

Colossians 3:18-4:1

The New Man and Relationships

Good morning, Church.

We woke up to the news yesterday... Bombs dropping in the Middle East.

Iran's leadership has been toppled, but it is still operating its war machine.

A missile barrage hit near Jerusalem today.

Understand that whenever nations clash, real people suffer.

The temptation for us in the US is to be distant and see it as nothing more than a Board game, with pieces moving around on maps on our social media screens.

But families like yours are disrupted, children are afraid, soldiers are endangered.

This all reminds us that we live in a deeply broken world.

War does not begin on battlefields; the Bible tells us in **James 4:1: "Where do wars and fights come from among you?" Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?**

The conflict we see between nations is the same fallen nature that shows up in homes, in workplaces, and even in churches.

And that is why the passage we are studying today matters so much.

In a world where relationships fracture - between countries, between neighbors – God speaks to the most foundational relationships of all: husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants.

Christ doesn't just save souls; He transforms relationships.

Listen, the governments may shake, the nations may rage.

But there is a God that sits above every president, every general, every ruler.

And the same God who rules the nations calls us to reflect His character in our homes.

If you have your Bibles with you, please open up to Colossians Chapter 3, where we will pick up our study here on Sunday Mornings.

We left off at verse 18 last time, and we will work our way through verse 1 of Chapter 4 today.

The message today is titled The New Man and Relationships.

Let's pray... (Peace, Protection of the innocent, wisdom for leaders, restraint for evil, Christ to be magnified, our response as a Church... and for our homes to reflect the peace of God).

So far, the Apostle Paul has written about the believer's life being Alive in Christ.

He mentioned the character traits of the old man, those things that are undesirable of a person who is now Alive in Christ, whose mind is set on things above.

He listed: Fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desires, covetousness, and idolatry.

Then he went deeper, and taught that the reader should rid themselves of anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, lies, and filthy language.

He described these character flaws as the old man; they are supposed to be part of our old nature.

And here in this final section of Chapter 3, he will speak to that new nature, what we are to have in place of the old one.

Remember, we are to put on: Tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, long suffering, and forgiveness, which are bound by love.

Unmerited love is the perfect bond that ties all these godly virtues together.

It is a love that seeks the best for others and thinks of self last.

Now, as we finish this chapter, Paul will describe how these virtues play out practically in our relationships.

This is how being alive in Christ should affect how we interact as a family, and even in the workplace.

Look with me at verse 18.

The Christian Home

(cf. Eph. 5:21-6:9)

3:18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Don't panic, ladies... That word "submission" is a doozy, I know.

Immediate clarification... we are not being taught this morning that women need to submit to men outright...

I am writing a paper right now, and have a book on my desk written by Vishal Mangalwadi, one of India's foremost intellectuals.

He wrote, "The Book That Made Your World – How the Bible Created the Soul of Western Civilization."

In chapter 15 of that book, he discusses why the women's liberation movement began in America, and under Biblical thinking, not under the Muslim religion or even his own nation's religion, Hinduism.

He makes the case that the Bible gives equality with authority, giving order to our families.

It is interesting to read someone from another culture, looking into our Biblical worldview and critiquing it, because he does find points in Christian history where abuses and misinterpretations were noticeably evil in the Church.

He quotes the French Magistrate Alexis de Tocqueville, who traveled to the United States in 1831 and observed, "American Christians believed in a practical, social, and temporary hierarchy of husbands

and wives while affirming their inherent, intrinsic, or metaphysical equality.”¹

Understand, Christianity has done more to lift women up than any other belief system in the world, especially within the framework of America’s freedom.

And here in Colossians, Paul has already stated, we all come to God on equal footing... no one is greater than the other.

Yet, here, in the same context, Paul is asking the wives to be submissive to their husbands... Some think this is Paul contradicting himself.

He says in

Gal 3:26-28 For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

¹ Vishal Mangalwadi, The Book That Made Your World, (Thomas Nelson, Nashville, Tennessee, 2011) 277

So what in the world is happening here?

Well, we are all equal... yet, in our homes, there must be a functional order...

Think of any operation: there is a structure with a boss, managers, and so on.

The Military or Police Force... there must be some command structure.

Even those of you from the gang life, some call the shots... There must be order...

Now, you wives might be thinking, "He better not give me orders..."

Well, we have to understand what Biblical submission really looks like.

It is not a terrible thing... as the feminist might paint it today.

