

Complete in Christ in Your Marriage

Colossians 3:18-19

September 24, 2017

As Christians, we are complete in Christ. Through Christ, we have received eternal life, and we've received all that we need to live the Christian life. Today, we'll learn how Christians are to apply their completeness in Christ in the marriage. When husbands and wives choose to minister to their spouse in the way Paul prescribes, they are able to enjoy a wholeness in their marriage that would not otherwise be possible.

1. The Wife's Primary Ministry to Her Husband Is Christlike Submission (18). God has designed the home to help us to understand our God and how we are to relate to Him.

Notice that the order in the marriage is not of human origin ("as it is fit in the Lord" v. 18).

1.A. The wife's submission to her husband pictures Christ's submission to God.

1 Corinthians 11:3 "But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman is the man; and the head of Christ is God."

Hebrews 10:7 "I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God." (Quoting Psalm 40:7-8).

John 14:31 "But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do."

John 12:49 "For I have not spoken of myself; but the Father that sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak."

1.B. The wife's submission to her husband does not imply inequality.

Philippians 2:5-6 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:"

"In these places the apostle associates the wife's submission to her husband with Christ's submission to God. As there is nothing derogatory to Christ in his submission so there is nothing derogatory to the woman in her submission. It is no "robbery" of God that Christ is equal to God, and yet the Son is submissive to the Father; so it is no robbery to the husband that the wife is equal to him, and she is his equal though her sphere be different, and yet she is submissive to him." (W. R. Nicholson, *Oneness with Christ*, p 250.)

2. The Husband's Primary Ministry to His Wife Is Christlike Love (19). Since wives are commanded to submit, what do you think should naturally follow in relation to husbands? "Husbands, command your wives." But that is not the case. Instead, husbands are commanded to love their wives.

2.A. The husband's role in the home does not imply superiority. Nicholson says this about this passage: "We cannot but notice that the apostle does not say husbands *command* your wives. And why does he not so say, since it is correlative to the word "submit"? This is very significant. While the duty of submission is enforced on the one side, the prerogative of commanding is not enforced on the other side. He does not deny that prerogative, but neither does he so much as mention it. It is not his purpose to enforce prerogatives, since they need no enforcement. Neither is it his purpose to exalt and magnify the husband over his wife. He recognizes his authority, but does not say one word which might have the effect to exaggerate the husband in his own estimation with reference to his wife. But he does say, "Husbands love your wives." This love includes every attention, honor, service and delight in her society, every deference to her wishes and the reposing of his confidence in her, as well as the enjoyment of his oneness with her in Christ. What more is it possible for the wife to desire? Thus if the husband be fixed in his place of authority, is not the wife exalted to stand by his side? Moreover, it is added, "be not bitter" against your wife. Here the husband is specifically warned against tyranny on the ground of his authority. In all his relations with his wife love must rule. There is no place here for bad tempers, or impatience, or lack of considerateness or any selfishness." (Nicholson, p 251-252)

2.B. The husband's love of his wife pictures Christ's love for the church (cf. Ephesians 5:25-30).

2.B.1. Husbands are to love unconditionally (Ephesians 5:25).

Romans 5:8 "But God commendeth his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us."

Ephesians 2:4-5 “But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)”

Wedding Vows: “For better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness, and in health...”

2.B.2. Husbands are to love selflessly (Ephesians 5:25, 28, 29, 33).

3. The Key to Marriage Is Love and Respect (Ephesians 5:33). God highlighted the areas in which each spouse falls short. The wife understands loving behavior, but she has a hard time showing respect in ways that are meaningful to her husband. The husband understand respect, but he has a hard time showing love in ways that are meaningful to his wife.

3.A. Without Love, She Reacts without Respect; Without Respect, He Reacts without Love...

God created men and women to complement/complete one another, but because of the curse, those differences have the potential to antagonize and even destroy one another.

Because a woman is wired for relationships, love is her deepest value. What she doesn't understand is that the most critical way to show love to her husband is through admiration and respect.

Because the man is wired for work, respect is his deepest value. What he doesn't understand is that the most critical way to show love to his wife is through unconditional love.

Illustration: Responses in Conflict – The wife resorts to mothering, the man resorts to isolation

3.B. His Love Motivates Her Respect; Her Respect Motivates His Love...

Husbands:

1. Closeness: She wants you to be close (Ephesians 5:31).
2. Openness: She wants you to open up to her (Colossians 3:19b – “be not bitter against them”).
3. Understanding: She wants you to listen (1 Peter 3:7 “Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life...”)
4. Peacemaking: She wants you to say “I'm sorry” (Ephesians 5:21 “Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God”).
5. Loyalty: She needs to know you're committed (Ephesians 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;”).
6. Esteem: She wants you to honor and cherish her

Wives:

1. Conquest: Appreciate his desire to work and achieve.
2. Hierarchy: Appreciate his desire to protect and provide.
3. Authority: Appreciate his desire to serve and to lead (1 Timothy 2:12).
4. Insight: Appreciate his desire to analyze and counsel.
5. Relationship: Appreciate his desire for friendship.
6. Sexuality: Appreciate his desire for sexual intimacy (1 Corinthians 7:3).