

Living with Jesus as Lord in Marriage

Colossians 3:17-19

8 September 2019 | Grace Bible Church Corinda | Ben Shannon

Big Question: How will wives and husbands live if Jesus is their Lord?

Big Idea: Jesus is Lord in our marriages.

Introduction

Here are some highlights from “The good wife’s guide”, from *Housekeeping Monthly*, dated 13 May 1955:

“Be a little gay and a little more interesting for him. His boring day may need a lift and one of your duties is to provide it.”

“During the cooler months of the year you should prepare and light a fire for him to unwind by... After all, catering to his comfort will provide you with immense personal satisfaction.”

“Greet him with a warm smile and show sincerity in your desire to please him.”

“Listen to him... Let him talk first – remember his topics of conversation are more important than yours.”

“Make him comfortable.”

“Don't ask him questions about his actions or question his judgment or integrity. Remember, he is the master of the house and as such will always exercise his will with fairness and truthfulness. You have no right to question him.”

“A good wife always knows her place.”

Do you find that confronting?

It’s certainly a long way from *His Needs, Her Needs*, isn’t it? It’s his needs all the way.

The typical approach to the roles of men and women in the home – and the marriage relationship itself – has changed a lot in the last sixty years.

Technology has changed the way that people spend their time and that’s had a big impact on our relationships too.

That advice sounds like it comes from another era – an era that it’s easy to feel like we’ve moved on from.

The 1950s feels like a completely different world.

Despite the fact that this article looks and sounds like it came from that time, this particular article is almost definitely a fake.

It's helpful though because that's exactly how the Bible sounds to many people.

What the Bible says about husbands and wives sounds just as foreign and irrelevant.

If the '50s feel like a long time ago, how could the Bible possibly be relevant to our lives today?

It could be that you've made up your mind about this sermon before you've even heard it.

You might be like Abbey, wife of President Bartlett on the TV show *The West Wing*.

Apart from the fact that she got the verse number wrong, she's quoting from the parallel passage in Ephesians 5.

She's more than happy with "husbands love your wives," but when it comes to "wives submit to your husbands," she skips over it because she thinks it's stupid.

Perhaps you do too.

As tempting as it might be, we're not going to skip over these verses, regardless of the fact that I've got no doubt I would've slept better this week if we had.

I'm not going to lie, they're challenging verses.

Challenging because they question a whole host of assumptions that we mightn't even realise we have.

They're verses that cause us to question our traditions – regardless of what they are.

As we get ready to turn to our text, it seems totally appropriate to ask you to please join me in praying.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, your word gives life to everyone who hears and obeys. It strengthens us and sustains us, lighting our way as we walk through life. Please help us to be humble as we listen to your word this morning. Fill us with knowledge and wisdom as your Spirit opens up our minds. We ask you to give us words that will bring us life and hope. In the name of our Saviour who died and rose again, Amen.

Context

I didn't just randomly choose this text this morning.

We've been studying sequentially through the book of Colossians.

One of the reasons we work through a book of the Bible is because we take seriously the Apostle Paul's example of preaching the whole counsel of God to the Ephesians.

Teaching systematically helps us to have context, but also forces us to listen to the things that we might otherwise be tempted to skip over.

This's one of those passages.

What we know as the New Testament book of Colossians was originally a letter to a church in the city of Colossae, located in modern-day Turkey.

The whole book is about being captivated by Christ.

In the letter so far, Paul's shown how glorious Jesus is because Jesus is supreme over everything.

If you want to see God, then look at Jesus – all wisdom and knowledge can be found in him.

That's why Paul dedicated his life to teaching others about Jesus – so that they'd become mature in him (1:28).

We've seen that as Christians, we're united with Jesus.

We died with Jesus – 2:20 – so we've been freed from being bound by human religion and tradition.

And we've been raised with him – 3:1 – which means we can set our minds on things above.

What that looks like was unpacked for us in the rest of chapter three.

We've changed teams from Team Self to Team Jesus.

Sin is incompatible with who we are now and so we put it to death.

Instead, we clothe ourselves in actions which serve others because of our love for them.

Ryan showed us how this makes Christian community different.

There's peace where Christ rules, verse 15.

God's word transforms God's people as we share it with each other.

There's a very clear change in the style of writing in verse eighteen.