I remember talking to one such feminist... we were actually friends, and we had many discussions...

And I asked her, you and I are out there on the sidewalk, and a man jumps out with a knife to take your purse and my wallet...

And she was a little thing...

I asked her, "Are you going to jump in front of me and protect me?"

She gasped, "No way, how dare you even say that, you would protect me?"

I said, "Well, that is not equality, is it?"

You see, God did design us differently, and in our marriages, when we are offended at God's Way... we really do damage to a wonderful institution...

Your husband was made to carry a different burden than you.

Many marriages do not last when the wife does not accept that reality...

Understand something...

Even Jesus Himself submitted to the Father's will while He ministered here on earth...

Jesus became a servant...

Phil 2:6-7 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, **7** but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant,

The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus for His ministry here on earth...

All three are equally God, but were able to serve the other.

You can go searching through the entire Bible, and you will not find one verse that says the wife is less than or has less value than her husband.

The wife is instructed here to take the lower position... so the relationship can function.

One common reason a woman will not is that she is afraid she will be taken advantage of.

They think their husband will be unreasonable.

But the most important factor here is that the marriage roles are to be done in obedience to the Lord.

You serve that fallen Christian man as unto the Lord.

Imitating Jesus's own submission to the Father.

Jesus did so at a great cost to Himself, even when He had to endure immense difficulties, going to the cross.

He submitted, because it was right, and it was good, and it was the Father's will.

Wives, obedience is not always going to be easy, or it might not make sense, but if your husband is not leading you into sin... Trust his decisions...

Our feelings are so deceptive... they are subject to all kinds of variables...

Now, listen, you are not a doormat or a Stepford wife.

My wife has a huge voice in my life... her voice is one of the biggest in my life... if not the biggest...

You wives have the responsibility to provide godly input on the issues your family is facing.

Jessica is wired so differently from me... She sees things through a completely different lens than I do.

So many times, she will say something that brings absolute clarity to a circumstance or problem we face.

We have incredible discussions over the decisions that are made... I listen very intently to her input... I know it is a gift to me to have her perspective...

But, we have come to impasses... and those times will come in your marriage as well...

This is when the wife must yield and pray for him...

The Bible must be our authority, over culture, over our feelings... and there comes a time... when we trust God's Word above all...

To allow Biblical characteristics to replace worldly traits...

This is not easy for her... she was raised an outlaw... she hates being told what to do...

I tried to get her a trainer, a wonderful Christian trainer from the Church, Jess has a hard time with authority... I found them... and our trainer friend was like, "I don't think this is going to work."

So Jess really needs the Holy Spirit to help in her role with me...

Peter says...

1 Peter 3:1-2 Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, **2** when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear.

Listen, you will not change that man through command and demand...

It is not how we are wired...

But there is a secret that the Bible teaches about us...

Men will be butter in your hands... your husband will go to the moon and back for you... If you believe God's Word over what the world says, what your friends are telling you that you deserve, "Girl, you've got to get yours." "Live for you."

If that man you live with comes home every day to a wife who reminds him of what a failure he is, who throws every mistake he has ever made right back at him.

Your words are: "You are not a leader." "I have led this family." "You don't do enough."

I don't care if he is 250lbs jacked, full of muscle, he is going to be the weakest man on earth...

Because you are the key to his true strength.

If you respect and honor that man, "You work so hard for us." "I feel so safe when you are home."

"Thank you for always providing for me."

There is nothing he will not do, there are no sacrifices he will not make to keep hearing those things...

It is in us... We will go to the front lines for you and die for you.

Every man in here has at one point imagined a bad guy coming here, and what he would do to save you and everyone in here...

That is how God made us... We want to be that for our wives... but when you deflate him every day... that man, the hero that is in him, will die ultimately...

Or sometimes, another lady down the way will start telling him what an amazing man he is... that respect will be received...

You have so much power, ladies... in your submission to him, you allow that home to rise or fall... this is your command in the Word...

Men... look at verse 19...

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

In Ephesians, Paul premised his teaching on marriage with **Eph. 5:21 Submitting to one another in the fear of God.**

Now you men, you are saying, “Hold up, wait a minute, I have to submit?”

That was her thing...

Our flesh, the Old Man hates hearing these things...

We don't like that lower position... because we like ourselves so much...

Paul has already made this point to the Colossians and to us in our study, that the person who is Alive in Christ will lead from a place of humility and lowliness of mind.

