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## Christ Over All

### Part 7 – Prioritizing Christ at Home and Work

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We're in Part 7 of our series, Christ Over All. Today, we're talking about what it looks like for Christ to be over the home, Christ to be over the workplace, and then even as we head toward election time, what does it look like outside as we minister to those outside the home and outside of the workplace.

That's what I love about Colossians; it's such a practical book. And we turn the corner in Chapter 3 from Chapters 1 and 2 and this great theology about Christ over all, in all, through all, and in our lives and over our lives. Now, today, we're talking about what that looks like in the home.

We're going to jump right into Colossians 3: 18 as we talk about wives submitting to their husbands. **18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.** And we're going to talk, in Verses 18 and 19, about the relationship between husband and wife. And then we're going to look at the relationship between parent and child. And then we are going to look at the relationship between employer and employee.

This passage, **18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.** There are really three ways that I've seen people take this verse here as well as Ephesians 5, **22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands...** You either receive it as God's Word, you reject it outright, or you redefine it.

Today, we're seeing a lot of people want to redefine this word *submit*. I'll be very clear upfront that I am a complementarian when it comes to my theology. I believe that male and female, he created them. We have equal value. But I believe that he has given us different roles in the home. I believe that a husband is to lovingly lead in the home and the wife is called to submit to that authority.

We're going to unpack all of that this morning. Egalitarian theology would teach that there are no roles in the home, and we all submit to one another. I'll be very clear upfront. We are called to submit. We are all... In everything we look at in the text today, we all submit unto the Lord, period. But at this church, we understand that there are a lot of ways people make decisions, there are a lot of ways people make decisions for their life and for their home. In this church, we teach that the Bible, the scripture is in the driver's seat. And next to that, in the passenger seat, we would have tradition. We're going to be looking at what some of the church leaders... I'm going to be quoting other theologians who are of the complementarian theology and that perspective. Behind that, you have reason, emotion, and experience.

What I've discovered in over 20 years of ministry is that a lot of people want to look at this verse based on experience and emotion. We get that and we understand that that is part of the conversation and we'll unpack that as well.

I want to talk about this word *submit*, that we are very clear. You would not have found a Greek speaker in the first century use the word that is used here for submit, speaking of just being considerate to one another. It was a military term, very specific. One of the definitions of this military term is "to arrange oneself under another." But people will always want to point back to Ephesians 5 and teach what I believe is a faulty thought on submission and it's called *mutual submission*. Where it says **21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ**, people will take this verse and say that means that everyone in the home submits to one another, but generally what they mean is husbands submit to wives, wives submit to husband.

You'll rarely ever hear someone say children should submit to parents and parents should submit to children. You're never going to hear that one in the conversation. We have to be very careful here that we understand, especially the word picture that Paul uses in Ephesians 5 to talk about marriage. It's this beautiful picture of Christ and the church. It's not a picture of how we relate to one another within the church; it's a picture of how Christ relates to the church and how the church relates to Christ. This is the picture that Paul unwraps for us and it's a beautiful picture. And to diminish this idea of submission and the authority in the home, to me, is a hit, a smack to this beautiful word picture of the gospel that we get when we talk about marriage.

I want you to know what we're talking about when we talk about submission in the home. **It is voluntary, thoughtful submission, not blind absolute obedience.** We're not talking about that today. We're not talking about no matter what happens... Sometimes people will say... Verse 18... A lot of men have taken that, and they've abused that. They've become controlling and manipulative and they just are reigning and ruling in the home with an iron fist. That's not at all what this picture that we have of marriage and the gospel of Jesus, Christ being over marriage... That is not at all what Paul is taking about. I want to be very clear.

When we talk about roles in marriage, **women and men are both created in the image of God and have automatic, equal, and intrinsic value.** When we talk about roles in the home, when we talk about submission and authority or submission in leadership or submission in headship, we're not talking about value. To the Christian couple in here, please hear me. Peter uses the term. You are co-heirs in Christ. This has nothing to do with your value, this has nothing to do with intellect, this has nothing to do with even physical strength. We are speaking about how God has created marriage to paint this beautiful picture of how Christ relates to the church.

John Piper puts it this way, *"The roles of husband and wife are rooted in the distinctive roles of Christ and his church. God means (by marriage) to say something about his Son and his church by the way husbands and wives relate to each other."*

That's what I want to talk about today to make this very practical as we jump into this. People will take advantage of Verse 18 and that's why we have Verse 19.