It's written in a style called a household code.

'Household' is the theme that ties 3:18 through to 4:1 together.

Wives and husbands, children and fathers, and slaves and masters were all household relationships in the ancient world.

These codes described what household relationships should look like.

That might seem quaint to people who live at a time when there's no limit to the size or shape of family, but it was fairly popular in the ancient world.

Aristotle – the Greek philosopher – wrote a very famous one.

Do you remember verse seventeen from last week?

We finished up by seeing that knowing Jesus changes what we say and what we do.

Jesus is supreme over everything and he's reconciling all things to himself, we're told in 1:20.

He's in command and control of the whole world.

Everything we do, then, we do in the name of King Jesus.

And this is very important to see – it will result in thanks to God.

Colossians 3:17 (NIV11) ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Throughout Colossians, Paul always joins one section to the next one by overlapping them.

It makes it very tricky to work out where one section ends and another begins to divide the book up.

We shouldn't look at this whole next section as a self-contained argument.

And that's one of the reasons I'm convinced that Paul's doing something very deliberate here.

The theme of 'household' runs through these verses, but there's also another theme that runs through these verses.

The word 'lord' appears eight times in these nine verses – it's nine in ten if you include verse seventeen.

The name Jesus isn't there at all.

The title 'Christ' is used once, but right next to 'Lord' as well.

That's not a coincidence.

These verses are making the point: Jesus is Lord of our household relationships.

Our households matter to him.

If Jesus is our lord, he will shape how we relate as wives and husbands, children and fathers, slaves and masters.

We're going to be looking at each pair of relationships over the next three weeks.

Today, we start with wives and husbands.

Family is one of God's good gifts.

Please join me in thanking and praising God for the huge blessing that great marriages are.

But all relationships have conflicts and struggles.

We've all experienced what this can be like in one way or another – either personally or by watching others.

We really shouldn't expect anything less when we're dealing with new creations who are still putting off the old.

We need the Lord Jesus.

We don't do ourselves or others any favours when we sentimentalise our Christian relationships.

A Christian household should be a safe place to escape the darkness, but it isn't always.

We're kidding ourselves if we think that every Christian has a great relationship with their kids.

A relationship between husbands and wives, fathers and children, masters and slaves aren't automatically perfect, even if everyone's a Christian.

We need the Lord Jesus.

Even as we face up to the reality of the challenges, we need to be reminded that it doesn't have to always be difficult though.

The gospel can redeem dysfunctional relationships.

The gospel has the power to change our relationships for the better.

Following Jesus doesn't necessarily make living in our households easier, but he will make it sweeter.

As we put off the old and put on the new, when we live with Jesus as Lord, our relationships are going to change for the better.

Jesus is Lord in our marriages.

Jesus is Lord of Wives

First of all, Paul addresses wives.

That's remarkable because usually these household codes were written by men, to men and for men.

In most ancient cultures, the husband was king pin; what he said went and no correspondence would be entered into.

They never stooped as low as addressing wives, children and slaves.

Paul honours each of these groups not just by speaking to them, but putting them first, in the place of honour.

Since Christianity has been the norm in the West for so long, it's hard to remember that it was so radical in the first century.

The kind of teaching you get in verse 22 – that your status doesn't make you superior – was the kind of stuff that starts revolutions.

It'd be easy for Christians – as well as those watching them – to think that this message was going to tear society apart.

What Paul says here shows that following Jesus won't result in anarchy.

You might rightly ask what right I have as a bloke to preach this verse?

Let me tell you, I'm glad these aren't my words we're looking at – not because I want to distance myself from them, but because Paul's far more helpful than I'd ever be.

But Paul was in the same boat, you might say. What right did he have?

This isn't his opinion.

Colossians begins by laying down his authority as an apostle – someone commissioned by God to carry on the authoritative teaching of the church.

He wrote under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and that's no less true here than it is in the rest of the letter.

These verses might well make you feel quite uncomfortable.

They clash with so many of the assumptions held by people living in our time and place that it's no wonder that sparks fly.

I would expect that for many of us, the word 'submit' sticks out like it's the only word on the page.

Many of us are really sensitive to that word, if not offended by it.

There are a whole bunch of reasons that we might struggle with submission.

I say "we" because it'd be wrong to assume that I don't have to wrestle with this personally.

