

# THE ULTIMATE WHY

Living Our Lives  
For God's Glory

COLOSSIANS 3:17



## THE WHY OF FAMILY (4 ROLES)

Colossians 3:18-21

### WIFE (COLOSSIANS 3:18)

- Paul is speaking here only about the marriage relationship (wives and husbands), not about the general relationship between men and women. Wives are not told to be in submission to every man they encounter but rather to their own “husbands in the family unit.” [Swindoll]
- A wife is never to be merely compliant but is to use her resources to empower - but is to use her resources to practice *Loving Collaboration* (Prov. 27:17) with *Respect* (Eph. 5:33) [Kathy Keller]
- A wife is not called to give her husband unconditional obedience. (Acts 5:29) [Kathy Keller]

### HUSBAND (COLOSSIANS 3:19)

- The husband's authority (like the Son's [Jesus] over us) is never used to please himself but only to serve the interests of his wife. Assuming the role of headship is only done for purposes of ministering to your wife and family. (Eph. 5:21ff; I Cor. 11:3)
- Husbands are called to exceed the world's expectations in two ways. [Swindoll]

1. *Husbands are to sacrificially love their wives* (3:19). Paul is not referring to the passion of romantic love or even to the warm affection of a two-way relationship in this verse. He uses the term *agapē*—the kind of love that seeks the highest good of the other, even at the price of one's own comfort, safety, and benefit - powered but he hey Spirit. This is unconditional, self-sacrificial love, the quality of love that God shows His undeserving children. This is so counter-culture to the Greeks view of the husband-wife relationship.

2. *Husbands are instructed not to be “harsh” with their wives* (3:19). How natural it would be for husbands to become “resentful of their wives if they poured all their time, energy, and emotions into such selfless love, only to discover that there's no equal return on the investment! But this is exactly what husbands are called to do. Whether a man's wife submits to, honors, or cherishes him, the husband's responsibility is to cherish and honor his wife regardless, with nothing less than true *agapē*. [Counterculture]

### CHILDREN (COLOSSIANS 3:20)

In light of what Paul has just said, children should already have a model to follow in their godly mother who shows deference and submission to the leadership of her husband. In fact, this may be one of the reasons God has ordered the husband-wife relationship this way—to provide an everyday example of what respect for authority is supposed to look like. [Swindoll]

### FATHERS (COLOSSIANS 3:21)

No dad is called to be a harsh, unloving, iron-fisted dictator. Nor is he to relinquish his authority and become a passive, timid, permissive parent who fails to provide leadership or exercise discipline when necessary. Fathers (and mothers) are to set standards, provide guidance, and discipline their children with patience, kindness, and love. [Swindoll]

■ **COLOSSIANS 3:18-21:** Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. <sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

■ **EPHESIANS 5:21-33** <sup>21</sup> . . . submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

■ <sup>22</sup> *Wives, submit to your own husbands*, as to the Lord. <sup>23</sup> For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. <sup>24</sup> Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. <sup>25</sup> *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, <sup>26</sup> that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, <sup>27</sup> so that he might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish.* <sup>28</sup> In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. <sup>29</sup> For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, <sup>30</sup> because we are members of his body. <sup>31</sup> “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” <sup>32</sup> This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. <sup>33</sup> However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

■ **I CORINTHIANS 11:3** I want you to understand that the head [kephalē] of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.

■ **PHILIPPIANS 2:5-8** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

## Discussion Questions

1. Read Colossians 3:18-21. “What are the core principles behind these commands? How have you seen these principles at work in your family and community” [CSB]
2. The call to put on *agape* love for a Father was so counter-cultural in this time in history. [it is the antidote to harshness rooted in bitterness]. Take some time to read more about how to “put on [agape] love” in 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Why is love the most important characteristic we can demonstrate as followers of Jesus?
3. What made you feel convicted from these verses? Why? What's a step you can take this week to obey Paul's instruction? [CSB]
4. Pray for God to strengthen your marriage, or the people who are married that do life with you, and that God would bless and use our relationships for His glory.

## THEY ULTIMATE WHY?

TAKING A DEEPER LOOK AT WHO WE ARE,  
WHAT WE DO. AND WHY WE DO WHAT WE DO