



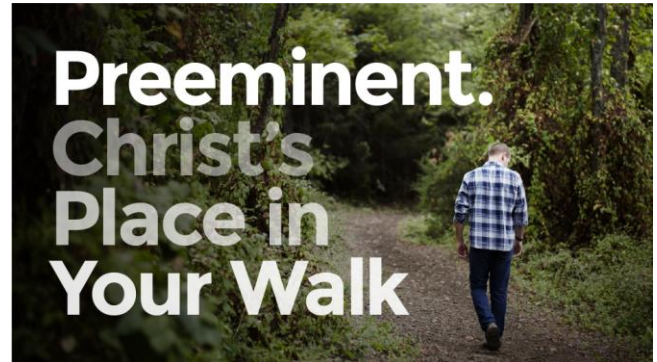
# VILLAGE BIBLE CHURCH

## SUGAR GROVE CAMPUS

# Love and Marriage

**Preeminent. Christ's Place in Your Walk | Part 14**

**Tim Badal | March 22, 2015 | Colossians 3:18-19**



Take God's Word in your hands and turn to the book of Colossians. We are continuing in our series entitled "Preeminent." This week we are in the second part of our series. In the first part we looked at chapters one and two. We talked about Christ's preeminence in the world and His place within the Trinity. He is the God-Man. At His Name, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess (Philippians 2:9-11). In chapters three and four, Paul addresses Christ's preeminence in our relationships. Over the last couple of weeks, we have talked about Christ's preeminence over our inner self. He is preeminent over our struggle with sin. His preeminence allows us to put on righteousness and holy living in all that we say and do. Throughout the rest of the book, Paul will address Christ's preeminence in specific types of relationships. Today we will look at what Paul has to say to husbands and wives. Next week, we will look at the relationships between parents and children. Then we will look at slaves and masters—or employees and employers in our modern context. After that, Paul addresses our relationships with unbelievers and how we should pray and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. We will close our study by looking at our relationships as fellow co-workers in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Today we are bringing our attention to one of the most vital human relationships: husbands and wives. Before we dive in, I want to bring clarity to a few points. If I don't address these issues, some of you might be disappointed by what you hear. Perhaps I won't address something that you think is important. Let me give you five points of clarity, explaining where I'm going and why I am addressing these specific things, then we will jump into our passage. As you look at Colossians 3:18-19 where wives are called to submit to their husbands and husbands are called to love their wives, remember:

1. Our passage is very short and because of that, we must not allow these verses to be a springboard into other passages of Scripture. We cannot address all of the issues that a couple will face in one sermon. Paul isn't giving a marriage conference, but a concise counsel for Christian households. I will try to focus on what Paul is saying in the text and not go beyond that.
2. Paul is speaking to hundreds, if not millions, of people because this passage has been recorded in Holy Scripture. As Paul writes to a general audience, I am speaking to you all as a general audience. I can't address every specific issue with which each individual couple is dealing. We will learn about the truths that Paul has addressed. If there are questions that this passage sparks, please seek out help and guidance for answers.
3. In this passage, Paul doesn't address singleness, dating, divorce or widowhood, so I won't address them today. I would love to address some of these things, and we have done so in the past. This isn't because they're not important or because your particular struggles aren't important; it is because these issues aren't found in our text today. We want to stay true to what this text articulates.
4. These truths are commands given to Christians. They are for people who desire a deep relationship with God and Jesus Christ. While we want these truths to be adopted by society, the text does not say, "Husbands of Colossae,

love your wives. Wives of the city of Colossae, submit to your husbands.” This is written to the church at Colossae, to children of the King who are in a local church setting. These are things believers need to hear.

5. Do not use my words as a way to fight with one another. Please don't do that. When I begin talking to the wives here, husbands, don't say, "Amen!" And wives, when I begin talking to the husbands, don't say, "Yeah, preach it, brother!" These are truths that we all need to take a look at and use to evaluate our own lives and our understanding of who we are. Leave the other person in the hands of God.

