

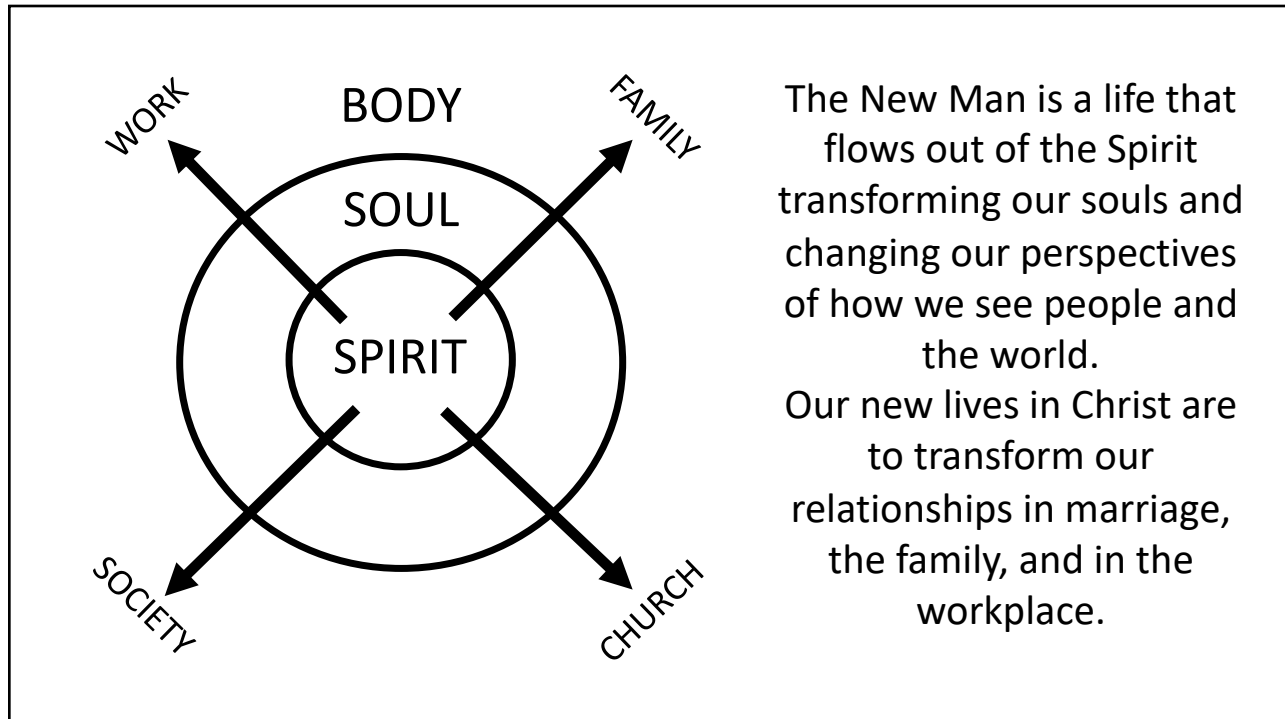
Colossians 3:18-4:1  
Relationships of the New Man

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## Introduction

The “Old Man” is cut off from God and others. His life centers on himself, often at the expense of others. This old man overflows into the relationships of the home and society which create division and discord.

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## Colossians 3:18-4:1

Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

<sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

<sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the

Lord. <sup>21</sup> Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. <sup>22</sup> Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according

to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. <sup>23</sup> And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord

and not to men, <sup>24</sup> knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup> But he who

does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. <sup>4</sup> Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair,

knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

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## A Word to Wives

Colossians 3:18

**Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**

Marriage and its roles are under attack. The roles that God has established are not demeaning. They paint a bigger picture for the world to see. When these roles are taken out of context it impacts our witness to the world and we lose the blessings of a proper marriage relationship. Ephesians teaches that marriage is a picture of Christ and the church. Both husband and wife have responsibilities in this picture. Several years ago, my wife did a series in the Ladies class on the the wife being the helper/completer. The husband starts things, but it is the woman who helps and completes it. We see this in childbearing. The husband may initiate the conceiving of a child, but it is the woman carries and brings it into the world. A husband may buy or build a house, but it is the wife who makes it into a home.

