

THE PRISON EPISTLES: NURTURE FOR OPPRESSED BELIEVERS

II. Colossians: Nurture In Living Focused On The Supremacy And All-Sufficiency Of Christ

J. Nurture In Applying Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency To Our Walk

4. Nurture In Applying Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency To Family Life

(Colossians 3:18-21)

I. Introduction

- A. If the believer must focus on his positional certainties in Christ in the heavens to offset the trials he faces from evil pressures on earth as Colossians 3:1-4 with its Colossians 2:1-23 context teach, he is **also** obligated to **function righteously** in his **family life** as *opposed* to living in **worldliness** in that realm.
- B. Colossians 3:18-21 gives practical instructions on this subject, and we view it for our insight and edification:

II. Nurture In Applying Christ's Supremacy And All-Sufficiency To Family Life, Colossians 3:18-21.

- A. Colossians 3:18 in its context directs righteous functioning for **wives** in marriage:
1. Under the control of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16), the believing wife in a marriage is to focus on her heavenly position in Christ (Colossians 3:1-4) so as to submit herself unto her husband, for this is "proper, fitting" (*aneko*, Arndt & Gingrich, *A Grk.-Eng. Lex. of the N. T.*, 1967, p. 65) in the Lord, Col. 3:18.
 2. The verb "submit" here is in the **middle** voice (*hupotassethe* [from *hupotasso*], *U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*, 1966, p. 701; *The Analytical Greek Lexicon*, 1972, p. 419), indicating the wife submits *for her own benefit*, that the **LORD** in *heaven* is pleased with such a wife's function and that **He** will thus **bless her accordingly!**
- B. Colossians 3:19 in its context directs righteous functioning for **husbands** in marriage:
1. Under the control of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16), the believing husband in a marriage is to focus on his heavenly position in Christ (Colossians 3:1-4) so as to love (*agapao*, *Ibid.*, *U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*) his wife, Colossians 3:19a. This Greek term implies an objective, "reasoning attachment" as opposed to a mere emotional connection (as with *phileo*), Richard C. Trench, *Synonyms of the N. T.*, 1973, p. 41.
 2. This love was to be accompanied by the husband's *ceasing* (present imperative with subjunctive negative adverb *me*, *Ibid.*, *U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*) to let himself be (passive voice, *pikrainesthe*, *Ibid.*; *Ibid.*, *The Anal. Grk. Lex.*, p. 324) "made bitter, embittered" (*pikraino*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 663), Colossians 3:19b. This verb in this context means "do not become incensed, harbor resentment, against" one's wife (*Theol. Dict. of the N. T.*, v. VI, p. 125), that a man not despise his wife's female weaknesses so as to inhibit his love toward her, but to make an **objective choice** to **love** (*agapao*, cf. II, B, 1) her as she **needs** him to do.
- C. Colossians 3:20 in its context directs righteous functioning for **children** in family life:
1. Under the control of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16), the believing child in a family is to focus on his heavenly position in Christ (Colossians 3:1-4) so as to obey his parents in **all** things, Colossians 3:20a, the sole exception to such obedience of course being if a parent tells the child to sin against God, Acts 5:29.
 2. Such activity is "acceptable, pleasing" (*euaestros*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 319) in the Lord, Col. 3:20b.
- D. Colossians 3:21 in its context directs righteous functioning for **parents** in family life:
1. Under the control of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:16), the believing "parents" (*pateres* here is the word for "fathers" [*U. B. S. Grk. N. T.*], but in the context (Col. 3:20), both mother and father are included, with an emphasis on the leadership of the father in the family) are to focus on their heavenly position in Christ (Colossians 3:1-4) and *cease* (present imperative with subjunctive negative adverb *me*, *Ibid.*) "provoking, irritating, embittering" (*erethizo*, *Ibid.*, Arndt & Gingrich, p. 308) their children, Colossians 3:21a.
 2. The reason for this cessation of parental irritation of the child is to avoid the child's emotional and mental implosion into "losing heart; being discouraged" (*athumeo*, *Ibid.*, p. 21), Colossians 3:21b. Children are impressionable, especially at the hands of their parents, so parents must watch that as they teach, guide and discipline their children that all of their parental actions are **constructive**, **NOT destructive**, to the child!

Lesson: *Under the control of the Holy Spirit, as each party in the family focuses on his heavenly position in Christ, (1) the wife is to submit herself for her own blessing before the Lord unto her husband in marriage, (2) the husband is to decide to love his wife unconditionally and cease letting himself be incensed at her female weaknesses, (3) the child is to obey his parents as pleasing unto the Lord and (4) both parents must stop provoking, embittering or irritating their children in relating to them lest the children mentally and emotionally implode!*

Application: *May we believers in Christ who are part of an earthly family rely on the Holy Spirit to focus on our heavenly position in Christ to fill our God-assigned roles in that family in the way that is pleasing to the Lord.*