

## “Relevant Roles”

Colossians 3: 18-21

Take a quick look at the families portrayed in popular television shows and movies. There is a distinct difference between what we see in today’s media and what we saw just 10 to 15 years ago. Many examples today lead us to believe that men are buffoons who can’t do anything right. When we look at a family in popular media, it is hard to see where some roles begin and some roles end. Many times the wife and mother is left leading the family through difficult times while the father offers little or no helpful leadership and insight that might resolve the situation. While this can make for good comedy, it fails as an example of good leadership for families.

God’s plan includes husbands and wives who are emotionally healthy, spiritually encouraging, and physically respectful. His plan is also to have clearly defined roles for both spouses. When our marriages are defined by these truths and these roles, we’ll point others to Jesus.

In writing about these roles, Paul made several points in Colossians, “Wives, be submissive to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and don’t become bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this is pleasing in the Lord. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so they won’t become discouraged” (3:18-21).

Submission is a hard word to hear these days. Particularly in our generation, there is a natural rebellion against submitting ourselves to anyone or anything. We are our own persons and enjoy a wide range of freedoms. Yet submission happens quite routinely in our lives. We openly submit to speed limit laws when driving. We pay for food and services around our communities. We even will yield to oncoming traffic. Submission begins with our willingness to ease up on the gas pedal of self and allow the interests of others to be our central concern.

A story goes that there were two lines for husbands in Heaven, one for domineering husbands and another for submissive husbands. The line for domineering husbands stretched for many miles while the line for submissive husbands had only one man. As an angel asked the man in the submissive husbands line why he was there, he timidly looked around and softly replied, “Because my wife told me to stand here.”

While this story is funny, it also presents a truth. Dominate personalities will take hold of a family’s direction and move it to whatever that person desires. In a family that has a dedicated servant of Jesus Christ as the father, the chief concern is keeping that family in the center of God’s will and affirming one another in the process. There is no room for a cavalier mentality among dedicated spiritual leaders in our homes. We must be willing to care openly for our wives. One way we care for our wives is by serving them.

We live out the unique roles God has called us to in the home through a spirit of humility and encouragement toward one another. If one member of the family is trying to manipulate another by stepping over their roles or even pursuing their roles in a manner that is not encouraging, there will be a disconnect with the plan of God.

So why roles? According to the writers of the New Testament, it all goes back to the Garden of Eden. That is where the first roles were formed. In 1 Timothy 2:13-14 Paul notes that there was an order in creation that obligates us to live out these roles in our marriages. When we look directly at the Genesis passages related to the creation of Adam and Eve, we see that God created Eve as Adam’s helper in the Garden. They were equal in their standing before God but held uniquely different roles.

Of course this kind of conversation doesn’t go over too well in our modern society. You probably feel something tugging at you when you talk to others about the unique roles God has created for men and women.

Roles in our relationships, whether they are dating relationships or marriage relationships, can set the tone for where we end up long-term. While we will get into specific male roles next week, it is important to remember that there are some issues that we should consider at this point in our lives.

Many of us come from families that didn't identify and live out biblically appropriate roles. Our generation, often called the Millennials, is the most diverse age demographic ever in the United States. The homogenous white, middle-class Americana doesn't exist as widespread as it once did. We look at our friends and find a wonderful assortment of ethnicities and diversity in family patterns.

Let's consider the make up of our families. Probably more than one close friend in our lives comes from a fragmented or blended family. If we were to ask in our college Bible study groups who comes from one-parent families or had a mother who did all of the day-to-day business of the house while the father worked feverishly, we would see a great diversity of answers.

Our society doesn't think in terms of gender-appropriate roles. It often leaves us scrambling to pick up the missing pieces and keep all the balls in the air. We each have a tremendous opportunity in our family lives and current relationships. There is something powerful about a relationship and family that are centered in God's Word and pursuing God's will. If we work hard at it now, it will come easier, though not easy, down the road.

Imagine how much easier it will be if you and your future wife are on the same page as you accomplish great things through your family for the Kingdom of God. One secret to realizing and reconciling gender roles is mutual service together to see the gospel proclaimed.

The first step in this journey is to realize that there is a God-ordained separation of roles in our relationships and in our future families. You don't have to repeat the errors of your parents. You can have something even better. God has given us this incredible opportunity to begin this journey. Are we willing to take it?

### Talk It Up:

1. Do you believe that God has unique roles for men and women in relationships and marriage? Why?
2. When you read Colossians 3:18-21, what are some things you immediately notice?
3. How can we begin to develop roles in our current relationships?
4. How does spiritual leadership work into our specific roles in relationships?
5. How have your actions, words, or thoughts this week affirmed the "whole purpose of God" in your life? (Acts 20:27)
6. How has your mindset and/or actions reflected God's missional purpose for you this week? (Acts 20:29)
7. How has God's Word built you up this week? (Acts 20:32)

### Prayer Requests:

- Pray that God will show how each person can grow and learn about godly roles.
- Pray for your future families and spouses, specifically that they will pursue a path of honor God through living out proper goals.
- Pray for each other that you will each be able to learn and develop spiritual leadership your lives.
- Ask God to open the hearts of specific people in your life who need a relationship with Jesus. Commit to pray regularly for them.
- Pray for God to start a spiritual awakening on your campus and on college campuses across North America and around the world.
- Take time to pray for any personal requests that group members may have.