Turn to Colossians 3:18-19 where Paul says:

*Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.*

I want to address this issue between husbands and wives under three headings. If Christ is to be preeminent in your marriage, then you must:

## **1. Understand the Problem with Our Culture**

There is a problem in our culture in the way that we think about marriages and relationships between husbands and wives. Marriage is under attack. Before you think that this is a new issue, remember that marriage has been under attack since the beginning. In the Garden of Eden we see a wonderful thing take place. Man is with the animals in a perfect garden, but he is lonely. There isn't a helper suitable for him. God, in His grace and goodness, gives him a helpmate. Her name is Eve. After putting Adam into a deep sleep and taking one of his ribs, God makes a life-mate for Adam. Adam comes out of that sleep and announces to all the creatures in the Garden, "Hot diggity-dog! This is great! This is what I've been looking for! This is what I need in life! I have someone to whom I can relate!" (Genesis 1:26-2:25).

A marriage ceremony takes place. God says, "You're going to have a one-flesh relationship. You are going to live life together. This togetherness will be seen as you are fruitful and multiply. You will enjoy My favor. What I have brought together, let no man tear apart." That first wedding ceremony elevates the marital relationship above all other earthly relationships.

The problem is that in the garden there was something evil present. It isn't just the animals and Adam and Eve. The devil is in the garden, listening to what is taking place. The devil sees God elevate this relationship and he knows exactly what he is going to attack. The devil thinks, "I'm going to go after them." As soon as the honeymoon is over, he divides and conquers. That's what he always does. He will always do this with couples. He speaks to the woman and deceives her. The husband, not playing his part, follows her into deception. Adam fully knows what God had commanded. He rebels against God's laws. God comes and brings the punishment for their rebellion (Genesis 3).

In that moment, the first relationship hindered by sin is humankind's relationship with God. They go running for the hills. They are afraid to see God. On the heels of that broken relationship, their relationship as husband and wife is torn apart. When God confronts Adam, he does what every bad husband does; he throws his wife under the bus. He says, "The woman You gave me made me do it. It's Your fault. It's Your fault, God. You gave me this broken creature. She blew it for me." Bad husbands have been doing that ever since.

When God comes knocking, Adam and Eve cover themselves, not before God, but before each other. They start covering up the differences in their bodies. Sin has filled them with shame and a desire to cover and conceal, instead of being open and free without shame. Our struggle with marriage, our struggle with a culture that hates marriage, has been around since the garden. While there may be seasons when marriage has been pushed deeper and deeper into the garbage can, the Bible is clear that this issue isn't new. Marriages have been attacked since the beginning.

God is so honest about marriages in the Bible. Some of the greatest men and women of faith had some of the most difficult marriages. They struggled and committed some of the most heinous sins of betrayal and hurt. They brought so much sorrow to their spouses. The Bible records it for us in order to give us hope that we are not alone. However, the Bible doesn't say that we will never have a good marriage in our sinful flesh. In the Old Testament there is an entire book—The Song of Solomon—dedicated to the celebration of marriage. It is the celebration of oneness between a husband and wife. Because of His grace, God says in His Word that a sinful man and a sinful woman can come together and be united in marriage. They are able to enjoy blessing and bliss if they turn their attention to the One Who created them.

We have a culture that says marriage is always going to be a problem. It will always be difficult. The way the devil does this is the same way that he did in the Garden. He allows two of our enemies in his arsenal to attack us. Marriage today is attacked on two fronts:

## External Conflict

We live in a time when marriage is being redefined as something very different from what God intended. I don't just mean that in the obvious ways we see in our culture. Even today, we as Christians have a warped idea of what real marriage looks like and how we should love our spouses as God intended. We have allowed marriage to become something selfish, temporary and defiled. Be careful not to allow culture to lead you, but let Christ to lead you. What causes this to happen? What causes us to hurt those whom we say we love?

If we are going to have an impact for the Kingdom of God in this world, then we cannot allow our personal lives to look different from our spiritual lives. You cannot say that Christ is preeminent in your life when you are at church and then go home and live heinously in your marriage. This must change. Paul tells the Christians in Colossae that their marriages matter. They matter to God. They matter to other believers. They matter to our testimonies. Paul gives us a reminder in these two verses. In Colossians 3:17, we see that whatever we do, we are to do all things in the Name of Christ. Our marriages must be worked out in the Name of Christ.

