

Place: Lurgan Baptist Church 10:3:2013

## COMPLETE IN HIM

Reading: Colossians 3:18-4:1

### 11. MAKING YOUR RELATIONSHIPS WORK

Four year old Suzie had just been told the story of “*Snow White*,” for the first time in her life. She could hardly wait to get home from nursery school to tell her mommy. With wide eyed excitement she retold the fairy tale to her mother that afternoon. After relating how Prince Charming had arrived on his beautiful white horse and kissed Snow White back to life. Suzie asked loudly, “*And do you know what happened then ?*” “*Yes*,” said her mom, “*they lived happily ever after.*” “*No*,” responded Suzie, with a frown “***they got married.***” In child like innocence that little four year old girl spoke the real truth without realizing it. Getting married and living happily are not necessarily synonymous. Check the statistics if you are not convinced. Unhappy marriages, domestic conflicts and spiraling divorce rates are common among us, all because people have abandoned God’s original blueprint for marriage and the home. *Can you imagine the confusion that would occur on a football team where no one knew his specific responsibility ? Can you imagine the frustration that would exist in a business where there were no job descriptions, where everything was everybody’s business, where everyone was a*

“*chief*,” and no one was an “*Indian*.” Well that is the kind of frustration and confusion that exists in many marriages because there has never been a sorting out of the responsibilities. Everyone is a “*chief*,” and no one is an “*Indian*.” Hence, oneness in marriage is not experienced. *But you see, the Christian faith is not just personal its relational.* The life of the new man is a life lived among other new men. The new believer in Christ is to have an impact on the society in which he lives. Do you recall the words of the Lord Jesus ? “*Ye are the salt of the earth, but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted ? it is henceforth good for nothing but to be cast out and to be trodden under men. Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid.*” ( Matt 5:13-14 Phil 2:15 1 Pet 2:12 ) You see, throughout history the Christian faith has had a positive influence on society. The 19<sup>th</sup> century evangelical Lord Shaftesbury was instrumental in getting Parliament to pass laws regulating child labour.

He was also a champion of better treatment for the insane. Agencies like the YMCA and the Salvation Army were also active in social work during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. William Carey, missionary to India worked for the abolition of widow burning and child sacrifice. Missionaries to Africa discouraged polygamy, fought the slave trade and built schools and hospitals. You say, “*Well, what does that have to do with Colossians Ch 3 ?*” Just this. The place where Christianity should have its social impact is in what ? The home. A. T. Robertson says this. “*Real Christianity is both a doctrine and a life. Mere belief is dead without life as*

*proof. Real spiritual life is impossible without life with God and Christ and our dealings with others become the final proof of our real connection with Christ.*” In others, the Christian faith is dead unless it has an impact with people. And the nitty-gritty, the place where the rubber meets the road, is the family, the home, the basic unit of society. Did you notice that Paul addresses here three man social relationships of life ? He talks about husbands and wives, children and parents, and masters and servants. I want to talk to you this .... **“About Making Your Relationships Work,”** notice firstly,

### **(1) THE MARITAL RELATIONSHIP**

After all marriage is God’s invention. Now what is marriage ? *Marriage is a total commitment and a total sharing of the total person with another person until death.* Now remember the times in which Paul was writing. Under Jewish law a woman was a “*thing*.” To them were servants. In Greek society wives were simply the ones who claimed the house and bore legitimate children. Men found their physical enjoyment outside of marriage. And among the Romans divorce was not the exception it was the norm. Now this was the condition of marriage when Paul said, “*wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands .... husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them.*” You see, Paul points out here,

#### **(a) THE DUTY OF WIVES:**

Let me give it to you in one word. **Submission.** You see, you cannot have anarchy in the home with no responsible for discipline, for earning wages or for giving direction. That would bring nothing but chaos, so God has designed that in the family, for the sake of function that the woman is to be submit to the leadership of the man. Its not a matter of who’s better, this is way that God has designed it. Now the common word used for “*submit*,” in the New Testament describes a relationship of subordination of someone to someone else. The Greek word ( *hupotasso* ) means “*a lining up underneath.*” In the military sense it means “*to rank beneath*,” or “*to rank under.*” So in the family for the sake of function the woman is to take the place of submission to the leadership of the man. Now this concept of submission is illustrated in the life of Christ. ( Lk 2:51 ) Now was Jesus Christ the eternal Son of the living God ? Was He as much God when He was a boy as when He was a full grown man ? Yes.