Verse 19 is very clear. **Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.**

One of my favorite word pictures that Gary Smalley used over 20 years ago... Many of you maybe saw it at Promise Keepers. He would have guys take off their shoe and he would have a feather. He would just ask the question: "How are your words and actions landing on your wife?"

I wanted to bring it more into a fall picture, so I got leaves and rocks. A lot of times... and I get this. This is why husbands need to be taught. We need to be taught because we can be forceful, we can be strong, we can be passionate. We have to kill things so we can eat! Can I get an amen on that in October? We get that, but we have to be very careful. Sometimes, we think we say things and we do things and it's landing on here just as a gentle leaf falls to the ground, when really, she is feeling the rock. How are your words and actions hitting and landing on your wife?

We're called to cherish. If you want to read a great book, Gary Thomas was just here talking about when to walk away, but I encourage you to pick up his book called *Cherish*. What a great word. **Husbands, you are called to cherish her by considering her highest good.** I've had guys tell me in the past when they've heard me speak on this, "You're doing it too much. You're too much gushy, gushy stuff." I say and do things in my home that it isn't just dropping a rock; it feels like throwing a rock. Can we just be honest about that today? We do that.

You know when we're low on energy... And a lot of times, these leaves and rocks, this illustration, when you're at the end of the day and you're spent, you've got nothing left, our words and our actions can tend to be harsher.

Let's be really clear about the leadership in the home that we're talking about, and the leadership we are asking wives to submit to. Wayne Grudem and John Piper, both complementarians in their theology, said, "*Any kind of leadership that, in the name of Christlike headship... So, it's not about ruling with an iron fist. ...that in the name of Christlike headship, tends to foster in a wife personal immaturity or spiritual weakness or insecurity... Guys, hear this. ...through excessive control, picky supervision, or oppressive domination has missed the point.*" Altogether.

**We are a church that honors marriage...** and I want to be really clear what we're talking about as we talk leadership and submission, as we talk about headship and submission. **...and for that reason, we would never encourage someone to stay with an abusive spouse, never. Your mental, emotional, physical, sexual, and spiritual wellbeing matters to God and it matters to us.**

Sometimes people hear this text and they're thinking, "blind submission." We don't believe in blind submission; **we believe in thoughtful, voluntary submission.** I get asked this question I don't know how many times. I'll ask someone, "Are you abusive with your wife?" I'll get, "I've never touched her." "That's not what I asked. Are you abusive with your wife?" There's this back peddling because there is emotional, there is verbal in the home. They want me to define abuse. And we do. I've worked with a lot of couples where a lot of times they are experiencing conflict and they want me to label it abuse. I get to walk through that with them and help them. You're dealing with what Amy and I deal with. We've never had abuse in 24 years of marriage in our home. We've had something called conflict.

We have to be careful not to label conflict abuse. But I want you to know... This is why we have elders, this is why we have care pastors. If you are in an abusive marriage, we have Marriage 911. We have so many people that will walk through this with you and if you don't have the strength to stand up for yourself, this church will. We will help you. We will find safety.

Somebody on Friday night, after an event, shared with me what is going on. They were wanting to run, but not knowing how to do it. Sometimes when you are involved in the trauma of abuse, you need someone to stand up with you and for you. And this church will do that. Because your mental, emotional, physical, sexual, and spiritual wellbeing matter to God and it matters to us.

I've been in plenty of situations with couples. You've been there too. I've been at meals that have been painful in talking with couples. Sometimes these are friends just in a bad spot. Sometimes it's family. I would describe the interaction between husband and wife as nagging, correcting, second guessing. On the man's side, demanding, controlling, and nitpicking. I try not to say too much or be too expressive. At a dinner where I'm experiencing that, sometimes it's hard for my mouth to stay shut. But I usually get out to the car and I look at Amy and I'm like, "I love you, I love you so much. Thank you for not being like that!" And she's like, "I love you too. Thank you for not being like that."

Can I take it to a very serious moment for just a second? If you are a nagging, correcting, second guessing wife in here today, I am praying that you will repent of that today. That you will repent before your Father in heaven and repent to your husband.