Why do we struggle so much?

I'm going to give you some problems that you might have with submission.

We've got an authority problem in general.

I don't mean women struggle with authority.

I struggle with authority – I honestly don't know that I'd cope joining the army or the police force.

Being anti-authority and having very flat structures is part of our national identity.

It's almost a truth that I am happiest when I'm free to do things my way.

We don't think that we like restraints and so we do our best to avoid them, but the restraint of authority is actually good for us.

I hate rollercoasters.

When my kids drag me onto one, I don't like the way the bars come down and lock me in.

When I feel like I'm about to career off the edge though, I'm very thankful for that restraint.

Submission feels like a uncomfortable restraint, but one that can actually serve us well.

We've got a submission problem to God in particular.

This isn't really just a matter of submission of wives to husbands.

We've also got problem with how we submit to the Lord Jesus.

Without that being sorted, none of the rest of this makes any sense.

Humans have struggled against God's authority since the time of Adam and Eve.

Sin is when we overturn God's authority and put ourselves in charge.

We think that we're better off when we do things our own way, rather than submitting to God.

We're going to have a problem with submission if we don't trust that God's ways are better.

It matters that Jesus is our Lord.

We've got an independence problem.

We don't want to be bound by what anyone else thinks.

Getting married means having to make a commitment to another person.

That's one of the reasons that many people don't get married at all – that'd mean making a commitment to each other.

Or it's reflected in the word we've used to replace 'spouse' – a 'partner' is someone I journey through life next to.

However, a partner is also someone that you can part ways with.

In marriage, God takes two people and joins them together to form one – two interdependent people.

That's what makes marriage different.

1 Corinthians 11:11 (NIV11) ¹¹ Nevertheless, in the Lord woman is not independent of man, nor is man independent of woman.

Man and woman here could just as legitimately be translated as husband and wife.

And we've got an equality problem.

Equality matters and submission sounds like it's an attack on equality.

Or another way to put it is that we think that love and submission can't go together.

As Christians, we should all be concerned about equality in marriage because men and women are both created equal.

All human beings reflect the image of God, Genesis 1:26, which gives them equal worth and dignity.

Your cultural heritage, your freedom and your gender don't make you superior – everyone needs to be saved and only the death and resurrection of Jesus can do that.

So whatever it means to submit, it doesn't mean that men are superior to women.

To many, equality in marriage means splitting everything straight down the middle.

Husbands and wives share 50% of the bills and chores as well as 50% of the opportunities outside the home.

It's a terrible view of equality though because that version of equality says that you're only valuable – you're only worth being married to – as long as you're contributing.

What happens if one spouse has an accident or struggles with mental illness and can't contribute anymore?

It's profoundly sad when they're given the flick because they're not able to contribute their half.

So, what does submission mean?

It's a little bit tricky because Paul doesn't really unpack the word for us here, in this passage.

We do know that it's not always a bad thing though because in Luke we're told that Jesus submitted to his earthly parents.¹

And if Jesus submitted to his heavenly father – which he clearly did by praying, "Not my will, but yours", then we can't say that it's an inherently bad thing to submit to another.

Studying the word itself doesn't help all that much.

It's a compound word made up of the words "come under".

Sometimes submission in the Bible is voluntary and sometimes it's demanded.

In the Bible, Christians are called to submit to the law, righteousness, authorities, other believers, God the father, leaders in the church, masters.

Submitting to your husband means bringing yourself under his authority, recognising him as God's head over you.

God's plan is that there is a different level of authority between men and women.

Paul makes this argument in 1 Corinthians 11:3:

1 Corinthians 11:3 (NIV11) ³ But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God.

Paul writes this as a command, but it's something that you've got to do yourself.

The way the word is written, this is something that you do for yourself.

It's because Jesus is Lord that a wife will submit to her husband.

Your husband can't demand it of you.

Blokes, the application of this is not to demand from your wife that she submits to you.

That would actually be sinful and comes from sinful motives.

Notice also that you submit to your husband.

This is describing what happens in a marriage.

It doesn't speak directly to what happens in the workplace or even in the church.

A fairly common response is to say that this was just a product of their times.

It was the case because there was typically a difference in age, education between spouses or a legal right to own property.

That was then, but this is now.

That doesn't really stack up because Paul gives another reason.

