
Brothers, Lead Your Families

Colossians 3

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Where are the future leaders of the church? Where are they being formed, trained and gaining in skill?

In our Christian Schools?

In our Bible colleges and seminaries?

In our churches?

Maybe. But only to the extent that they are leading their homes.

Our text this morning is about Christians in the church. It says what it says. It is clear and challenging. It challenges us across the board. But I am going to speak to our men and to our sons today.

Brothers, you must lead your family. You must lead it in all that God has said of who you are and what you are to do. Yours is a Christian home, one whose parents are indwelt by the Spirit of God. Yours is a Christ-like home, one that reflects the relationship between Christ and the church. Yours is a connected home, one whose whole existence is within the community of Christ, the church.

So, brothers, for the glory of God and by the grace of God, lead your home:

In the Focus of your Family

(v.1-4)

What is the primary focus of the people in your home? What do they think about, talk about, spend time and money on? Do you lead in making these four verses the focus of your home? Is Christ the life of your family?

If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. ² Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. ³ For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

We must hold fast to our identity in Christ, the provisions of the cross, and live by faith and thus receive the grace to walk with Christ. Two imperatives work out how to walk with Christ by faith. Both of these are acts of believing what the Bible says, even when we cannot sense or experience these realities in our bodies.

In What You Pursue

(v.1)

Living as a Christian means that we must pursue God's heavenly agenda. Do you lead your family in seeking heavenly things?

In What You Ponder

(v.2-3)

Living as a Christian means that we focus our thoughts on Christ. Where is your mental focus? What do you think about when you do not have to think about something particular?

In How You Persevere**(v.4)**

Living as a Christian means that our hope is focused on the future realities which define us presently. Christ is preeminent in your life when you are focused on heavenly things.

What does this mean for you as one who is responsible to lead your family?

What priorities have you established for your family?

What would you give up in order for your family to serve Christ?

In the Purity of your Family**(v.5-9)**

⁵ Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ On account of these the wrath of God is coming. ⁷ In these you too once walked, when you were living in them. ⁸ But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Paul's highlights Christ as our all. The result is that we are to put to death and to put off sin. The emphasis here is on two key verbs: *put to death* and *put off*. One deals with its *power* and the other with its *presence*.

In Dealing with Sensual Sins**(v.5-7)**

Notice how, in the midst of these sins which we all recognize as carnality, greed is thrown in just to level the field.

Immorality

Here are sexual sins – any sexual activity outside of marriage. Are you careful in your relationships that there is no taint or blame? Are you pure in your thoughts and actions? Do you set the tone for how sex is treated in your home? Are you leading your sons and daughters to both be pure and respect sexual intimacy?

Impurity

Here are excesses in life that lead to a focus on sensual and physical pleasures. The warning here is highlighting the stain, corruption, decay that comes through this way of living.

Do you lead your family in guarding against personal indulgences and excesses? Are you an example of self-discipline. Do you help your wife and your children to know how to enjoy the good God gives without being corrupted by idols, sins and indulgences?

Lust

This is being mastered by desires particularly those that lead to immorality.

Brothers, do you lead your family in how you deal with sensual images you see? Are you involved in porn? Is your wife reading the “women’s porn” of magazines and novels? Do you talk with and hold your sons and daughters

accountable for the purity of their IM's, cell phones, movies, music, video games, and so on?

Evil desires

Here are desires for forbidden things. This is a form of coveting. It is referring to cravings and appetites which can only be satisfied through sin.

Brothers, do you lead your family in what you as a family desire? Would you be embarrassed if your wife or your children or your pastor knew what you really thought about? Wanted? Talked about with your buddies?

Greed

We are warned here about a form of idolatry which worships materialism. It is expressed in wanting to live and have what others do. Covetousness.

Brothers, do you lead your home in greed? Do you set the example in careful management of your money? Are you involved in your finances? Do you help your wife to be responsible with the family money? Are YOU responsible with the family money? Do you lead in the finances, the budgeting, the setting of your giving?

Did you notice something in that list? Yes, brothers, you must lead your home in its purity. Yet, many Christian men have struggled here and are in desperate need of repentance and the transformation the gospel brings.

Why should you take great care for leading in dealing with these sensual sins?

Because of the future, there is coming the wrath of God.

Because of the past, this is the way you lived as an unbeliever.

In Dealing with Social Sins

(v.8-9)

What kinds of relationship sins should you take care for in leading your family? Here is an illustrative list.

Anger

Is this your habitual response to opposition? When your wife or your children not want to do what you want (even when you are right!) do you get angry? Have you learned to respond to opposition with firm yet gentle leadership and admonition?

Rage

Do you have sudden uncontrolled outburst of sustained anger? This may not necessarily be against your family but gets expressed within your family. Do you lead in dealing with anger and rage in your spouse? In your sons and daughters? What example are you setting when your team loses? Your promotion is denied? Your car is hit? A child damages a prized possession?

