; it is a pattern of blessing and release.
 - 4. Submitting to your husband goes along with submitting to God and Christians submitting to one another. No one would ever suggest that in submitting to one another, Christians ought to allow themselves to be abused or forced to commit immoral acts.
- C. A doctrine that affirms the husband as the center of attention, service and care. Submission is not the statement that the wife should do all the work so that the husband can rest comfortably in his easy chair. Actually, the husband (not the wife) is the one told to do things for the sake of his wife.

IV. What Submission Accomplishes

- A. Submission acknowledges the necessity of redemption and restoration. Since the creative order (of full and equal partnership between husband and wife) was broken by sin, God established a new arrangement for the cosmos—both men and women now must serve the source from which they came.
- B. Willing, eager submission makes a wife more desirable and beautiful to her husband. Resistance pushes away; submission attracts (1 Peter). The goal of submission is oneness—communion and intimacy and full partnership.
- C. Submission acts as a safety net, protecting a wife from the unforeseen spiritual consequences of going-it-alone and from the mistaken choices her husband may make. Lasting, spiritual consequences in your life stem from your choices, not others.’
- D. In the midst of such a complete, radical egalitarianism for women proclaimed through the *good news*, a wife’s submission to her husband reminds her that her freedom should be used for the sake of others. Gnostics, mystics and activists all miss the point.
- E. Wives submitting to their husbands are expressing their gratitude for and trust in Jesus.

V. Other Thoughts about Submission

- A. Though the wife is told to subject herself to her husband, she has exclusive authority over his body—to control it according to her sexual desires. Husbands are supposed to submit their physical being to their wives. (1 Corinthians 7:3-4)
- B. The basic message of the Kingdom is “seek others’ best, not your own.” This has two parts to it: love, cover and nurture others; and, humble, submit and forget about yourself. These two parts are perfectly embodied in the commands to husbands and wives. The two become one complete expression of the way of God.
- C. Christian marriage is not a romantic daydream or a panacea. It complicates your spiritual life, and it has a definite cost to your freedom. Make sure you want a Christian marriage, not just a fantasy.

- D. Submission is not a rigid law to be imposed without wisdom, grace and love. Extenuating circumstances of abuse illegality or perversion must always balance admonitions for submission. Make sure that you are always under authority when you are trying to find balance to submission.

VI. Wives Be Subject to Your Husband

- A. As it fit in the Lord: ana = up, and heko = arrive, come, be at. Your submission to your husband gets you 'in step with' and brings you into line with the life-arrangements God set up to redeem the cosmos. Getting things right (redeeming) is always more important than making sure things are right (judging).
- B. Beware of self-pity and the excuses it offers you to not submit to your husband: "He's not doing his part. It's easy for him. He just gets to do what he wants."
- C. Beware of self-righteousness, evaluating and judging your husband by your standard of worthiness; submission is something you give, not something he gains.
- D. Submission is a litmus test for wives. Whatever keeps you from submitting is evil. If it hurts when the Scripture-fingers probe, then something is wrong.
 - 1. There are only three possibilities: your sin, your bondage, or your husband. Rarely is it your husband.
 - 2. God gives grace for you to submit to your husband, even if he is the problem, it usually isn't that much a problem.
 - 3. There is grace for your sin, but only after you confess and repent of it. There is deliverance for your bondage, but only after you see and renounce your submission to it.

VII. What is love?

- A. The most basic essence of who and what God is. (1 John 4:8) God's motive's and means for making and redeeming the world is love.
- B. The fundamental activity of obedience. (John 14:15) Love fulfills all of God's arrangements for life. Loving God and loving others will keep us from violating the way He meant for things to be. (Matthew 22:36-40)

- C. A purposeful choice of attitude, behavior and conversation towards another person. Love counteracts the sinful tendency to think primarily of yourself because it focuses on how you are towards another, not on how they are towards you. (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)
- D. A predisposition, an urgent readiness for you to always be poised to show patience, kindness, selflessness, humility, care, longsuffering, and forgiveness. Agape love is motivated and generated by itself, not by the person who is being loved.
- E. In the redemptive order, love most often manifests in forgiveness. (John 3:16)
Unforgiveness disallows love.