Now this downward spiral that we are involved in has escalated and accelerated within the last generation. While marriage, divorce and abuse have been around for centuries, marriage is experiencing a terrible fall into depravity. This is seen in how a song has been used in the last 50 years. In 1955, Frank Sinatra introduced the world to a relatively obscure song called, "Love and Marriage." The song had simple lyrics and a catchy melody. With the velvety voice of Sinatra, it became an instant hit. Some may say that it embraced a Biblical understanding of marriage. It went like this:

Love and Marriage  
Love and Marriage  
They go together like a horse and carriage  
This I tell ya brother  
You can't have one without the other

It's love and marriage  
Love and marriage  
It's an institute you can't disparage  
Ask the local gentry  
And they will say it's elementary

So try, try, try to separate them  
It's an illusion  
Try, try, try  
And you will come to one conclusion

That love and marriage  
Love and marriage  
Go together like a horse and carriage  
Dad was told by mother  
You can't have one without the other

While disharmony has been rampant, I grew up in a culture that saw Sinatra's songs as the norm. As I watched television, I saw sitcoms where husbands and wives cared for one another. This would have been especially seen in the "Cosby Show." Do you remember Cliff and Clair Huxtable? They were fictional characters. Almost every week during the show, though their family life was chaotic, at some point Cliff and Clair would just love on one another. Whether it was eating an anniversary cake or giving one another a foot massage, they showed affection. I saw that in my parents' relationship as they loved one another.

However, something happened on April 5, 1997. The country was introduced to a dysfunctional Chicago family that would redefine marriage and what it looked like. On the Fox network, "Married with Children" would chronicle the lives of Al and Peg Bundy. Ironically, they used the song "Love and Marriage" as the theme song for the show. They used it as a satire. Al Bundy was a washed up high-school athlete turned shoe salesman. He was lazy, perverted and just plain stupid. He had no moral compass. He was content to argue with his wife, drink beer, leer at and harass younger women. He lived a lazy life. One TV critic said,

“Finally, for the first time, a real all-American husband has been introduced to society.” Are you kidding me? Husbands are supposed to be like Al Bundy?

Peg was a wife who was always on Al's case about money. She refused to do any domestic work. She was lazy, loud-mouthed and spent most of the time in front of the TV. She delighted in robbing Al blind by shopping. She was an inattentive mother and a nagging wife. She used every opportunity to humiliate Al about his job, his earnings and his manhood. Her taste for clothing and male strippers along with Al's dysfunction caused the family to fall into disrepair. The running joke throughout the series was Al mocking and regretting the fact that he married Peg in the first place. It didn't matter who was in the room. Yet, in the midst of that dysfunction, a feminist group praised Peg saying, “Finally, on TV we have a woman who has no need of a man.”

I want to be careful and say that no one TV show doomed marriage. I want to illustrate that, in a matter of 15 years, the country's concept of marriage changed dramatically. We are swimming in that as Christians. Whether we know it or not, we are adopting some of these same attitudes. God's Word today says, “That's not okay.” We need to be moved and changed. The external conflict has done its damage, but the Bible tells us that the devil doesn't just deal with culture; he also fights with us as believers through internal confusion which was the result of the first sin, but it runs deeper than this.

### **Internal confusion**

As husbands and wives, we have internal confusion. We lack wisdom and understanding in what it means to be a godly spouse. One of my biggest frustrations with Christian parents today is that we spend so much time and energy in our children's education, athletic pursuits and fine arts training. We feel like we've done a great job in raising them when they can do those things. There is one area, however, that we don't address at all. We don't talk about what it means to find a godly spouse or be a godly spouse. We wonder why our children struggle just like we did. What causes this?

As a pastor, I have performed many Christian wedding. Each time, Amanda and I will sit down and do extensive counseling with them. One of the questions that I ask each couple is: tell me one thing that your mom and dad did in their marriage that you want to take into your marriage. Almost half of all of those couples said that there wasn't a single redemptive thing that their parents did that they would want to emulate. We have a problem. We aren't modeling what it means to be godly husbands and wives. What an opportunity we have in the church for older men to teach younger men, for older women to teach younger women. But in order for us to have the right to teach, we must be doing this right in our homes or we're hypocrites.