Malice

Brothers, are you leading your home without an attitude of ill will towards others, especially your wife? Is there a slow, low, burn against your spouse? Are you leading well in responding to your spouse or your sons and daugh-

ters who are expressing malice toward you or others? Do you correct and admonish the members of your family?

Slander

Do you lead your family in not saying something bad about someone (true or not) which you have not dealt with one on one? Do you deal with talk that is designed to tear down or destroy someone else's reputation? Are you careful in how you speak about others? Do you deal with your sons and daughters who slander one another or their friends or their enemies?

Filthy talk

Here is low, coarse, suggestive or obscene talk and humor. It is subtly or overtly crude. It involves "Christian profanity" where we have substitute words for worldly profanity.

Do you lead your family in avoiding filthy talk? Do you listen to or tell suggestive jokes or stories. What do you laugh at?

Lying

Here is any misrepresentation of truth even if the words are accurate. Consider Acts 5 in this regard. Brothers, do you require honesty in your home? Do you tell subtle lies to manipulate your wife? Do you exaggerate in telling stories? Would the people who saw what you are describing be surprised?

In Living by Gospel Truths

(v. 9-11)

...seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices ¹⁰ and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. ¹¹ Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Your leadership is not based on *feelings*; it is not even an expression of feeling. It is deeply rooted in *facts*. It is rooted in the work of the cross applied to us. It is what God has done and what we are to do in the light of it. "We were formed in God's image, deformed by sin and now are transformed into Christ's image." (W.Wiersbe)

The focus here is on one key verb: *put on*. It has the imagery of clothing ourselves. Do you lead spiritually clothing yourself for the sake of your family?

The Past - What God has done

(v.10a)

There has been a decisive putting off of the old person you used to be. This has to do with your character, your identity, the sum of your beliefs and wants. You also have decisively put off the old practices you used to do. This has to do with your conduct, your behavior, the sum of your actions and emotions. Because of our being united to Jesus spiritually, we have been united to or placed into His death and resurrection. You have passed through from the old life and are now living the new life. This is what has happened to you and what you have decisively believed in and affirmed. Right?

Now, you are to lead in putting on new self. This is a *completed action* of putting on, once for all, the self which new in time (*noes*). Having become a new person in Christ, do you put on this new person?

The Process - What God is doing**(v.10b)**

You are to lead in being renewed. This is the *ongoing action* of becoming new in quality (*kianos*). You are to take the lead in rebuilding the way you think. You are working to renew you mind by the Word of God depending on the Spirit and grace of God. So, there is an “already and not yet” about your growth as a Christian. In the process, you are to show and take the lead. You work hard at whatever is necessary to rebuild how you think from God’s Word.

Brothers, you also take the lead in encouraging and equipping and enabling your wife in these matters as well. You allow her time and you encourage every effort to read, study, pray, listen and change via the Scriptures. You relish it and rejoice in it. But you don’t drive it or dictate. You can only call for it – but you cannot cause it.

The Perspective - What God demands**(v.11)**

The sentence in verse 11 is aimed primarily to warn against artificial distinctions in the church. “Here” is referring to the body of Christ and to the gathered church. So, do you take the lead in being sure that you do not encourage or enable any of these false grounds for division? Do you promote any of the following in your home or in the church?

National	Nationalistic superiority is not to be a part of our churches. Even in our personal lives, our first loyalty is to the Kingdom of God, not the kingdoms of this world.
Racial	Ethnic diversity is to be encouraged and ethnic bigotry is to be denounced and opposed. What is your attitude toward blacks, Hispanics, Orientals?
Status	Rich, poor, white collar, blue collar, across the tracks (I-75), upper or lower class we are all brothers and sisters, equal before the Lord.

This is not *your* church, this is *Christ’s* church. He is to be the sum, substance and sovereign of His church. You must lead your family in repenting of your own bigotries and cleaning house in your own families, *because God says so*.

In the Relationships in your Family (v.12-15)

¹² Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, ¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. ¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. ¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

How are our relationships with Christians? How does it work out in living?

The Motivation for our Relationships (v.12a)

As a person who has been chosen, made holy and loved of God, you are to respond this way. The affirmation of who you are motivates and enables you to do what you should. Being precedes doing.

You are to lead in the cultivation of your companionship with your wife and the relationships with your family because of who you are. Because of God's initiating the relationship with you, you are to take the lead in building God pleasing relationships with and among your family.

The Maintenance of our Relationships (v.12b-13)

¹³ bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.

How you are to maintain your relationships is expressed in three verbs.

You must Clothe yourself

Are you leading in developing these character qualities in your home? You must wrap yourself in compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

These are particular challenges for us:

We can hide an uninterested, disconnected, unengaged, uninvolved, God displeasing lack of leadership under the cloak of these words. We say we are being kind and gentle and humble when in fact we are just unconcerned and disobedient.

We rule our homes in way that is inconsiderate, unkind, prideful, harsh and impatient. We think that our word is God's Word and our agenda, His.

