

Guidance for Life in the Family

This week's memory verse: Colossians 3:15

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

This week we will focus on relating with our family members. But before we do that, let's begin this study by reviewing those verses from last week in Colossians 3:12-17 regarding how we relate within the family of God. I believe this will help us relate better with our own families if we can learn how God wants us to relate with the family of God.

Read Colossians 3:12-17

1. How do those attitudes of character or behavior identified in these verses need to transfer into your relationship with your actual family (your spouse, children, parents, brothers, sisters...)?

We should certainly see our family as a dearly loved chosen family of God and we should treat them with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love. If God wants us to treat our church in that way, He certainly would want us to do the same to our spouse, our children, our parents, and our brothers and sisters.

2. Which is easier for you; to relate with a Godly attitude and behavior to people in your church or in your family?

Let people reflect on how they relate to family and share. I think for many of us, relating in a God pleasing way to family is much harder than with friends from Church. Either our patience has been strained. Or maybe we have been hurt or offended from the past. I think that forgiveness and patience may be the hardest when it comes to family.

Read Colossians 3:18- 4:1 (Check out Ephesians 5:25-33)

3. In verse 18, Paul gives instructions to wives regarding their husband. What does it mean to submit to your husband? Why do you think that is so difficult in our society to accept?

I think it means that a wife treats her husband with respect. Listening with love and allowing him to lead.

Unfortunately, we live in a culture where often men have not taken the leadership role they are meant to take. They have advocated leadership. Another issue is that some men have abused the leadership role God gave them forcing wives to fight for the role of leader. On top of this, our culture has created a movement that wants rights. We are a proud people. We long to rebel against submission to anyone, God, government or even husbands.

(Also check out Ephesians 5:22-24)

4. In verse 19 he gives husbands our charge. What does it mean to love your wives? How are we to demonstrate love to our wives?

Ephesians 5:25 adds, "...as Christ loves the Church" to this command to love our wives. Jesus is the demonstration of love we are to look to. It is a sacrificial love without condition. Love is a spiritual fruit. It comes from God and is best seen in Jesus. If I want to know how to love, I should look to Jesus and God's word for advice. 1 Corinthians 13 spells out what love is:

⁴Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. ⁵ It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. ⁶ Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. ⁷ It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. ⁸ Love never fails. 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

(Also check out Ephesians 5:25-33)

5. In Verse 20 Paul tells children to obey their parents. What does that look like in the family of God? Why do you think so many children fail to obey their parents?

Children who obey want to please their parents. They want to honor their parents. The command here should be similar to that call for us to obey God. Not because we must but because we are grateful and He is worthy of honor. Our obedience to God and to our parents demonstrates respect and honor.

(Also check out Ephesians 6:1-3)

6. In verse 21 Paul direct parents on how to handle children. What direction do you receive from God on this matter?

If obedience is a response to please the one deserving it implies that a parent is worthy of respect and honor. This means I must treat my children with love, gentleness, patience, compassion, forgiveness, love... (Sound familiar) and in so doing I am treating children the way God has treated me. I am not called to be the heavy handed boss but rather the loving compassionate Father who showers his children with love and grace.

(Also check out Ephesians 6:4)

7. Finally in verses 22 through 25 Paul gives directions to slaves and masters (aka: employees and employers). What does this tell you about your relationships in the business/working world?

We are to be respectful in our business dealings. We should treat our boss with respect. We should work hard and honorably. Those that are managers or owners should treat employees fairly and with great respect and care.

(Also checkout Ephesians 6:5-9)

8. Read once again Colossians 3:17. What does this tell you about your working life? Your family life? Your church life?

No matter what my life situation, as a child, a parent, a husband, a worker, or a manager... I am to carry out my role in whatever God puts in my life as a follower of Jesus and imitator of God to the best of my ability and the way that would best please the Lord and honor Him.