These things were probably happening in the church in Colossae. Paul wouldn't have written these words if all of the marriages were great. Paul praises the Colossians in other parts of the text. No doubt marriages were struggling in Colossae. They are struggling in Village Bible Church as well. What do we do? Culture isn't the way to go. We must turn to Scripture.

## **2. Live out the practices commanded in the Bible**

If you want Christ to be preeminent, then you must start living out the practices that the Bible commands. With very few words, Paul tells us exactly what married couples need. He gives us a foundation for every marriage. Even though Paul was single, and he wrote two thousand years ago, he addresses now what atheist, secular psychologists say are the foundational needs of a man and woman. For men, they say that they need respect. It gives a man value and empowers him to fulfill his part. Women naturally desire love, which allows them to thrive and flourish in their relationships. Here Paul addresses these two things.

Before we dive into the things that are given in this text, I want to mention a few observations.

1. In these two commands, neither person is left alone. Paul doesn't merely address wives saying, “Wives, you need to submit,” and then turn to husbands and say, “You are doing a great job. No commands are necessary.” What's good for the goose is good for the gander. Paul addresses each spouse fairly and equitably.
2. Each spouse is given a job that is easily sabotaged by selfishness. While the jobs are different—one to submit, one to love—both will be sabotaged if either spouse lives a selfish life. A selfish wife will not submit to her husband. A selfish husband will not love his wife. We need to look inwardly, rather than pointing blame at the other. There is a good chance that we are sabotaging our marriages and we don't even know it. We are blind to our selfishness. We have made ourselves preeminent and not Christ.
3. Each command comes with a reason. Wives are to submit because it is fitting in the Lord. Husbands are to love so that they won't be harsh with their wives.

4. Both commands are given without caveats of any sort. This assumes that these commands are possible to accomplish. There isn't an "if you're able to" clause. Paul says that we are able to do these things.
5. Each of these commands is given within the context of each marriage relationship. This does not mean, as liberals want us to think Paul said, that women are to submit to all men and men must love all women. It means that wives are to submit to their own husbands and husbands are to love their own wives.

Paul gives two clear commands:

### **Wife, submit to the leadership of your husband**

What does that mean in a world that has messed this up so much? What do we do with that? The word "submit" is the Greek word *hupotassó*. This was a very common word used in military jargon. It was a term that described soldiers lining up according to rank. The privates, then the corporals, then the captains, then lieutenants, then all of the colonels and generals. While they may have different responsibilities and different authorities—the private on one side and the five-star general on the other side—they have equal standing before God. There is equality. There is significance. When we talk about submission, we are not talking about inferiority.

However, notice in the text that God is the One Who is talking to both husbands and wives. When it says, "*Wives, submit to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord,*" God is the One doing the talking. Husbands, keep your mouth shut. The Scriptures never say that it is your job to tell your wife to submit. That is between God and His daughters.

As a manager in a business, my dad was working with me. When one of my employees asked me why they had to do something, my response was, "Because I'm the boss." My dad pulled me aside and said, "Just a quick piece of wisdom. If you have to tell people that you're the boss, you're not the boss." Husbands, if you have to tell your wives to submit, it is not a reflection on your wife's lack of submission but on your lack of leadership.

Wives, know that when the text says, "*submit to your own husbands,*" God is saying that there is an authority there. When he tells children to obey their parents, they are to obey an authority. We are called to serve our masters and employers well—as those in authority. We're told in other passages to submit to governing authorities; there is a real authority there. Your husband has been given real authority to lead the family. Your calling is to submit. Why? The Bible makes it abundantly clear that wives are to be subject to their husbands. Husbands are to lead. When you submit to your husbands, you are living out Christlikeness. The Bible says over and over again that Jesus submitted voluntarily. He laid down His life, in His humanity, in submission to the Father. That meant that God didn't drag Jesus kicking and screaming to do what He had called the Son to do here on earth. Nowhere do you see Jesus say, "Well, I'm My Own Man! You can't tell Me what to do!" In Mark 14:36, Jesus submits Himself to the Father when He says, "*Yet not what I will, but what you will.*" That's the calling for wives.