If you are demanding, controlling, manipulative, nitpicking husband, my prayer for you today is that you will repent before your Father in heaven and before your wife. And then take it one step further, that you would repent before your children. Because Stephanie just said it. They see everything, they hear everything, they forget nothing, and then they repeat. Let them see a mom and a dad modeling... Not nagging, correcting, second guessing, demanding, controlling, and nitpicking, but loving, serving, respecting, honoring, cherishing, considering, sacrificing.

A lot of people want to use these words to define the word *submit*. They're like, "It's really more about consideration within the home." I love how Wayne Grudem said it. Ephesians 5: 22 says, ***Wives be subject to your husband***. And in this passage, "wives submit to your husbands" has more of a force than just loving and serving. But this is what comes out of modeling the gospel of Jesus in our homes. May this be your home.

I'm trying to teach this to my kids. Again, we're all going to have moments of the nagging, correcting, second guessing, demanding, controlling, and nitpicking, where we are at each other. But may the loving, serving, respecting, honoring, cherishing, considering, sacrificing be what flows out of a gospel centered home where Christ is over all, over the wife, over the husband, and they are living this out.

Great marriage... I've seen it. I'm just convinced. **Great marriages have two spouses finding great satisfaction in doing stuff for each other that they would never enjoy doing on their own.** I tell my kids this all the time when I ask them to do something for the other and they don't really want to. I say,

“Listen, half of my life is doing stuff I don’t want to do, but that’s called adulthood. I do it because I love you. This isn’t something I would do on my own.”

I was just at First Baptist Dallas on Friday night. I hate spell check with every ounce of my being. I type fast because I want spell check to keep up. Do you ever find yourself talking to spell check? I started typing, “Hey tonight, we’re at First Baptist Dallas. We’re going to be discovering factors and skills necessary to achieve high levels of marital satisfaction.” I’m putting this in a Tweet. I didn’t send it because I caught it first. I looked at the Tweet before I hit the Tweet button. I actually typed out, “Hey tonight, we’re at First Baptist Dallas. We’re going to be discovering factors and skills necessary to achieve high levels of marijuana satisfaction.” This is no lie. Then it said, “Let’s roll.” Then I was like, “Marital satisfaction, spell check, marital satisfaction.”

So, I think if you are loving and respecting and honoring, you’re going to do a lot of things that you don’t always love to do. I put a list up here. This is somewhat personal, maybe 95%. But you’re going to have your own list. I would love you to send them to me. What do you do because you love your wife? What do you do because you love your husband? How are you living this out in marriage?

**Shopping.** I’m not a big shopper. I go because I love my wife. I don’t enjoy sitting on benches in malls. I’m tired of it. But I’m not tired of her, so I still do it. Fine dining. Never been a huge thing. My restaurant is Le Cracker Barrell. But she’s turned me into a fine dinner. There are some weird things that come out of fine dining. I got marshmallows once with squid ink on them; like the black stuff that comes out of the fish when you’re cleaning them? That’s what it is. I hated it. But I love my wife, so I ate squid ink.

How about **remodeling kitchens and baths**? This is our quarantine project. No one ever told me when getting married that the countertops go bad. When I bought granite 13 years ago, I thought it was for life and it’s not because brown granite is done; it doesn’t work anymore. We need white quartz. Again, this is just me. But we’re remodeling a bath. I’d be fine with the bath and the kitchen I have for the rest of my life, but I love my wife.

We were sitting at the breakfast bar the other day after we tore it out and put new in and Carson goes, “Dad, why are we doing this?” I go, “Because we love your mother.” He goes, “Dad, we could have bought a four-wheeler with this money.” I said, “And a jet ski.” With trailers and all the bells and whistles.

Some of you **decluttering**. I like my stuff. Do you like your stuff? I don’t like throwing stuff away, but Amy loves decluttering. She has two love languages: acts of service and quality time. Which means I serve her for long periods of time. And in the middle, it’s a sixth or seventh or eighth love language – decluttering. “If you haven’t used it in a while, you don’t need it, we’re getting rid of it.” So, I go around with garbage bags throwing stuff away because I love my wife.

**Showering.** Some of you are like, “Keep this PG.” I’m keeping it PG. I’m not talking about that. I’m talking about showers. For some of you, hygiene is not high on your list, but you got married and your

wife, your husband, they like someone who is clean, so take a bath, take a shower. You're like, "Every three days, I'm good." No. every day. If she wants it every day, she gets a shower.