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## A Word to Wives

Colossians 3:18

**Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**

**Submit** means “to subject oneself.” It has the concept of putting oneself under, not by compulsion, but willingly. The term is used in Luke 2:51 to refer to Jesus’ subjection to His parents, and in Luke 10:17, 20 to describe demons being subject to the disciples. In Romans 8:7, Paul employs the word to speak of being submissive to the commands of God’s law. His use of it in Romans 13:1, 5 refers to the necessary submission of every person to governing authority, which is established by God. In both 1 Corinthians 15:27–28 and Ephesians 1:22, the verb looks to the time when all things in the universe are made subject to Christ and God in eternal glory.

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## A Word to Wives

Colossians 3:18

**Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**

Paul's word to wives is be submissive to **your own** husbands. They do not submit to some detached, impersonal authority. Rather, they submit to the man with whom they have an intimate, personal, vital relationship.

It is helpful to note several misconceptions about submission. First, submission does not imply inferiority. Galatians 3:28 clearly affirms that spiritually there is no difference between male and female. Jesus submitted to the Father during His life on earth, yet He was in no way inferior to Him. Second, submission is not absolute. Obedience in this passage is reserved for children and servants. There may be times when a wife must refuse to submit to her husband's desires (if they violate God's Word). Finally, the husband's authority is not to be exercised in an authoritative, overbearing manner. The wife's submission takes place in the context of a loving relationship.

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## A Word to Wives

Colossians 3:18

**Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**

That wives submit to their husbands is **fitting in the Lord**. The Greek form in this phrase expresses an obligation, a necessary duty. It is how God designed and commands the family to operate. As stated before the wife is to love and submit to her husband as the church is to submit to Christ. The practice of submission involves an attitude of respect and a response to a husband's leadership.

This is easier when the husband is properly fulfilling his role in marriage.

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## A Word to Husbands

Colossians 3:19

**Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.**

Notice that this verse does not say, “husbands exercise authority over your wife.” In fact you will not find that command anywhere in Scripture. What is stated is that **husbands are to love your wives**. In Ephesians 5:25, Paul wrote, “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church.” Obviously, in spite of the failings of the church, Christ has continually loved her with grace and forgiving mercy and thus has never become bitter because of the church’s many sins.

Paul addresses two commands to husbands. First, they must love their **wives**. The present tense of the imperative *agapate* (**love**) indicates continuous action. The verb itself seems best understood in the New Testament to express a willing love, not the love of passion or emotion, but the love of choice. It is a covenant kind of love. It could be translated, “keep on loving.”

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## A Word to Husbands

Colossians 3:19

**Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.**

The willing, covenant love in view here is the activity of self-sacrifice. It is a deep affection that views the wife as a sister in the Lord and the object of a promise to be kept. The love that Paul commands sees the wife as a weaker vessel to be cared for while at the same time a fellow-heir to grace (cf. 1 Pet. 3:7), a best friend, and life-partner.

God designed that a wife’s submission operate within a context of love. In that way she is protected because a man who truly loves his wife would never force her to submit to something humiliating, degrading, or that violates her conscience. The godly husband loves his wife like Christ loves the church.

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## A Word to Husbands

Colossians 3:19

Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

The second command is that **husbands ... do not be bitter toward them** (wife). The word and tense of **bitter** could be translated, “stop being bitter,” or “do not have the habit of being bitter” In its only other uses in the New Testament (Rev. 8:11; 10:9, 10) it refers to something bitter in taste. Paul tells husbands not to call their wives “honey,” and then act like vinegar. They must not display harshness of temper or resentment toward their wives. They are not to irritate or exasperate them, but rather to provide loving leadership in the home.

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## A Word to Husbands

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Paul adds another helpful note when, in 1 Corinthians 7:33–34, he calls for a mutual concern in marriage. The husband is to seek to find “how he may please his wife,” and the wife to pursue “how she may please her husband.” Though there is authority and submission by God’s design, there is also spiritual equality and a mutual longing for each partner to please the other. The woman most pleases the man with loving submission, while he pleases her with loving authority.

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**So What ...**

When either husband or wife fight for control, everything falls apart.

Husbands, take the responsibility for your wife and family that God has entrusted to you.

Wives, be the helper/completer that God designed you to be.

It takes both of you working together, with eyes on serving Christ to become a Godly home and raise up Godly children.

The church is here to support you in this endeavour.