With authority comes responsibility. Husbands, let me remind you that because your wives have been called to submit to you, you will be held accountable for how you lead your wife and your family. God will judge you. He will judge me. Paul describes an order here. There must be an order in the family or there will be chaos in our lives. From the beginning of time God says, "Men, lead your families well. Women, follow their leadership."

Before you think that submission is a demotion, remember that there is submission within the Godhead. We've seen this in the humanity of Christ, but it goes further. First Corinthians 11:3 is another passage that you can study in order to see this truth. You may think, "Tim, are you saying that I'm not equal with my husband? That I'm not as smart as my husband? That I can't lead as well as my husband? That I'm not as spiritual as my husband? Do you think my biblical knowledge isn't at the same level as my husband's?" No. I'm not saying that at all. In some ways, women knock it out of the park compared to men. However, I want you to recognize the order that God has established. In 1 Corinthians 11:3, Paul says this: "*But I want you to understand that the head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.*" Here's the pecking order: every man is accountable to Christ, every wife is accountable to her husband, and Jesus Christ is accountable to God the Father.

You may say, "Wait a minute. Isn't Jesus God? Isn't He equal with the Father?" Yes. He is equal. "Was there a time when God existed and Jesus did not?" No. "Don't they have the same power and intellect? Don't they work all things together?" Yes. "Is God the Father greater than God the Son?" No. However, in the midst of that equality, the Son submits to the Father. Likewise, just as the Son submits to the Father, wives submit to their husbands. This isn't because of a lack of intellect, nor a lack of spiritual, physical or emotional abilities. Men and women are equal in God's sight, but they are different. They complement (as in complete-ment) one another in a way that brings order to marriage. Just as Christ is equal to the Father, He submits to the

Father in function, not in being or essence. This is done so that the three Persons of the Trinity can deal responsibly and orderly with the created world.

What does it mean that submission is *"fitting to the Lord"*? This means that God has called wives to this task, not husbands. For wives, submitting to their husbands is their lot in the Christian life. When a wife does not obey the command to submit to her own husband, she doesn't just fall short of being a wife, she falls short of being a follower of Christ. For such a woman, the command to submit is foreign to her nature or personality. You cannot say, "If I was the submissive type, I would submit. If I was a more passive woman, submission wouldn't be a problem. But I am a feisty lady. I'm empowered." No. All types of women are called to submit in marriage.

This has nothing to do with your husband's intelligence, giftedness or capability. This is a command and it reflects your relationship with Christ. It honors Him. Just as Paul will tell us not to please our earthly masters through eye-service, we serve our masters unto the Lord. He is our true Master. This has nothing to do with whether or not your husband is right on a particular issue. It has to do with Jesus being right. For our younger women, this means that if you are having difficulty understanding what it means to submit to a man who will be your husband, choose your husband carefully. Don't choose a man because he is attractive or wealthy or romantic. Choose a man whom you can respect.

Before I move on from the concept of submission, let me say this: When can you not submit? We live in a sinful world. The Bible tells us that whether it's governing authorities, bosses, parents or husbands, those who are called to submit are called to submit as often as they can. If the husband tells you to do something contrary to God's Word, respectfully and humbly tell him, "I cannot do this. You're causing me to sin. Don't ask me to do something that will dishonor myself or dishonor my God."

There are terrible men and terrible husbands in this world. I would be remiss if I didn't talk about abuse. If your husband is abusing you or your children—emotionally, spiritually, or physically—get out of the house. If you have to, call the police. Those are the governing authorities. If a husband abuses a wife, he should spend some time in jail. That's out of place for a Christian. Husbands are not to abuse women, but love them and care for them as equal partners in the covenant of grace that God has given us. It goes without saying that if your marriage is in a troubled spot and it's hard for you to submit, seek the wisdom of Godly people to know how to deal with that appropriately. In all other situations, as far as it depends on you, submit. If you can't, humbly ask God or seek the wisdom of others so that you can learn how.