VIII. What Love Isn't

- A. Phileo = General attraction towards another person or thing; fondness towards friends, family, associates, feelings; sentiments, emotion.
- B. Eros = Desire to want someone or take possession of them; sexual desire, yearning, ecstasy; passions, arousal, stimulation.
- C. A romantic, fantasy-fulfiller. As surely as husbands can use submission as an illegitimate means of getting their wives to "live up" to the husband's lustful fantasies, so too can wives paint an impossible profile for their husbands, like the hero in a romance novel.
- D. A mindreading of the female psyche. Just because a husband does not understand his wife, or just because his actions may be interpreted as insensitive by his wife, does not mean he does not love her. Our culture now projects an unspoken (and incorrect) assumption that men ought to become women to be better men.
- E. An invitation to impotence and silence. Loving your wife does not mean you must always agree with her, follow her impulse, listen endlessly to what she wants to say, or give up your manhood. Love is a motive not a muzzle; it satisfies her without castrating you.

IX. What Does Love Accomplish?

- A. Love changes the basis of a relationship from "if" to "since." It creates a climate of security, which inspires huge investments. When love is the given, much more will be given.

- B. Love creates unity. Without love real oneness is not possible. That is why sexual union outside the love-content of marriage is such a destructive distortion. The goal of love, like that of submission, is oneness.
- C. Love is the primarily channel through which to build up, nourish and develop others. Spiritual gifts and spiritual vitality flow in love. The more a husband loves his wife, the more she will become and be to him. What you get back from your wife is usually the love you have given him.
- D. The more that a husband loves, cherishes and values her life, the more she will be drawn to his side. Eager, consistent love makes a husband more desirable and attractive to his wife. Really being loved is very stimulating to a woman.
- E. Loving your wife regardless of her response or submission is a way of expressing your thanks to Jesus for all He has done for you. Jesus loves and served us before we loved and were submitted to Him.
- F. Loving your wife protects you from many sinful choices you might otherwise make. God is severe toward men who are treacherous against their wives. (Malachi 2:14-15)

x. Some Reminders About Love and Submission

- A. Most humans approach life from the perspective of how they can be made happier or “more inconvenienced.” That is not the focus of the Bible. God wants to teach us how to be righteous, not just how to be right. He wants to show us how to live the life we have been called to be; and, thereby, to inherit blessing from him.
- B. The reason Paul addresses family life is not just to make better marriages. His primary purpose is to make all the theology practical—to show how it is to be lived out in everyday life where non-believers would be struck by how differently believers lived.
- C. A husband’s calling is not to get his wife submitted. A husband’s calling is to be part of the restoration process in her life—seeing her recover from what others have done to her and what she has done to herself. Whether or not a wife is submitted, her husband has the same calling.

xI. The Poison of Bitterness

- A. Pikraino = sharp, pointed, piercing, painful—“pegging” or “nailing,” angry, harsh, ill-disposed, hateful—mean; to affect harshly, create anguish for; an expression of animosity, anger, resentment, disappointment or grief.
 - 1. An outward response of inner frustration, blame casting or hard-heartedness.
 - 2. Associated with cursing and a desire for evil to befall another (Romans 3:14).
 - 3. An oath of condemnation, judgment and sentencing.
- B. Bitterness takes root only after we stop pursuing peace with others, and after we stop looking for our own sin. Bitterness the sprouts, causing us great trouble (crowd, harass, mob, overwhelm) and defiling us (Hebrews 12:14-15).
- C. Bitterness is the first attitude/emotion we are told to “put away” from ourselves in order to live like God wants us to live—being kind, tender-hearted and forgiving. (Ephesians 4:31)

XII. Other Scriptures Regarding Husbands

- A. The Genesis Record.
 - 1. Cain and Abel. (Genesis 4:1-8)
 - 2. The Redemptive Order of Headship. (Genesis 4:9-12)
- B. The Sexual Mandate is “You are not your own.” (1 Corinthians 6:12-7:5)
- C. God, Your Wife and the Golden Rule. (1 Peter 3:7)
 - 1. Don’t misinterpret her weaker physical frame as an indication of lesser spirituality.
 - 2. God doesn’t listen to men who mistreat their wives.
- D. ‘The crown factor.’ (Proverbs 12:4)
- E. ‘The tender surrender.’ (Ephesians 5:25-33)