The reason that Paul gives is that submitting to your husband is fitting in the Lord.

This isn't going to make sense apart from Jesus being your Lord.

The joy in doing this doesn't come primarily from following your husband, but from following Jesus.

You don't submit to your husband because he's so great, but because Jesus is.

Submission shouldn't feel like this meme ("The secret ingredient is resentment.").

Like it or not, we're all influenced by culture and traditions.

That includes times past (or at least our perceptions of it), whether we pine for those times or want to cut ourselves off from them.

Paul made the argument in 2:20 that because we've died with Christ, we're freed from having to submit to human rules.

Instead we submit to Christ.

It's because you submit to Christ that you submit to your husband.

The phrase 'in the Lord' also comes with a built-in limit.

Paul uses a different word – obey – when he's talking to children and slaves to what he does when he's talking to wives.

That's deliberate: he's not just mixing it up.

If your husband asks you to submit to something that goes against the Lord Jesus, then don't do it.

Be like Peter and the other apostles who said:

Acts 5:29b (NIV11) "We must obey God rather than human beings!"

I'm conscious that there's danger when this whole idea of submission is misapplied.

If a husband is abusive – especially physically abusive – this doesn't mean that you have to stay.

Wives, I know that if you love your husband it might even be difficult to leave.

But submitting to your husband doesn't mean submitting yourself to abuse – get out.

That's the what, but it doesn't really answer the 'why'.

Why is it fitting though?

It's because there's a right reordering to our relationships – this's the way God has set up the world.

Paul praises the Colossians for having disciplined lives in 2:5, or more literally, "good ordered" lives.

Christ is bringing everything into submission under him and that includes the ordering of our home life.

We live in a world dominated by rules based on elemental things, but a Christian's household will be ordered under Christ.

How we live reflects on Jesus, our Lord.

Titus tells us that it's so that it won't malign the word of God.

Titus 2:5 (NIV11) to be self-controlled and pure, to be busy at home, to be kind, and to be subject to their husbands, so that no one will malign the word of God.

In the coming age, people won't be married or given in marriage, so why is there a hierarchy in marriage now?

I think it's right to ask why Paul didn't tell husbands to submit or just tell wives to love.

Paul gives a bit more explanation in Ephesians 5:

Ephesians 5:23 (NIV11) ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour.

We don't really take that analogy seriously.

Marriages – even imperfect ones – reflect Christ and the church.

The church loves Jesus and the church submits to Jesus.

Jesus loves the church but Jesus never submits to the church.

What does submitting to your husband look like practically?

Does it mean submitting to his cooking? His Dad jokes?

It doesn't mean that a wife has to serve her husband like a slave, delivering every one of his whims.

It doesn't mean that a husband's happiness matters and a wife's doesn't.

I think a translation like the CEV can give us the wrong impression when it says:

Colossians 3:18 (CEV) ¹⁸ A wife must put her husband first. This is her duty as a follower of the Lord.

Often submission is reduced down to making decisions and the reality that someone's got to make the call.

The analogy is used of two people who are trying to step through a narrow door and someone has to go first.

Whether that's by the husband going first or opening the door and allowing his husband to go first.

While that's true, but I'm not sure that's what Paul's got in mind.

In a marriage, rarely, if ever should decisions really come down to that.

We get a bit more insight when we look at what's clearly a parallel passage in Ephesians 5:33:

Ephesians 5:33 (NIV11) ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

A wife should respect her husband.

She should care about him and be willing to take his preferences and desires into account, rather than just sidelining him.

It means not ignoring him and at the same time not milking him for all he's worth.

So, the question to apply this is obvious: Wives, are you submitting to your husband?

If you're a woman who isn't married yet, are you looking for the kind of bloke that you can submit to?

Choosing to marry someone who's going to be easier to submit to is going to make your life easier.

Prince Charming isn't 6'6" with massive guns and a six-pack.

He's a Colossians 3:19 type of bloke.

You'd expect that submitting to your husband is going to be easier to do in a Christian marriage.

It's going to be much easier to submit to a husband who's living out verse nineteen, loving his wife.

But that's not the reason Paul gives, he doesn't say that your submission is based on how your husband treats you.

And sometimes, often perhaps, that's going to be really, really difficult.

However, this isn't just for Christian marriages.

