

bitterness. God commands you to forgive, even if she never confesses her sin. **Bitterness is like a cancer that will eat at your emotions and ruin your life.**

- d) If your bitterness was caused by selfishness, confess your bitterness to God and then ask your wife to **forgive** you for it. Even if your wife was at fault, **forgive** her. We all fail, that is part of life. Overlook little issues. (Matthew 7:3) "*And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?*"
  - e) If you are positive that the disappointment or hurt was **not** selfishness on your part, then **talk to your wife** about it. Do not shout, accuse, blast or shame your wife. Make positive suggestions.
  - f) Pray together, asking God to help this issue not to cause irritation or bitterness any longer.
- 2) With God's help (by being Word-filled / Spirit-filled) put all bitterness out of your life. (Ephesians 4:31) "*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice.*" (Ephesians 4:32) "*And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you.*"
- 3) One person wisely said, "**Worry about changing yourself, not your spouse.**" That is good advice!

**Conclusion:** Husbands, God knows that we struggle to love biblically and to never become bitter toward our wives. However, if we will live Word-filled / Spirit-filled lives, we can do these difficult tasks. If you have been struggling with these commands, draw near to God and put what you have heard tonight into practice.

**When you wife irritates you, find a way to show her love instead of becoming bitter.**

**Song:** Teach Me Thy Way, O Lord - 337

# Word-filled Husbands

5 March 2017 PM - Colossians 3:19 - Col16 - Scott Childs

**Introduction:** Read Colossians 3:19. Love and bitterness are like the two ends of a seesaw. When one end is up, the other is down. You cannot possibly be loving and bitter at the same time. If you biblically love your wife, you will not be bitter toward her. If you are bitter toward your wife, you are not biblically loving her.

**Transition:** In the text before us, we find two clear commands for every husband that he can do if he is Word-filled. These commands are not optional. Failure is disobedient sin. So, husbands, we have work to do.

## 1. Husbands Love Your Wives

### a. Husbands are to be loving leaders

- 1) In the previous verse we learned that wives are to submit to their husband's leadership. That is not always easy, especially if the husband is a poor leader.
- 2) Good leaders lead first by example and then by wise direction.
- 3) In marriage, God commands that the husband's leadership must be guided by love.
- 4) (Ephesians 5:23) "*For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.*" (Ephesians 5:25) "*Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;*"
- 5) If as a husband, I make decisions that hurt my wife emotionally, physically, or spiritually, those decisions were not made in love. I was leading selfishly. Remember, **love is sacrificially giving of myself to meet the needs of another.** Loving leadership thinks first of the needs of the wife. Selfish decisions are not loving leadership.

### b. Love is a difficult duty

- 1) The opposite of biblical love is not hate; it is selfishness. Biblical love is not a feeling; it is a choice.
- 2) Husbands are to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself for it.
  - a) Christ left heaven for us.

- b) Christ became sin for us. He took my sin as if it were His.
  - c) Christ was abused, spit upon, mocked, punched, crowned with thrones, hit on the head with sticks, whipped till nearly dead with a “cat of nine tails”, all because of OUR sins.
  - d) Christ died for our sins.
  - e) We find no selfishness in Christ’s actions. In every act He sacrificed His feelings to benefit us.
- 3) Reader’s Digest [6/86], p. 159 tells a story of a wife who had been married to a coach for 34 years and had learned that a ball game always has top priority. But one particularly frustrating day she burst out, “Frank, you’d miss my funeral to go to a ball game!” He calmly replied, “Roberta, whatever made you think I’d schedule your funeral on the day of a game?” Quoted by Steven Cole True love is giving your wife top priority.
- 4) In love Christ suffered for us that he might improve our condition. (Ephesians 5:26) "*That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word,*" (Ephesians 5:27) "*That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish.*"
- 5) Men, to love our wives as Christ loved us, we must live to make her more holy and without blemish. We must discern what her physical and spiritual needs are and then seek to help her in those areas. If your wife has begun to irritate you since your marriage, it is very likely that you have not been selflessly building her up as Christ does.
- 6) God knows that husbands struggle to be proper loving leaders, but if we will let the Word of Christ dwell in us richly, we will be Word-filled (Spirit-filled) husbands enabled to be loving leaders. **We cannot do it without the Spirit’s enabling.**

## 2. Husbands Be Not Bitter Against Your Wives

### a. What is bitterness?

- 1) The Greek word means to make bitter, to exasperate, to

render angry, to be indignant, to be irritated.

- 2) We can learn about bitterness by noting its **siblings**. (Ephesians 4:31) "*Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*" Bitterness is in the same family as all kinds of anger. Bitterness is leading with harsh authority.
- 3) **Paul Bucknell** notes that, “Bitterness comes from being offended by someone and holding a begrudging heart against him.” He goes on to state “Bitterness, I believe, is the number one killer of our marriages.”
- 4) **Steven Cole** adds, “Bitterness is settled anger which comes from disappointed expectations that are not properly dealt with.” “It takes root when you focus on the sins or shortcomings of your wife. Behind it is the disappointment of unmet expectations. It expresses itself by embittered anger, vindictiveness, or being cross or harsh.”
- 5) From our text we learn that bitterness is the opposite of biblical love. Biblical love is living to meet the needs of my wife. Bitterness is selfish irritation because my wife did not meet my expectations and being unwilling to forgive her. **NOTE: Wives may become bitter for the same reasons.**

### b. How are we to resolve bitterness?

- 1) We must deal with disappointments and hurts in a biblical way. Bitterness is sin. Do not excuse it!
  - a) **Identify signs** of bitterness. Signs may include harsh words or unkind actions toward your wife or family, irritated feelings toward your wife or desire to be left alone.
  - b) **Examine your heart** before the Lord. Ask God if the disappointment or hurt was real or just selfishness on your part. **[If you are not sure, ask “What would Jesus do?”]** Unrealistic expectations are simply selfishness demands. Getting irritated over unavoidable circumstances is also selfishness.
  - c) In the worst scenario, even if your spouse sinned against you or was unfaithful this does not justify