And husbands, for us to properly lead in our homes, we need to die to self daily...

I just told a young man this in his pre-marital counseling.

I have no respect for any man who ever tells me, "What about me?"

That is the most childish thing a man can say...

A man becomes a man when he no longer thinks of himself...

A man is not worried about buying himself the new trinkets and toys, the new gadget coming out... "Well, I work, it is my money, I am going to get what I want."

That is how a child talks...

A man makes sure his wife has everything she needs and wants, and his kids have everything they need and want; only then does a man of God think about himself.

I want to play video games... that is how a child talks... throw them out... unless you are playing with your kids...

It's underwear and socks every birthday and Christmas for us.

Because the greatest joy for a man is watching those he loves have everything in life they need and want...

What about me? That is how a kid talks... not a man of God... You are dead man... Man up! Take care of them...

That is how we are fulfilled in life... The most ridiculous and angry husbands are those selfish childlike ones, who think about themselves first.

Usually, they were spoiled by momma, and they think the world owes it to them now.

Husbands we are last, we die to self, we look at Christ's example there on the cross... and that is our role... and you know what you will find the ultimate fulfillment in living it out...

Work hard for that family... give all that you have for that wonderful woman God has given you...

Serve her with that mutual submission... and as Paul says, Love your wife...

In Ephesians...

Eph. 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her,

This is a safeguard for the wife who submits to her husband.

The husband who loves his wife as Jesus has loved his Church, has only good intentions for her.

Agape does not denote affection or romantic love here, but more a caring love that is deliberate.

It is an attitude of mind that concerns itself with the well-being of the one receiving the love.

Paul is challenging us husbands to have a love for the Church like Jesus has.

His love was an act of His will... it was not just a fleeting feeling.

Jesus's love was demonstrated... He was not emotionally driven... but was led into action...

We have a crisis in the Church because the world's definition of love has superseded the biblical definition of love.

Emotions... "I just don't love them anymore." Well, that is a choice... that is the world's fleeting emotive love....

Our Christian love is act of our will... an action... feelings follow it... it requires work...

If you have lost that loving feeling... it is on you...

Jesus set the example of loving even if it is not easy... it was no easy thing for Him to go to that cross.

He agonized in the Garden... yet His love pushed Him ahead in obedience....

Heb. 12:2 looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus went to the cross, while we were still sinners, the Bible says, Christ died for us... Romans 5:8

It was a demonstration of love that drew me to Him, and ultimately led me to give my life to Jesus and to this desire to submit my life to Him in ministry...

I do what I do as a Pastor out of my love for Jesus; it is me submitting to His love for me.

Men, we can misinterpret this idea of leadership as a domineering dictator demanding respect from our wives...

Jesus was the most manly Man, yet as our example, He was meek, humble, and a servant...

If we love our wives as Jesus loves the Church, we will recognize the greatest aspect of love was that He laid Himself down for us.

You are called to be the most others-centered person in your home... serve your wife...

Also, understand that your wife is not called to lead, but the amazing thing about her is that she will if she has to.

Love her enough to take that burden from her... Be an example, be a man of God.

Lead your home in spiritual matters as well... set the tone... it is usually mom dragging the kids into Church... You should be the one making the Church a priority.

This is where, typically, an illustration is dropped, telling us how men are failing...

But listen, men, you are key to the spiritual health of your home...

Be awakened to that reality, please... There is no guilt trip I can give you... The Spirit of God needs to awaken you to your calling.

The last thing I want to mention here is husbands, learn to be creative in reaching their hearts.

My wife, over the last 22 years, is still a mystery to me. I am still learning her and figuring her out...

She is like a mystery novel, a comedy, and sometimes a scary movie all at once...

But men, we need to study our helpmate...

1 Peter 3:7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the

weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Dwell with her according to knowledge.

Investigate... If your wife is like mine, they change almost weekly in their likes and dislikes, so this takes some intentional and thoughtful observation.

We need to figure out ways to know what they are thinking about... Men, we are simple... we are easy to make happy...

Eph. 5:33 Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects *her* husband.

God's Word makes it simple... listen... many of us have broken homes or have been touched by divorce or broken families...

God's Word is telling us how to do it right...

I have been divorced once... I know how to do it all wrong...

I also know what it is like to be married as a Christian and to put these principles into practice.

God knows what He is doing here...

If the home is broken... something got out of alignment with His Word...