Peter says that submission is important regardless.

A wife submitting to her husband might well win him over to Christ.

1 Peter 3:1–2 (NIV11) ¹ Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behaviour of their wives, ² when they see the purity and reverence of your lives.

You submit to your husband out of a love for Jesus.

That's the main point of this section.

That's the thing that you absolutely can't miss.

Wives submit to their husbands because Jesus is their lord.

He's the pattern we can look to, where we can see humility and submission.

Jesus submitted to his father, even to the point of laying down his life for us.

Submission isn't a dirty word, it's part of God's plan.

Jesus is Lord of Husbands

Husbands, now it's your turn.

This's also a word to men who aren't husbands too, because you might be a husband one day, even if you're not aspiring to it now.

If Jesus is Lord, then you are not the ultimate Lord.

The chief end of man – to take the words from the Westminster Shorter Catechism – is to glorify God and not you.

The typical ancient household code was designed to be all about protecting the bloke's rights.

With Jesus as lord though, Paul flips that upside down and instead focuses on a husband's responsibility.

Husbands are called to love their wives.

Verse 19:

Colossians 3:19a (NIV) ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives

I know that it's kind of stating the obvious, but sometimes that's actually a good thing to do.

Husbands, you need to love your wife – not your secretary, next-door neighbour or an image on your device.

As someone who's been raised with Christ, you need to put to death the kinds of behaviours that're listed in verse 5: sexual immorality, impurity and lust.

Sexual immorality is really any kind of sexual activity outside of marriage.

It's the Greek word *porneia*, which we get the word 'pornography' from.

In ancient Roman culture and many cultures since, wives were for breeding and other women for pleasure.

It's not really any different today – you sleep around until you marry the woman you want to have kids with.

That's not loving your wife.

If you're looking at pornography, you're not loving your wife.

If you're having an affair, you're not loving your wife.

Of course, as a Christian you're actually called to self-sacrificially love your secretary, next-door neighbour and the woman on the image that shouldn't be on your device.

But it's not just with a romantic love, instead it's with a self-sacrificing love.

The same is true of wives.

When it comes to wives, loving her doesn't just mean romantic love.

What does it look like to love your wife?

It includes all of the kind of mushy stuff that you're used to – buying flowers and writing sappy love poetry.

You see all the young couples walking around sideshow alley where the bloke has shown his skill by winning a giant stuffed teddy bear.

And then she's left carrying this humungous bear around for the rest of the day.

The love Paul's talking about is the kind of self-sacrificial love that uses those big, strong muscles to carry the bear.

Even if it does look like he couldn't leave his teddy at home.

Loving your wife means caring enough to be putting her needs ahead of your own.

It's hard enough to just take her needs into consideration.

Putting her needs ahead of your own is even more difficult.

If Jesus is your lord, then that's how Jesus commands you to serve both him and your wife as a husband.

It's not just in the physical realm though.

A godly husband will help her to be spiritually nourished as well.

Take an interest in whether she's reading the Bible.

Encourage her by making sure that you read the Bible with the kids.

Combining the two together, are you willing to take an equal turn on church rosters?

Or do you always get along to home group while she stays back with the kids?

Husbands, we need to think of ways to practically serve our wives to help them spiritually.

Don't just wait for her to ask!

If Jesus is your Lord, you'll want to encourage her (but not demand) to come under his lordship too.

Preaching a passage like this is just so convicting.

With this passage rattling around my head this week, it opened up my eyes to a whole bunch of ways that I can love my wife better.

I saw opportunities to lay down my life that I don't think I would've otherwise.

Which just shows what a long way I've got to go.

And it's why we need to keep being reminded of these passages.

I found this meme this week ("Why, I'd be *delighted* to put my needs last again.")

It's done up in the style of the 1950s and shows a housewife.

There's no doubt it's meant to be sarcastic, paying out how the 1950s housewife put her own needs last.

I'm so thankful that mothers do so often put themselves last.

But I couldn't help but be struck by the irony.

It's treated as legit to poke fun at that kind of attitude today.

And yet it's the very attitude that the Bible asks – not of women – but men to have.

To be delighted to put our needs last.

If you're loving your wife, then you can't treat her like a doormat.

You'll respect her, 1 Peter 3:7 says.

Your wife is also made in the image of God.

