

Instructions To Wives And Husbands

COL 3:18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

1. "Wives, be subject to your husbands" - "hupotasso" [hoo pah **tahs** soh] - "subject, submissive."

a. Paul has stressed this in other scriptures. (1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:22-24).

1CO 11:3 But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ.

EPH 5:22 Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

EPH 5:23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

EPH 5:24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.

b. A wife being in subjection to her husband did not denote inferiority.

c. Jesus submitted to God His Father, but He was not inferior to Him. (Phil. 2:5-8).

PHI 2:5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

PHI 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

PHI 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

PHI 2:8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

1) Like the Father Jesus is Deity. (Col. 1:15; 2:9; Jn. 14:9; 10:30; Matt. 1:23).

2) He is co-eternal with the Father. (Isa. 9:6,7; Mic. 5:2; Jn. 1:1-3; 1 Jn. 1:2).

d. The husband and wife had equal authority or rights in the marital relationship. (1 Cor. 7:3, 4).

1CO 7:3 Let the husband fulfill his duty to his wife, and likewise also the wife to her husband.

1CO 7:4 The wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does; and likewise also the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does.

e. The husband is to honor his wife "as with a weaker vessel" [not an inferior vessel]. (1 Pet. 3:7).

1PE 3:7 You husbands likewise, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with a weaker vessel, since she is a woman; and grant her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

2. "as is fitting in the Lord" - "aneko" [ah **nay** koh] - "proper, fit." It denotes an obligation - not a suggestion or option.

a. The Christian wife was to be subject to her husband.

b. This was true if the husband was a Christian or a non-Christian.

c. This was true even if her husband was not perfect.

d. The wife, who had an unbelieving husband, was not to leave him because he was an unbeliever. (1 Cor. 7:13).

1CO 7:13 And a woman who has an unbelieving husband, and he consents to live with her, let her not send her husband away.

e. The wife who had an unbelieving husband might lead him to Christ by her godly life. (1 Pet. 3:1,2).

1PE 3:1 In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives,

1PE 3:2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior.

3. Paul also stressed wives were to respect their husbands and to love them. (Eph. 5:33; Tit. 2:4,5).

EPH 5:33 Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband. "Respect" is from "phobeo" [fah beh oh] meaning "fear, respect, reverence," but not "dread" or a state of being "terrified."

TIT 2:4 that they may encourage the young women to **love their husbands**, to love their children,

TIT 2:5 to be sensible, pure, workers at home, kind, being subject to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be dishonored.

a. There is no evidence this was merely cultural instructions and could be abandoned at a different time or place or under different circumstances.

b. This was God's plan from the beginning. (Gen. 3:16).

GEN 3:16 To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you shall bring forth children; Yet your desire shall be for your husband, And he shall rule over you."

c. Wives, in every age, are required to obey their husbands if they wish to please God.

COL 3:19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them.

1. "Husbands, love your wives" - Loving one's wife is a mandate from God.

a. This is not some watered-down love or mere sexual attraction.

b. Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and as their own bodies. (Eph. 5:25, 28, 29).

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

EPH 5:28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself;

EPH 5:29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church,

c. A husband who loves his wife to this extent will be considerate of her needs and will never be abusive to her.

d. In 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 Paul describes the love Christians are to have for Christians and others including their marriage partner.

1CO 13:4 Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous; love does not brag and is not arrogant,

1CO 13:5 does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, does not take into account a wrong suffered,

1CO 13:6 does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;

1CO 13:7 bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

2. “and do not be embittered against them” - “pikraino” [pik ri noh] - “make bitter, embitter.” NIV “do not be harsh with them” - McCord “do not be bitter with them”

a. There are a variety of things that might cause a man to be bitter or harsh towards his wife.

1) Certainly regarding her as inferior or mere property would lead to this sinful conduct.

2) Certainly following the norm for husbands in a pagan community and nation would cause a man to shamefully treat his wife. As a general rule wives were shamefully treated in the first century and in other centuries before and after that.