You young people will be married one day... Don't forget these principles... The world is going to hammer you with its many silly philosophies; some will sound okay, some will feel amazing, but only God's principles applied will give you lasting relationships and blessed families.

Look now as we get into the roles of child and parent within the home...

Verse 20...

20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

We see now that the instruction for the children is to respect and obey their parents in the Lord.

That is key.

I look at the cartoons and movies, the shows that are on, and everything my kids watch, and everything depicts the parents as buffoons and the kids as in charge.

Our society is youth-driven, marketed to the youth, empowering the youth, and we see this dishonor of the aged and those who have gone before...

And for Christian children, you have an opportunity to stand out here...

To be different... it is to be done as unto the Lord... and you do it in His strength...

It is not easy... we all know that... we were all kids once....

Let's look at that word obey.... If you are my kid, it means this: "Do what I say."

Today... kids are like little lawyers...

Do your chores. "How about tomorrow, because today, I just want to drink this chocolate milk, Dad."

Now, you kids may not fully understand why your parents are doing what they are doing, but know that wisdom comes with age.

Obey them, as you would obey God... honor your parents.

Do not disrespect and disgrace them by the choices you make.

You will need God's power to do this... because again, it goes against everything society is telling you.

But it comes with God's blessing... and that should be all that matters... more than acceptance, being cool, or you cooking, or you having riz...

You want God's smile...

Your parents are trying; they have a lot of guilt most of the time, and we feel like we are getting it wrong.

I do, and sometimes we get little glimpses of wins, and I think it is going to be okay.

Sofia and Freedom

Now, don't worry, the Bible has one for your parents too...

Look at verse 21...

21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

This is to us fathers... and I know now every home has a father...

To the parent who is leading the home...

Do not provoke or incite anger in your children.

I am a dad of six, and I know how hard it is to raise kids...

I feel like a failure most days... But I am learning that anger is not a good motivator for my kids...

I want to be an encourager, to motivate them through life by inspiration more so than discipline.

Discipline is necessary... Listen, kids who never learn the word “no” are the ones who get into college, and when a girl tells them “no,” they don’t care; they have never been taught boundaries.

We have to teach our kids... discipline is necessary... or you will be visiting your kids behind glass once a week.

We are to discipline the wrong action, not the spirit of the child.

And parents, I know a lot of our discipline comes from anger and frustration... that is not good...

We need to communicate what we are doing...

We try to have our kids sit and think about their actions, and depending on the severity of the malfeasance, discipline will be meted out when our anger has cooled.

And it is different for each of the kids... Our first child, Sofia, I only needed to raise my voice, and she would recover in a day...

But for my boy Freedom, there were other methods applied to the seat of understanding that only worked for him.

He is older now, and he is only allowed to play video games on weekends if he has a good week, and it has been almost a month since that video game was on...

You find what works for each of them...

But like our wives, men, we have to learn our kids that what worked for one, will not work for another...

Also, we live in a society that rejects God's principles and fears Biblical concepts.

Loving discipline is important... but we major on the loving part of it...

It is all done with clear communication... It is not a punishment because we are angry; we are loving them. It is other-centered correction... and it will help the child function better in this world.

We are teaching them about life... through these lessons... God uses discipline in His instruction with us...

But we must learn our kids... at each age, prayerfully consider what is appropriate and what new things we need to be teaching our kids...

I know, now that Free is ten, the Lord has really placed upon my heart that I have to teach him to be a man.

I realized he was in double digits. I remember we had an incident, and Mom wanted to handle it. I knew it was my time...

I took him to his room and said, "You are in Dad's school now."

I let him know he was not a little boy anymore; the discipline was going to be more his age... and the lessons were going to be tougher...

But I explained to him why... God had entrusted me with making him into a man...

I noticed that when I told him that, he made eye contact with me, and something in him changed. The boy I had known for 9 years had left, and we had an

agreement in that moment, because inside him was this longing to know what a man was...

I explained to him about duty and sacrifice, protecting the girls and his younger brothers when I was not around, and I could see in his eyes that he understood a new level of responsibility.

Now, he is still ten, and still childish... the schooling has just begun...

The next day, he said all his friends were getting a new gaming system and wondered if he could get one...

I said, "Freedom, you remember our talk? I am making a man out of you; you are going to work for those things from now on. If you want something special like that, you have to earn it. I am not buying you stuff. I don't want a spoiled brat for a son."

He thought about it, "What do I have to do, Dad?"