She's a co-heir with you in the inheritance of Christ.

1 Peter 3:7 (NIV11) ⁷ Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

And a Christian husband is called to love regardless of the response that he gets from his wife.

How many times has a pastor heard in marriage counselling, "I'd love her if she'd submit to me."

This command isn't dependent on what she does or doesn't do though.

You can't blame her for failing to love her well.

It's like the team gathered in the locker room at half time.

So far, the game's been brutal and they're getting absolutely flogged.

The coach asks, "What are we doing wrong?"

One of the defenders pipes up immediately, saying that the problem obviously lies with the forwards. They're clearly not doing their job."

"Hang on a second, says one of the forwards, if you lot didn't botch that last tackle, then we wouldn't be in this mess."

What does the coach do at that point.

He pulls them up and tells them that they need to be responsible for their own game.

For the team to do its best, everyone needs to give it their all.

Blaming someone else isn't going to fix the situation.

This's a call to love even when you're not being treated that well.

And that's hard.

Even when we know that's the right thing to do, getting our emotions up to speed is much, much harder.

Husbands need to love even when they don't want to.

Blokes, it doesn't matter if she's a supermodel or her skin has gone wrinkly.

Whether she's got a good sense of humour or her words are barbs.

Whether her breath stinks or not.

Whether she respects you or not.

You've got to love her anyway.

There's also a second part to what Paul says.

The flipside is not to be harsh.

Verse 19:

and do not to be harsh with them.

The word's used in the Bible to describe having a bitter taste in your mouth.

When your wife is bitter towards you, it's tempting for you to be harsh to her in response.

Not for the Christian husband who lives with Jesus as his lord.

It's interesting how this lines up with what we need to get rid of in verse 8:

Colossians 3:8 (NIV11) ⁸ But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.

We tend to respond harshly when we're criticised or when we want someone to blame.

Brothers, that's not the right response.

James tells us that it's our wrong desires that come out as vitriol.

We need to control our desires.

James 4:1 (NIV11) ¹ What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don't they come from your desires that battle within you?

Loving is really broad, but that seems really specific, doesn't it?

Paul seems to be assuming that being harsh is a problem for enough men to warrant talking about.

If you felt a bit offended at the word submission, I feel a bit offended by that.

How dare he even suggest that I'm harsh with my wife... that's not me!

And yet, two thousand years later, we're more aware of family violence than ever before.

This really is a problem.

Paul was way ahead of his time.

Our government doesn't really know what to do about domestic violence.

I can't imagine them doing a campaign saying, "Love your wives."

It'd be too radical.

If you're head of your household, that doesn't mean that disciplining your wife is your job.

That's exactly how many men understand their role.

It's how they justify violence and I'd hate this passage to ever be seen as giving justification to that.

Don't be harsh.

Remember that Jesus is your Lord.

Marriage isn't just a matter of convenience, it's hard work.

It means dying yourself.

No one's going to pretend that this isn't a confronting passage.

But with Christ, it's possible.

As we look to Jesus as the model for what it looks like to serve others, we see him laying down his life.

He lay down his life for us.

He washed his disciples' feet.

And we're called to do the same for our wives.

Conclusion

If Jesus is Lord, it will change the way we live as husbands and wives.

What Paul says really should make all of us feel a little bit uncomfortable.

Is Jesus Lord in your marriage?

If he is, then wives will submit to their husbands and husbands will love their wives.

That view of marriage is as radical today as it was two thousand years ago.

¹ Luke 2.51

Living with Jesus as Lord in Marriage

Colossians 3:17-19

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Big Question: How will wives and husbands live if Jesus is their Lord?

Big Idea: Jesus is Lord in our marriages.

Discussion Questions

1. What ties the section from 3:18-4:1 together?
2. What connects this section to the one before?
3. How is the command to submit guided by the phrase, “as is fitting in the Lord”?
4. What does submission NOT mean in this context?
5. “Submission comes down to who makes the final decision in tough situations.” True or False?
6. Why do you think Paul commands wives to submit to their husbands, rather than just telling husbands and wives to love each other?
7. How does what Paul says to husbands connect with the virtues and vices he discussed earlier in chapter three?
8. What limits does Paul put on loving your wife? Why do you think this is?
9. If a husband admitted to you that he struggles with not being harsh with his wife, how would you counsel him?