3) Certainly demanding perfection according to his “infallible” standards would cause him to be embittered against his wife who could never do everything or anything right.

b. The Christian husband certainly would not fall into that trap of treating his wife harshly if he followed the Lord’s instructions.

c. Christian husbands should be the best husbands in the world, and they will be if they follow God’s instructions.

d. God created woman to be the “helper” of man - not his property or slave. (Gen. 2:18).

GEN 2:18 Then the Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."

3. One is not, however, to love his husband or wife more than Christ. (Lk. 14:26).

LUK 14:26 "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple.

a. The Christian husband or wife must put the Lord first as all believers. (Matt. 6:33).

b. One should not let his/her unbelieving mate compromise his/her character.

c. One should not let his mate hinder service to the Lord.

4. Under Roman law the wife had few, if any, rights, but this was not to be true in a Christian home.

a. The husband and wife were to work and share together under submissive to God.

b. The Christian husband does not domineer and mistreat his wife.

Instructions To Children And Fathers

COL 3:20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing [acceptable, delightful] to the Lord. The best Greek manuscripts have “in [the] Lord.”

1. “Children, be obedient to your parents in all things” - Paul is addressing Christian children, but all children are to obey their parents. (Rom. 1:28-30).

- a. Again Paul emphasized this fact in the letter to Ephesus. (Eph. 6:1,2).

EPH 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

EPH 6:2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise).

- b. Disobedience to parents is abominable sin to God. (Rom. 1:28-30).

ROM 1:28 And just as they did not see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper,

ROM 1:29 being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil; full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice; they are gossips,

ROM 1:30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents,

- 1) The Old Testament commanded disobedient accountable children to be put to death. (Exod. 21:15, 17; Deut. 21:18-21).

EXO 21:15 "And he who strikes his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

EXO 21:17 "And he who curses his father or his mother shall surely be put to death.

DEU 21:18 "If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them,

DEU 21:19 then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his home town.

DEU 21:20 "And they shall say to the elders of his city, 'This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.'

DEU 21:21 "Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel shall hear of it and fear.

- 2) The New Testament does not teach disobedient children to be put to death, but teaches such makes one displeasing to God.

2. "for this is well-pleasing to the Lord" - Children who obey their parents are well-pleasing to God.

- a. This is not the only requirement to please God, but no one can please God who rebels against parents.
- b. The exception to this would be if the parents required the children to lie, cheat, steal and do other sinful things. (Acts 5:28, 29).

ACT 5:28 saying, "We gave you strict orders not to continue teaching in this name, and behold, you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us."

ACT 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered and said, "We must obey God rather than men.

- c. Wives, children, slaves, all must not disobey God to please or submit to others.

3. The word "parents" is significant in this verse.

- a. It clearly reveals that wives have authority over children as well as husbands.
- b. Children are taught to honor and obey both parents. (Matt. 15:4; Mk. 10:19; Eph. 6:2).

MAT 15:4 "For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him be put to death.'

MAR 10:19 "You know the commandments, 'Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.'"

EPH 6:2 Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise),

- c. The Old Testament recognized the significant and vital role of the mother in raising children. (Prov. 6:20; 15:20; 20:20; 29:15).

PRO 6:20 My son, observe the commandment of your father, And do not forsake the teaching of your mother;

PRO 15:20 A wise son makes a father glad, But a foolish man despises his mother.

PRO 20:20 He who curses his father or his mother, His lamp will go out in time of darkness.

PRO 29:15 The rod and reproof give wisdom, But a child who gets his own way brings shame to his mother.

COL 3:21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.

1. "Fathers, do not exasperate your children" - The Greek word "erethizo" [eh reh **thee** zoh] means to "provoke, irritate, exasperate."

- a. Fathers must not provoke their children to wrath. (Eph. 6:4).