**Dressing up, buying new clothes, stopping to use the restrooms on long trips.** I am shocked at the number of men I talk to who are like, "We ain't stopping!" You stop because you love your wife. Can I get an amen on that one? I have heard... I'm not making this up. There are men, and they are in this church, who have made their wives pee in a ditch. You read this passage until you are blue in the face and you will never again make her pee in a ditch. You will stop when she needs to stop. This is insane!

Okay, let's just keep moving. **Watching Life Below Zero.** Amy doesn't like this show, but I love it. I have a dream about living off the grid, in Alaska, away from all of you. I watch it every Monday morning. Amy's like, "It's 40 below zero, they live by themselves, they eat fish and muskrats!" She watches that. I hate Hallmark movies, but I **watch Hallmark movies** because she watches Life Below Zero. I don't have friends who like Hallmark movies. If I did have friends that like Hallmark movies, we wouldn't be friends. But I watch them, for her.

**Taking romantic walks around the neighborhood at a brisk pace with our cheeks squeezed together.**

**Chilling in the family room before 8:00 pm.** Amy does that for me. She doesn't want to sit still until 8:00 pm. She's got stuff to do around the house. We have to clean and remodel and all that. I got home from a trip yesterday, it was 4:00 pm and I'm like, "Hey, you just want to sit in the family for bit?" You could just see it all over her that she didn't want to. It's hard for her to relax before 8:00 pm. She's not relaxing at 4:00 pm, but she does that for me.

**Waiting in the Target Parking lot. Visiting his family. Visiting her family.** Do that for the other.

Moving to Colossians 3: **20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.** I've never, in 24 years of ministry, had someone say to me: "Ted, can you help me understand what it means for children to obey." Wives submit, we're going to debate that until we're blue in the face and we're always going to be talking about that. No parent has ever come up to me and go, "I don't really know what it means for a child to obey." We all get that. Most everyone I've ever met receives this. I don't know anybody who rejects this. I don't know anybody trying to redefine this. Children submit to your parents as unto the Lord. **Children must obey parents unless it demands they do something the Bible forbids or forbids something the Bible commands.** Now we're into the parent/child relationship.

To the fathers... It's not just to parents, this is to fathers. **21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.** As we lead in the home, how are our words and actions landing on our children? How are they receiving that? **Dad, we must lead in a gentle and reasonable way, not a "because I said so" way.**

Continuing on from husband/wife, parent/child, and moving into employer/employee. Some people will read the next text and go, "Well, in the Colossian home, there would have been a mom and dad, a husband and wife, children, and bond servants. That's not how our economy is set up anymore. We do not have masters and slaves, so we don't need to read this text; this text doesn't apply to us." There is still plenty of application from this text for the working relationships.

***22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.*** Here it is again. Everything in the home... We all are fulfilling our roles, submitting to the Lord. It's every one of us. ***23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters...*** I think about the story of Paul meeting a runaway slave Onesimus, leading him back to Philemon, sending him back to live this out. ***24 since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.*** ***25 Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.***

Christian employees, please here this. **You should exceed expectations at work.** People should know by the way you work that you are a follower of Jesus and that Christ is over your life. **Do this by showing up on time, every time, with smile, eager to serve.** Your like, "That's Chick-fil-A." It is Chick-fil-A, but it's a lot of over places as well. But isn't it interesting how you can go through one drive-thru where you get all of this: a smile, "my pleasure to serve you..." You go to a drive-thru just a little bit away and you get none of that. It's the Lord's chicken, we know that, but... The Christian, wherever you work, you're showing up on time, every time, with a smile, and eager to serve, eager to learn, teachable when the boss is instructing us.

Now, you're like, "I don't have a reasonable boss." Okay, we can talk about that because in the scripture, Paul was very clear with that. **If you have an unreasonable boss, remember Jesus is your ultimate boss and pleasing him is your first priority.**

What about employers. Let's keep going, moving on to Chapter 4. ***1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.*** I don't believe we need government regulations to tell us how to treat people well. If you run a business in this town, Christ over all and over your business leads you to do well with your employees. **Christian employers should not need government regulations when determining how to best care for their employees.**

I love when we hear from an employer in our church that says, "Hey, one of my employees... The guy has worked for me for a while. He's having car problems. I've done all I can. I've poured money into his car and it broke down again. Is there anyway the church can help?" We love when benevolence is done that way. When the boss, the employer is wanting to care for his employees. We had it happen just a couple weeks ago. An employer bought his employee a car. The car broke down within a week. He asked if he could get a little help. We would love... It's kind of like Care for Kids through the schools. We love when the counselor is meeting the physical needs of student and we, as a church, are just able to partner with them in that. Christians employers should take care of the wellbeing of all of their employees to the best of their ability. Their emotional health, their physical health, their spiritual health, their financial health. It's not just about money.

