Christ|God Visible #11 Pastor Rick Baker

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A Bigger and Better Way to Do Family Life

***Christ makes things better***

Col. 3:18-4:1

*“Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way.”*

(A. Tolstoy; Anna Karenina, 1878)

Where the rubber of Christian virtues hits the road of real life!

Why Christian marriages should be and are different!

*Presuppositions before a deeper dive into how Christian domestic life operates:*

* Christian members of families have died with Christ to themselves to be raised with Christ to a new way of living (2:20; 3:1).
* God’s creation design is to give form to the unformed and to fill the unfilled (Gen. 1:1f).
* Power, structure and roles are not the enemy of the family unit; the abuse of power and chaos are.
* The battle of domination and subtle or not so subtle manipulation is what Christian marriage is intended to reverse.
* In Christian domestic living, the powerful are presented duties to protect the powerless, and the powerless are granted rights that require responsibilities.
* Christian domestic life is about the faith-formation family and what actually happens through the renewing/transforming work of Christ—God’s chosen, holy, dearly loved people placed in families where Christian virtues go to excel or die.
* God’s grace and Christ’s Lordship motivates and obligates each person in one’s unique God-determined placement in a family to live out what a dead-to-self, alive-to-Christ family lives like—not what I can get from this family; but rather, what can I give to the family?

What does it look like to be a wife, husband, child, parent (father), servant, master who has been raised with Christ to set their hearts on things above?

From a man-centred culture 🡪 a self-centred culture

From community oppression 🡪 community chaos

* Christianity brings community peace and mission

**What is my duty to the alive-to-Christ; dead-to-self mission and worldview I gratefully represent?**

*How equality and different roles and different power is to be shaped in family units that form the church of equal souls—the Family of God*.

**WHY**? Because I am dead to self in favour of alive to Christ!

1. Husbands and wives are to be self-giving (3:18-19)

**Wives**- *Because you are required to be sacrificially loved; keep on willingly yielding to the good structural*

*order your husband provides to your home.*

Regardless, willingly/voluntarily place yourself in subjection to your husband **because it is proper in the Lord.**

What happens if my loyalty to Christ through this Christian conduct is not only not appreciated, but even turned against me abusively? *Your loyalty to Christ will be used by the Holy Spirit to benefit you, if not now, forever.*

**Husbands**- *Because you are to receive voluntary submission, sacrificially love that gift through responsible, accountable leadership of the home.*

Regardless, do not allow yourself to become bitter and treat her harshly.

1. Parent/child relationships are to be respectfully healthy (3:20-21)

**Children**-*Because you are to be treated by your father with just nurture, keep on listening and obeying for your own protection.*

Regardless, this way of regarding your father is **pleasing to the Lord**.

**Fathers**-*Because of the powerless dependency of your children, do not use your power to crush their will and spirit. Rather, honour their respect with justice and encouragement so they will grow into a responsible life and robust faith in their Heavenly Father.*

1. Master/servant relationships are to advantage each other (3:22-4:1)

**Servants**-*Because you are to be treated with what is right and fair, reciprocate the favour through respectful and productive service.*

Regardless, in reality, you are **working for the Lord**.

**Masters**-*Because you are to be rewarded by Christian servants with excellence and productive service, reward that in a manner worthy of your gratitude.*

Regardless, you have **a Master in heaven** who takes note of your standards of justice, fairness, and reward.

*All of this is a gift of our emancipating salvation that frees us to enjoy right living in the roles purposed for us by our loving Father—saved to live a life of self-giving and no longer self-taking in the new order where the peace of Christ rules richly and deeply.*