But God calls us to a leadership of our families and in all our relationships that rises from a loving heart. It manages the home with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Without these you will not be the kind of leader God calls you to be.

You must Bear with one another

This means sometimes as a leader you have to learn to hold up or hold back. Leaders must learn when to be quiet! Remember your own many failings when you are tempted to impatient, harsh and irascible over what irritates you about others in your family.

You must Forgive one another

Grievances: Do not hold them against one another.

Sin: Forgive as the Lord forgave us. Forgive because God will deal with sin and folly. The punishment for sin has all been laid on Christ or will be dealt with at the judgment seat.

Do you set the example of being quick to ask forgiveness? When was the last time you asked forgiveness of your wife? Your sons or daughters?

But more importantly, do you lead the way in granting forgiveness? Do you hold grudges? Do you bring up things from the past? Do you teach, model, require and encourage forgiveness in your home.

The Main thing for our Relationships (v.14)

¹⁴ And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.

The giving of ourselves in all these areas affecting our relationships is what binds each area together.

The Measure of our Relationships (v.15)

¹⁵ And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.

Christ's peace must rule our hearts. Is this what your inner person is like? Is it in constant turmoil? Is this what rules your home? Is your home in constant conflict and turmoil? Are you the lead agitator or the lead peacemaker?

You must respond to these three issues before your leadership in your family will mature. Our fellowship must be marked by the fruit of grace, gratitude.

In the Spirituality of your Family (v.16-17)

Brothers, you must lead in developing the spirituality of your family.

¹⁶ Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

¹⁷ And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

The Word of Christ (v.16)

As the leader of your home the Scriptures must be inward and will fill your minds and beings. Then they will move outward and fill your mouths in teaching, counseling and singing.

The Name of Christ (v.17)

Jesus' name, His fame and reputation will be your identity and your authority. You will live out His character and mediate His kingdom.

In the Roles in your Family**(v.18-21)**

Christ is your pattern for your family. The church is the first location of your home. This is why I have preached this message this way. The core of the church is its homes. Rarely is a church more godly in its community than its members are in their homes.

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

Wives**(v.18)**

Wives, you are to submit to your husbands. You are to do so as is fitting in the Lord. God holds him accountable for the decisions he makes. Hopefully, he is wise and open to counsel. When he is not, then you must entrust yourself and your family to God. Unless he is demanding that you sin, follow his leadership and do what he asks.

Husbands**(v.19)**

Brothers, even when a wife is unsubmitive, not a good companion, not all that she should be, you must not be harsh with her. You must respond to her with God's kind of love. You cannot make her into what she ought to be – that is God's job. Lovingly lead her through all that we have already said.

Children**(v.20)**

Children you are to obey your parents. Brothers, you must lead your children. You are not just to leave it to your wives. You must lead them. Your leadership must be so clear that they know what it is that you require.

Fathers (Parents)**(v.21)**

Brothers, do not embitter or discourage your children. Is it not curious that there is no listing of what does embitter or discourage children? Why? Because you have just heard all that will. If you will lead your families in a way that is pleasing to God, you will not embitter them nor discourage them. Notice that an outcome is being commanded. It seems to me that this is serving as a warning to you. You can ignore what God requires of the character of your leadership and you will have a dire and dreadful effect on your children.

Reflect and Respond

The companion text to this in Ephesians 5:33 closes with these words:

³³ However, let each one of you *love his wife* as himself, and let the wife see that *she respects her husband*.

In this we see the great obstacles to Biblical leadership in the home:

Brothers, you tend to serve yourself instead of loving your wife. True love sacrifices for the one loved – do you? Sometimes wives can be unlovely creatures. Nevertheless, you are to give yourself up as an expression of God’s love for her flowing through you as your love for her.

Sisters, you do not respect your husband and therefore find submission difficult. Notice the strength of the command: “See to it...” Some husbands may not have earned your respect and have done much to cause disrespect. Nevertheless, you are responsible to focus on heart talk to honors and respects him.

Brothers, lead your family:

In honoring your wife as a diligent and devoted complement to you whose hard work for your family causes you to safely trust in her;

In cultivating the qualities of a godly leader of your family, especially those required of leaders in God’s household;

In living with your Christian sister as a joint-heir of God’s grace so that you seek to understand and to honor her;

In learning and developing the skills needed to become pleasing to God as the leader of your family;

In pursuing and practicing love, harmony, humility and sympathy as a meek and masterful leader of your family;

In observing carefully from the Scriptures and from life the patterns and practices that lead to failure in leading your family;

In clinging to the gospel as you hope when you fail as a leader so that you will confess your faults, forsake them and seek to replace them with godly leadership;

In being the kind of leader that a wife can respect and will take delight in following and submitting to;

In building into your life and leading the purity, passions and pursuits that will bring glory to God and good in your home.

May God grant that we all will grow into becoming more of who we are. Brothers, lead your families.