XIII. Introduction

- A. As we have already seen, Paul addresses both sides of the family (wives and husbands; parents and children). The vulnerabilities he warns about are not meant to be used as a weapon against the ‘party’ he addresses.
- B. Paul’s encouragement to us, as to how we should live in our family, is not, primarily, to make things happy or easy (though it will accomplish that). Rather, living the way we should in the nitty-gritty, practical of life will enable us to:
 - 1. Witness to the world that Jesus has changed the ground rules of the broken cosmos; and,
 - 2. Experience the blessings of partnership in the redemptive order Jesus introduced into the cosmos.
- C. We imagine that frustration and exasperation of parents is greater than that of children.
 - 1. Parental exasperation is mostly the result of mistakes or sins of the parents.
 - 2. Most exasperation suffered by children is not their own fault—parents create frustration for themselves and for their children.
 - 3. Parental exasperation stems from parents’ refusal to:
 - a. Accept the realities of a changed life-style;
 - b. Deal with their own sins and inherited bondages;
 - c. Gird up their loins to maintain consistency;
 - d. Establish clear boundaries and consequences; or,
 - e. Discipline/nurture according to the guidelines of Scripture.
- D. Parents unintentionally exasperate their children in many ways—most of which go way beyond specific things the parents say or do.

Definition: Exasperate = stir up, stimulate, irritate, aggravate to frustration, to anger, to sense a futility.

1. Constantly “staying on a child:”
 - a. Always finding something else that’s wrong;
 - b. Making them feel like their efforts are never quite good enough;
 - c. Never having anything good to say to/about them; or,
 - d. Keeping them in their place—showing them who is the boss.
2. Living selfishly or vicariously through a child.
3. Maintaining a legalistic atmosphere more filled with rules and prohibitions than love and encouragement.
4. Not separating the child from the child’s behavior.
5. Expecting the child to be an adult in their reasoning, perspectives, attitudes and abilities.

E. When children have lost heart, generally they have:

1. Lost the hope that they can succeed.
2. Lost the hope that they can ever please their parents.
3. Ceased to regard their parents’ opinion—out of self-defense.
4. Become lifeless, dispirited and comatose at home, in contrast to being very motivated toward other things away from home (friends, drugs, etc.).

Definition: Losing Heart = without spirit or heart, dismayed losing drive, momentum or passion.

XIV. Parental Goals: (People are easily frustrated in their attempts to move toward an uncertain goal. If parents are clear about what they hope to accomplish with the children God has entrusted to them, they will be less likely to exasperate themselves or their kids.)

A. Knowing God.

- B. Knowing themselves.
- C. Knowing love (agape = welcome and honor).
- D. Knowing consequences.
- E. Knowing how they are to live in God's kingdom.

XV. CHILDREN LISTEN CLOSELY

- A. Context: Not about to make immediate situations rosier or better pleasing to us, but how to live life differently by the change Jesus made and by the example Jesus left.
- B. Trust in God for long-term blessing through the gradual accumulation of righteousness, as well as patterns of submission, love and obedience.
- C. Not about putting kids in their place or distorted notions like, "Kids to be seen, not heard"; "Kids have no rights." This is not a sentence of doom, sending kids away, keeping them under heel or serving the convenience of parents.
- D. Command with specific promise.

In 10 commands—# husbands & wives.

- 1. Specific readout.
 - a. Live longer = stretch quantity and quality of days.
 - b. Live better = make well, sound, beautiful, happy, successful, right, beneficial. Keep from foolish things because the cosmos is wired this way.
- 2. Severe penalty for speaking against parents.
- 3. Model for learning how to obey.
 - a. Learning about consequences.
 - b. V.5 pay attention; this is important.

- c. V.6 discipline = act of love, not loathing, receiving, not rejecting.
 - d. V.8 every child needs correction, instruction.
4. No discipline = no stake in your identity or future.
- a. Disobey = act of legitimizing.
 - b. Esau sold birthright for meal V.9.

** Not talking about extreme cases of violation/molestation

Honor =	Greek	Hebrew
	Prize	Heavy
	Fix value on	Weighty
	Esteem	Substance

- E. Act as ballast, weight to secure you.
- F. Add substance (depth) and weight to soul.
- G. Add value to you (self-esteem).
 - 1. Measure met will be given back.
 - 2. Only what you value can give you value.
- H. Recognize the role God has given them and realize the impact they have on you.
 - 1. Clearly unrighteous things forgive (abandonment, violation).
 - 2. Bondages cut off.
 - 3. Inconsistency—hold to what is good.
 - 4. Obey—endure abuse (turn in).

5. No opinion or personhood = living according to boundaries/instructions.