

Enough | Transform Your Marriage | Discussion Guide - *Colossians 3:18-19*

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A good marriage is one that honors Jesus. Here's how to have one.

The Bible is full of teachings many people view as antiquated or out-of-touch. The message of **Colossians 3:18-19** is no different:

Colossians 3:18-19 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting for those who belong to the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

These days, we're so focused on equality between the sexes. Wives submitting to husbands sounds like something from the Dark Ages! How are Christians to understand a godly relationship between husbands and wives?

Marriage Was Created by God

Marriage is the oldest human institution in the Bible. It was created by God in the Garden of Eden:

Genesis 2:23-24 "At last!" the man exclaimed. "This one is bone from my bone, and flesh from my flesh! She will be called 'woman,' because she was taken from 'man.'" This explains why a man leaves his father and mother and is joined to his wife, and the two are united into one.

Marriage is a good thing! God didn't just institute marriage and leave us to our own devices. He has guidelines and principles for us that will help us do marriage right. "Submission" is one of these guidelines.

Wives Must Respect the Leadership of Their Husbands

This is a rub for a lot of people these days. They read the word "submit" and imagine a once-vibrant young woman who is now like a wilted flower being shouted at by a greasy guy in a wifebeater shirt. But this is not biblical submission, and abuse and browbeating do not represent biblical manhood. The biblical teaching is that of mutual submission:

Ephesians 5:21 And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Husbands Must Sacrificially Love Their Wives

Mutual, biblical submission invests husbands with tremendous responsibility: to sacrificially love their wives just as Jesus sacrificially loved the church.

Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and never treat them harshly.

Ephesians 5:25 For husbands, this means love your wives, just as Christ loved the church. He gave up his life for her...

Men should sacrifice their time, talents, egos, and if necessary, lives, for their wives. Men: you might not ever have to literally die for your wife, but you can sacrifice daily for her. Don't shirk your responsibility as a spiritual leader. Work to provide for her and the family. Especially if she's a stay-at-home wife and mom, do some domestic chores around the house to give her a break. In turn, she follows your lead – and she'll be glad to because you've shown yourself to be a godly man worth following.

Marriage Is Meant to Make Husbands and Wives More Like Jesus

Our culture tells us that marriage is about being happy and fulfilled, and if you're not happy and fulfilled, it's okay to end your marriage or have an affair. But the biblical teaching is that marriage is meant to make us holy, not happy. Ephesians 5 is all about how marriage is a metaphor for the relationship between Jesus and the church. Will a good, healthy marriage make husbands and wives happy? Absolutely! But don't buy into our culture's errors and "me-first" mindset. Marriage, done right, most importantly reflects God's goodness to us and makes us more like Jesus every day.

Article for this topic by Daniel Martin.

Talk About It

- What is your initial reaction to this topic? What jumped out at you?
- Think about some of your basic convictions about marriage. Where did these come from? How much did your family of origin influence your views on marriage?
- Why is it important to understand the authority of the Bible before we look at what the Bible has to say about marriage? How do we decide who to follow when the Bible and culture disagree?
- Read Genesis 2:18-25. Make a list of principles about marriage that you learn from this passage.
- (For men.) Read Colossians 3:18-19 and Ephesians 5:22-33. How would you describe the love that a husband is supposed to have for his wife? Who is the model for this type of love?
- (For women.) Read Colossians 3:18-19. What is the meaning of "submit" in this passage? What are some ways that this can be done in a marriage? How would you answer the objection that this passage makes women into second-class citizens?
- What is the motivation for obeying the commands to husbands and wives in the Bible?
- Write a personal action step based on this conversation.