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"We love him, because he first loved us."

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#### b. God commanded husbands to love their wives

- 1) This is a positive command in the present tense, "Husbands, be loving your wives" (v.19).
- 2) God commands *agape* love. This is *sacrificially giving of ourselves to meet the needs of your wife*.
- 3) Being a command, this is **not** an option. **You cannot command an emotion!** You cannot say, "Feel good" or "Be happy". However, you **can** command an action like, "Be kind" or "Talk nicely". Since *agape* love is an action of choice, not an emotion, God commands husbands to choose to love their wives, even if she is unlovable. This has a direct link to avoiding bitterness, as we will see.
- 4) *Agape* love demands **commitment**. Commitment is binding yourself to a course of action. It is being **faithful to your wife in thought and deed until death**. **Because love is a choice, it is disobedient and sinful to choose to stop loving your wife**. It takes **grit** to remain loyally committed when circumstances become distasteful. **Even the best of marriages have occasional distasteful moments because we are sinful, selfish creatures**. Since **God is the source of love**, and He never changes, commitment is at the core of *agape* love. If you build your marriage on sacrificial, giving, *agape* love that is rooted in commitment instead of building it on emotional or fleshly love, you will have a strong marriage. If your marriage began on the wrong kind of love, it is never too late to begin *agape* love.

**Conclusion:** Wives, are you fulfilling your type of the Church by submitting biblically to your husband? Husbands, are you fulfilling your type of Christ by loving your wife sacrificially? If we fail to understand these types correctly, we will fail to understand and fulfil our roles in marriage. *Agape* love is the "oil" that prevents bitter friction in marriage. Use it generously.

**Song:** Have Thine Own Way - 388

# Bitter-free Love Pt.1

5 September 2021 AM – Colossians 3:-18-19 – Marriage – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** As I began working on this message several weeks ago, I requested your input on Colossians 3:19 regarding the cause and the cure for a husband's bitterness towards his wife. As my study progressed, I realised that the problem involves both husband and wife, and that I must include Colossians 3:18 as well. Because I cannot share all that I learned in one message, we will only be looking at "Bitter-free Love" part 1 today. Please do not miss part 2 next week.

**Transition:** Read Colossians 3:18-19. This morning, we are going to work through God's command to love.

## 1. God Ordained Love in Marriage

(Gen 2:24) "*Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.*"

### a. Both husband and wife are part of God's plan

- 1) God made both in His image.
- 2) God designed both to complement each other.
- 3) Marriage was part of God's original plan.
- 4) God created specific roles for husband and wife.
- 5) Since Adam and Eve sinned, both husbands and wives struggle with sin natures.
- 6) Interestingly, God tells us that He planned marriage to be a type of His relationship with Christians. Turn with me to Ephesians 5:31-32. Read it carefully! **This is key!**

### b. Wives are a type of the church

- 1) She is to submit to her husband as the church submits to Christ (Eph 5:22, 24). **Note carefully the type here.** *Her role is a type of the Christian's role as the Bride of Christ.*
- 2) I never hear Christians grip or complain that it is unfair that we must submit to Christ. Though we struggle to submit to Christ at times, we know that it is our role. Christ commands us to deny ourselves and follow Him. That is a challenge, but we do not see it as unreasonable. He expects us to present our bodies a living sacrifice to Him (Ro 12:1). He commands us to flee youthful lusts (2Ti

2:22). He demands that we put away all anger and be kind and forgiving (Eph 4:31-32). We are to do all things to the glory of God (1Co 10:31). **Submitting to Christ takes work.** **Though submission to Christ is humbling, it is not humiliating.** We are **not** Christ's doormat. **We are His cherished bride.**

- 3) The wife is to honour her husband as the church honours Christ (Eph 5:33). Her God-given role to submit to her husband is humbling, **but it is not humiliating.** If her husband is not all that he should be, that is for God to sort out, not the wife.
- 4) What then is she to do if her husband is not right with God or is not even a believer? Peter answers that question. (1 Peter 3:1) "*Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the [lit. a] word be won by the conversation of the wives; While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.*" A wife's godly submission and pure life will speak louder to him than her preaching. Live godly before him and do not nag him. If your husband is not right with God, be sure there are no sins in your life that he may use as an excuse.

### c. Husbands are a type of Christ

- 1) The husband is to **lead** his wife as Christ heads the church (Eph 5:23). Christ leads with authority, but not as a harsh dictator. He leads lovingly with clear direction.
- 2) The husband is to **sacrifice** to love as Christ sacrificially loved the church (Eph 5:25). Christ left heaven for us. He died a dreadful death, bearing our sin for us. That is the ultimate picture of God's *agape* love. **Agape love is freely giving of one's self for the benefit of another.** It always requires sacrifice. Loving our wives will take of our time, energy, emotions and finances. **Love is costly!**
- 3) **Christ is working to sanctify and cleanse us** (Eph 5:26-27). **His goal is that we become glorious, spotless, and holy.** As a type of Christ, every husband must develop a plan to **edify** his wife. **[Read carefully]. That plan may include daily praying together** (not just at meal time), **reading the**

**Bible together, discussing what you learn from your personal Bible reading, transparent focussed communication** (stop, look, listen, open up), **seek her counsel, expressions of love, empathy, repentance, forgiveness, compassion, sharing her load, building trust, etc.** **Be a godly example for her to follow.** If your wife is not sweeter and more godly today than she was on your wedding day, either you are **not working a plan or your plan is not working.** We must deny ourselves to edify and minister to our wives.

- 4) God said we must love our wives as we love ourselves (Eph 5:28). That will require a great deal of **empathy** for our wives. Empathy is understanding and entering into another's feelings. We must put ourselves in her shoes. Seek to see life from her perspective. **We should never sacrifice more for our own needs than we would for our wives' needs.** We are one flesh! We are to be one **emotionally, physically, spiritually, financially, etc.** If your wife is hurting, you are to be hurting with her. Her burdens are to be your burdens. Her needs are your needs. Loving her as yourself is part of *agape* love.
- 5) The husband is to **nourish** (promote health) and **cherish** (nurture with tender care) her as the Lord does the church (Eph 5:29). This **care** is also part of the *agape* sacrificial love. Men, we often struggle with this. I know in my own life, the Lord had to give me Lyme disease like my wife so that I could understand her fatigue, pain and brain fog. We must compassionately care for our wives' health. This is all part of loving her as we love ourselves.
- 6) Husbands, when God commanded, "**... love your wives, and be not bitter against them**" (Col 3:19), He was commanding us to be a type of Christ in marriage.

*Not only did God Ordain love in marriage ...*

## 2. God Orders Love in Marriage (Col 3:18-19)

### a. God did not command wives to love

- 1) God commanded the wife to submit; He did not command her to *agape* love. The husband is to initiate love. He is to

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