### **Husband, sacrificially love your wife**

Aren't you glad that God's assignments are never lopsided? In this Word of instruction and guidance, God gives a word of equal strength to both wives and husbands. Paul says with all biblical authority, "Husbands, you are called to love your wives." Might I add, wives, you're never called to do that in Scripture? Men, you are. Mere natural love can easily turn into selfishness and then into bitterness. The way that we show love is not based on us, but on the finished work of Jesus Christ, Who loved us and gave Himself up as a ransom for us. A husband whose life is marked by love toward his wife will have a wife who will have no difficulty submitting to him.

The word for love in Colossians 3:19 is the Greek word *agapé*. It means that we must love unconditionally and sacrificially as God loves the sinner and His Own Son. This means that men cannot love their wives the way God intended unless they have a vibrant and healthy relationship with the Almighty. If you think that a bunch of flowers on Valentine's Day or Swedish Days is going to get the job done, that's a selfish love. Christ-like love is the kind of love we are called to show our wives each and every day.

Martin Luther, the great Reformer, put it this way: "The Christian has continually in the Scriptures been called to love his neighbor as himself. Since the wife is the man's closest neighbor, she should have reserved for herself his deepest love." How is love made manifest? Husband, you are to delight in your wife. You must please her in every way. You must cherish her as Christ cherishes the church, offering and providing her support and comfort every day. You are to protect her. You must not be bitter toward her. Don't use bitter words or sour looks. Don't act rudely or harshly with her as if she were a slave or an animal. She is not. She is your companion and fellow recipient of God's grace. You must seek her physical, emotional and spiritual good every day.

What is the result? You won't be harsh with her. A husband must love his wife and not abuse her. There must have been a problem in Colossae because God doesn't add words for superfluous reasons. There is a reason why these words have been preserved for posterity. Colossians 3:19 is a challenging word for Christian men because God knows our tendency is to get angry.

When men get angry, they don't sulk by themselves; they make everyone else disappointed and frustrated and mad. "If I'm mad, everybody's going to be mad." Even the dog knows that we're angry because that's when we kick the dog.

Paul tells us to be careful. When you allow anger to ferment in your life, it will come out. Who will receive the brunt of that blow? The one who is closest to you: your wife. It will come out against your kids as well. Paul says to love your wife. Don't be embittered against her. Don't be harsh and resentful toward her. Don't abuse her. Don't hold hard feelings against her. Don't be sarcastic toward her. In my own vernacular, "Husband, stop being a jerk!" Don't treat your wife like anything less than what she really is: a woman of utmost worth who deserves your love and devotion.

God is reminding us, men, we are not doing this. How easy is it to take our wives for granted? How easy is it to not serve them, but be selfish? We are supposed to love our wives dearly. This is a word we need to take seriously.

The Bible says that the church must submit to Christ because He is the Leader of the church. How did Christ lead? He gave Himself up for her by laying down His life so that she might be lifted up. Christ went to the cross so that we might live. A godly husband lays down his life for his wife's so that she may be raised up. Do you notice the absolute genius of Paul's words? "Wives, lay yourselves low so that you can submit to your husbands. Husbands lay yourselves low so that you can love your wives." Humility is what will save the day in our marriages. God is not saying, "Wives, get down and play your inferior part so that the husbands can take over." No. Each spouse is vying to show deference to one another. Love and submission are the result.

I played in the school band throughout junior high and high school. I miss those times with the band. There's something beautiful about a group of young people getting together and playing instruments of all different kinds and producing music. Husbands, you must play a tune. Your job is to play the melody. The melody is loud and clear. It leads the way. You are to lead and play the tune that carries the music. Wives, you have a part that's just as important. Your job is to sing the harmony. It is a wonderful thing to hear a melody, but harmonies are something special. There are beautiful harmonies that take the song from good to outstanding. Husbands, your job is to sing the melody. Wives, your part is to sing the harmony. When your voices come together, it is a glorious thing. What we need in this church are couples who sing melodies and harmonies, making beautiful music with one another. That's what God intended. He wants you to sing a duet with your partner. That's what He has made us to do. It will help the children. It will help society when we get this thing right.