I saw how expensive those things were, and I laid out some man work for him: trimming trees, cleaning up

the backyard, loading trash barrels, weeding. It was about 3 weeks' worth of work before and after school... I was hoping he wouldn't do it or quit because it was too hard... and I wouldn't have to get the thing for him.

But he went at it... Some of the tree branches were too thick for him to cut... so, I said, "Bud, it is an important time in your life, I am going to teach you how to use a power tool, because when a man encounters a job that is too hard, we can't give up, we have to figure out a way."

Picture #1 – Freedom

And it took that 10-year-old 3 weeks, crying, wanting to quit some days, but finally finishing...

And he got to experience that feeling of working himself for something, earning something, and the lesson was huge...

But we have to reach their spirit... teach these tough life lessons... because we only have a short window with them...

Proverbs 22:6 Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it.

I believe the key is to communicate our intention in the lessons we are teaching...

In the discipline, we have to give them the reasons why...

Screaming and yelling will break down their character...

And that is hard, because sometimes it feels like they don't hear me, until I am the Incredible Hulk...

But the New Man, the New Woman, we will not relate to one another in anger in the home...

Now Paul leaves the relationships in the home, and moves outside the home...

Look now at verses 22-25...

22 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. **23** And

whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. **25** But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

Here, Paul addresses something very common during his time.

Those of you who went to Israel with us know that, as we learned about the Roman Empire, up to 35% percent of the population were slaves.

Most trades, doctors, secretaries, cooks, estate managers, teachers, even philosophers... think of all the agricultural and construction of the Roman Empire, the Mining and Quarrying, all of this was slaves...

Public works... so all the jobs we would have today would have been slave positions...

And as the Gospel spread, household slaves, field slaves, all kinds were coming to the Lord, and many

were documented to be in the same Churches as their masters.

This was an interesting mix and way of life... and now in Christ they were equal in Christ...

There is some confusion for them to overcome, obviously.

Paul teaches them to be other-centered.

Now, the Bible never okays slavery, but it did teach parameters for the society that it was writing within.

Slavery, of course, like the women's liberation movement, has its roots in Christian theology...

Wherever the Bible goes, people find freedom...

I don't want to get into that debate... however...

I want to draw another principle before we close this morning...

We can see this as an employee-employer relationship.

The context of submitting to one another in the Lord, and being other-centered.

These relationships will be best fulfilled as we look to be others-centered.

A Christian employee who is lazy is a terrible witness, and this should never happen.

It is embarrassing when an employer talks of a Christian employee this way.

We should be doing all things in life as unto the Lord.

You might not be the most skilled, but you can be the hardest worker.

When your boss is not there, and no one is watching, work unto the Lord.

The Lord will bless you.

Don't use your boss's time to evangelize; do that on your lunch and breaks, or invite co-workers to your home.

Your witness is better lived out in your work ethic and integrity.

If you are treated unfairly, don't complain or moan to the other employees; always talk about how blessed you are to have the job... Be a light...

Because your boss is accountable as well.

Let's finish with verse 1 of chapter 4...

Christian Graces; Final Greetings

4:1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

If you are a Christian employer, care for those entrusted to you.

Do not look for ways to take advantage.

The Lord has ways of blessing you for doing right by them that your calculator cannot even figure out.

Be fair, in wages and in treatment.

You are accountable to God and have His Spirit dwelling in you.

Bring Him Glory in your treatment of those entrusted to your care...

So, let's tie it all together now.

Paul tells the reader to put off the Old Nature...

We have put on this New Nature...

His Spirit is in us, and we are to put on His Spirit, godliness, and His character traits daily.

This will impact our relationships here in this life...

Everything about us will be changed.

We will be the best husbands God designed us to be, better wives, better parents, better children, better workers, and better stewards.

Our entire life will be different, consumed by this new nature.

This is not a teaching to fill you with guilt but to draw us closer to God, to show us our need for Him and His power.

If you are lacking, come up and get prayer; ask Him to help you put on the New Man and invade every part of your life today.

We need His Spirit desperately... all of us...

If you are a single parent, especially this morning... You have an incredible burden to carry... make sure you get prayer...

Know that Pastor Jake is here to support you... use him and his wife, Lauren, as a resource...

We are all here to come alongside you... Come up and get prayer... for wisdom and strength...

If you don't have Christ... all these things are possible only with Him...

Come to Him today... **Let's pray...**