Now, this ends it because we're going to go outside the home, outside the workplace to how you and I interact with those outside of the home and outside of the workplace and outside of the church. Here's what Paul says in Verse 2. ***2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.*** ***3 And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for***

*which I am in chains. **4 Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.*** I love this exhortation and we need this, not just leading up to an election, but beyond the election. **5 Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity.** You and I should be adapting our approach, not our message, our approach in every situation. Who are we with, who are we talking to? We'll adapt our approach, but not our message.

**6 Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt...** Follower of Jesus, during this election time, you don't need to be dull. You don't even need to be quiet. You can speak clearly, and you can speak boldly, but the key here is full of grace. I think we're seeing the extremes here. We have people who right now are salty and there is no grace, and then I have friends in ministry that it's all grace; we're not doing any salt right now. We're not going to even speak to the fact there is an election coming up. It's just grace, grace, grace.

No, we are meant to be lively. You can engage in the government and all that's going on, but if you're going to a city council meeting, please here me on this. Be full of grace and seasoned with salt. I want to remind you that the whole thing is livestreamed. It's not just those people in the room. Outsiders are watching and I'm watching some of the people and I'm going, "Oh, no you didn't just say that." Full of grace, seasoned with salt. As you get online this week, how are your words landing? For some of you this season, its rocks with everything you interact with. He says, **Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.** So that you know what your speech is doing and how you are leading people.

Here's the bottom line. **The world is watching and scrutinizing our every move right now.** Never felt this more. "You know, Ted, you said that thing and here's what I think you really meant..." I'm getting letters and emails... And then "I think you implied this." That's just par for the course. I'm not saying it's not going to happen; it's going to happen. They are watching... **People are more skeptical and suspicious of Christians** than I've seen ever in my ministry lifetime. "You say one thing, you preach one thing, but then you support someone who doesn't follow any of that. Ted, help me understand that, help me process that." Can I just say, let's not say or do anything that confirms their bias. Let's make sure we are full of grace and seasoned with salt, not saying or doing anything that confirms that.

But I'll tell you, as we head into this. Here's the last one. **We should be kind, courteous, pleasant, and civil, while strong, bold, lively, and clear on our convictions.** You can do both. You don't have to choose. We can be clear with what we believe, what we stand for. We can be clear with what Christ teaches. We can proclaim the Word of God with boldness, but we can do it full of grace. We don't have to choose.

I just encourage you... I'm out of rocks, but I have a couple more leaves left. Those are fun. I want to make sure... You know, it's a really hard thing for even up here with speaking, teaching, preaching. There are times I'm not in a good place and I'm throwing rocks. I don't want that. I want the truth of God's Word. I want to make sure I'm full of grace, seasoned with salt. I want to think through how it lands on a congregation. And may that be true of us in our homes. May it be true in our interactions, husband and wife. Parents, this week, may it be true of how we minister to our children, in the workplace, in our community, in our country.

I'm going to invite you to join me in prayer as we close out. It would be a good time to just pause and reflect for just a second. I believe all of us have some repenting to do this morning. If you had moments where you were like, "I hate what he just said. I totally disagree," pause and reflect on that for just a moment. As we pray, you repent to your Father in heaven. As you head out to the parking lot, as you get into the car, you repent to who in your family, you confess to who in your family you need to confess to.

Father, we're grateful for how you continue to work in this church. I pray a blessing over husbands and wives, moms and dad, employers and employees, the citizens of a town or counties of our country. May we leave here today with Christ over all in our lives, leading well, submitting well, knowing that all of us submit unto you.

I pray for the one who has never placed faith in Jesus that today would be the day they trust Christ as their savior. That they would confess their sins before you, believe in their heart that Jesus has been raised from the dead that they would be saved. That they would understand that by grace they are saved through faith; it's not of works so that they can't boast about it. May they cry out to Jesus today as their savior.

We pray all of this in the good name of Jesus and everyone agreed and said... Amen.