Sadly, many men have abdicated their role of singing melody and their wives have to pick up the job. Men, don't be lazy. Do what God has called you to by loving your wife so that your wife can know that her job isn't to worry about the melody; she fills in with the beauty of the harmony. I pray that my wife's life and calling of submission is one of the easiest things that she has to do. I hope that she can say, "I get to do that," because I've shown her love and affection every day. Here's what I know: I haven't always done this. I've been harsh with her at times. I have been quick-tempered with her. I'm thankful for a wife who loves Jesus and who recognizes that Jesus isn't done with her husband yet.

### 3. Take the Path that Leads to Christ-Honoring Marriages

Let me give you some applications and allow you to study them. You must take the path. How do you do this? I want to include where we've been in the last couple of weeks with our applications today.

1. **Elevate Christ as preeminent in your marriage.** I was told early on in my marriage that a marriage is like a triangle. Each spouse is at the base of the triangle. For any relationship to be healthy, Christ must be at the apex of that triangle. The calling of every spouse is individually to get as close to Jesus as possible. As each spouse grows closer to Jesus, the closer they will become to each other. Colossians 3:17 tells us to do all things in the Name of Christ Jesus. This means that you need to make Jesus the Number One Goal in your marriage.
2. **Evaluate yourself, not your spouse.** Colossians 3:1-4 says, "Husbands, wives, are you setting your mind on heavenly things or on earthly things?" Husbands, don't say, "Wow, you've done a lousy job submitting." Wives, don't say, "Husbands, you're blowing it in your love." Look at your own life. Don't worry about the person sitting next to you. Say, "Lord, how am I doing? What areas need to change in my life so that I can serve my spouse well?"
3. **Evict the enemies from your marriage.** Colossians 3:5-11 says, "We need to personally put things to death." Can I tell you that this is true in our marriages? Immorality has to go. Lying and slander must be released from our lips. If those things are in our lives, they will come out and hurt the ones closest to us. They will betray those whom we are called to love. We must rid ourselves of them. Kick them out of your lives. They will sap the vitality of any godly marriage.

4. **Extend forgiveness when you are wronged.** Living with someone isn't easy. Just ask my wife. I'm a mess. So are you. Each one of us has idiosyncrasies and issues. If you have been hurt deeply by your spouse or betrayed by your spouse, you are commanded to forgive as Christ has forgiven you. There is unforgiveness in many marriages today and it needs to be dealt with once and for all. Seek forgiveness by saying, "Please forgive me. I've wronged you in this way." Don't caveat it with, "If you didn't do this or that, I wouldn't have acted this way." Lay yourself at the mercy of your spouse and Jesus Christ saying, "I've blown it. Please forgive me." If you can't, if it seems impossible, your elders and their wives are here to help you. It may not mean forgive and forget. There might be some difficult things ahead. God wants you to forgive one another.
5. **Equip yourself through God's Word.** Allow the Word to dwell in you richly. Allow the Word of God to teach you and admonish you so that you can have the peace of Christ in your heart. The church has some incredible, Bible-based resources that will help. One great book is by Timothy Keller and his wife called, *The Meaning of Marriage*. Get your hands on it. It is an outstanding book. If you would like to, talk with one of the elders. We have a series that we offer here called, "Marriage on the Rock." It is a phenomenal, Biblically-based marital resource that helps. We'll get a couple families together and walk them through that study. We love to do that. We want husbands and wives to understand what God's Word says to them.
6. **Enjoy the blessing of having a spouse.** I get that your spouse isn't perfect. You're not perfect either. I get that your spouse is difficult to live with. So are you. Proverbs 18:22 says, "*He who finds a wife finds a good thing.*" Can I change the Bible for a moment? Can I say that it's true that when a wife finds a husband, she finds a good thing? Don't leave this place without recommitting your love to one another.

There is an old rock-and-roll hair band that once sang, "You don't know what you've got 'til it's gone." Let's not take living with our spouse for granted. It's a blessing. Do the hard work. You may not feel like it right now, but no blessing comes without hard work except the grace of God. We need our spouses in our lives to teach and train us. God never says that we will live happily ever after. However, He does say that if we serve Him and honor Him and serve and honor our spouse, He will bless us. Who among us doesn't need some blessing from God in our marriages? Take these words. Be sensible people. Don't use them against one another. Allow them to permeate your lives so that everything you do can be done in the Name of Christ and for His glory and praise.