EPH 6:4 And, fathers, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

- b. Being too harsh, too demanding, too critical, always threatening can "provoke, irritate, exasperate" a child.
- c. This kind of treatment would usually lead to rebellion against God, parents and all authority.

2. "that they may not lose heart" - "athumeo" [ah thoo **meh** oh] means "be dismayed, disheartened, broken in spirit."

- a. Parents who are always critical discourage their children may cause them to "lose heart."
- b. Children need love, training and correction, but not constant criticism.
- c. Praise is greatly needed in raising children.
- d. All children need praise although some may be harder to praise than others.
- e. Without regular praise and encouragement a child will not likely grow up to be a delight to his parents and God.

Instructions To Slaves

COL 3:22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

1. "Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth" - "Slaves" come from "doulos" [**do**o lahs] denoting a literal slave - not merely "a servant."

- a. Some slaves had Christian masters. (Eph. 6:9; 1 Tim. 6:2).

EPH 6:9 And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

1TI 6:2 And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.

- b. Most slaves had unbelieving masters who would be much harsher than a Christian master.
 - c. Most heathen masters regarded their slaves as property and most often treated them as animals.
 - d. In Paul's time there were millions of slaves, and these slaves made up a large part of the population of the Roman empire.
2. "not with external [eye] service, as those who merely please men" - "external service" is from "ophthalmodouleia" [ahf thahl mah doo **lay** ah] meaning service performed under the master's eye or a master's overseer. See also Eph. 6:6.
- a. Their obedience was not just to please men, but it was to please God.
 - b. The realization they were really working for the Lord should motivate them to greater service.
 - c. It should lighten the hard burden of slavery.
3. "but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord" - "with a sincere heart"
- a. The Greek "aplotes" [ah **plah** tays] means "simplicity, sincerely, purity of heart."
 - b. "sincerity of heart" means their service was to be genuine, undivided, whole-hearted.
 - c. This was to be done out of "fear" [reverence] for God.
 - d. Most masters would detect and reward that kind of genuine, whole-hearted service.
 - e. This kind of conduct most likely led pagan masters to permit slaves to be Christians.

Note:

1. The one who found himself a slave should not "worry about it" because being a slave did not effect his/her salvation.

1CO 7:21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that.

2. The slave was encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to legally gain his freedom. (1 Cor. 7:21).
3. The slave was, however, a freedman of the Lord. and the free man was a slave of Christ. (1 Cor. 7:22).

1CO 7:22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.

COL 3:23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men;

1. "Whatever you do, do your work heartily" - In context this was instructions to slaves, but is applicable to every

Christian.

- a. Lit. - "Whatever you do, work you from [the] Lord."
 - b. They should give their masters whole-hearted service, that is, they were to be diligent in their service.
 - c. They were not to be lazy and disgruntled, but they were to work as "for the Lord" Himself
2. "as for the Lord rather than for men" - It should be kept in mind that their labor was "for the Lord."

COL 3:24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

1. "knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance"
 - a. The Lord was fully aware of their service and would make sure they would "receive the reward of the inheritance." I
 - b. One might be a slave here, but in the hereafter would have the blessings of heaven.
 - c. Neither persecution or slavery would keep a faithful child of God out of heaven. (Matt. 5:10-12; Col. 3:24).
2. "It is the Lord Christ whom you serve" - Once again he emphasizes that faithful service to their masters was really service to the Lord.

COL 3:25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

1. "For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done" - Those who disobeyed their masters would be punished by God. God would not exempt them from suffering "the consequences" of wrongdoing because they were believers.
2. "and that without partiality" - God is not a partial God. (Rom. 2:11;10:12,13).

ROM 2:11 For there is no partiality with God.

ROM 10:12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him;

ROM 10:13 for "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

- a. He saves all those who obey Him. (Acts 10:34,35).

ACT 10:34 And opening his mouth, Peter said: "I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, ACT 10:35 but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right, is welcome to Him.

- b. He blesses all His children who do right, and He will condemn all His children who do wrong and refuse to repent.

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