Why the Scriptures say “*He shall be great and shall be called the Son of the Highest.*” ( Lk 1:32 ) Do you recall Gabriel’s words to Mary ? “*That holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.*” ( Lk 1:35 ) This was the Eternal Word made flesh yet He went down to Nazareth and submitted Himself to Joseph and Mary. Now does that effect in any way His inherent worth and dignity as the Son of God ? Never. Rather its referring to His position within the structure of the home. It was not demeaning to the dignity of the Son of God to be submissive to Joseph and Mary. Submission did not mean a demeaning of His person.

Now when women grasp this it should mean total liberation. Christ was not inferior to Joseph and Mary yet He went down to Nazareth and “*was subject unto them.*” Wives, submission does not mean that,

- 1. *That the wife becomes a slave, standing in the centre of the room awaiting commands. “Do this,” “Get that,” “Go there,”***
- 2. *That the wife becomes a wallflower who folds up and allows her talents to lie dormant. ( Pr 31:10 )***
- 3. *That the wife never opens her mouth. ( Prov 31:26 )***
- 4. *That the wife is inferior. That she is something half way between a human and an animal.***

No, no. The Lord Jesus gave Himself up to the directions of those whom God had set over Him. Now was He wiser than Joseph and Mary ? Well “*in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.*” ( Col 2:9 ) Paul says “*In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*” ( Col 2:3 ) But He was “*subject unto them.*” So its not a matter of whether the wife is better educated than her husband, whether she has more gray matter, a higher I.Q. whether she is more traveled or cultured. It has nothing to do with any of those factors. “*Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands .....*” because God has ordained the structure of the home. Just as Christ became subject to Joseph and Mary. My .... the Lord made Joseph and Mary, yet He was subject to them. Subject to the very people He made. So to be subject means nothing more or less than willingly to take the place of submissiveness to your husband’s authority. “*Wives submit yourselves unto*

*your own husbands.*” Why ? Because “it is fitting in the Lord.” Its, how God has designed the structure of the home. Now wives how are you getting on ? Have you obeyed this command of God ? Are you obeying it ? Are you continuously submissive to your husband ? (a)

### **(b) *THE DEVOTION OF HUSBANDS:***

For he says, “*Husbands love your wives,*” or it could be translated, “*Keep on loving.*” But you say, “*What do you think I married her for ?*” Well, what kind of love is Paul speaking of here ? I mean what is love ? A lot of people just want to make love just simply a feeling. Love based simply on your feelings. Like the poet who said,

**Love is a very funny thing  
Its shaped just like a lizard  
It wraps its tail around your heart  
An goes right through your gizzard.**

Well, what is love ? “*God is love.*” Read ( 1 Cor Ch 13 ) and see what love is. What is agape love ? *Love is that selfless quality that seeks the good of its object even at personal cost. So Paul is saying here*

### **1. Husbands Love Your Wives Sacrificially:**

For in the parallel passage Paul puts it like this, “*Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for it.*” ( Eph 5:25 ) The wife must ask, “*Do I love my husband enough to live for him ?*” The husband must ask, “*Do I love my wife enough to die for her ?*” I heard about a

young man who was professing his undying love to his girlfriend. “ *Darling, I would swim through a river for you. I would climb a mountain for you. Darling, I would wade through a swamp for you and if it does not rain on Friday night I will be over to see you.* ” My .... do you love your wife sacrificially ? I mean, do you give up time, pleasure, cherished ambitions, friends for her ? Young ladies, when some man starts saying, “ *I love you.* ” Ask what he means by that. Ask him, “ *Are you ready to give up your circle of friends so that I can become your closest friend as well as your wife.* ” 1.

### **2. Love Your Wives Exclusively:**

“ *Husbands love **your** wives,* ” a husband is to love only his wife. There must be no other woman or person substituted in her place. She alone is to be his bride and lover. No other person is to take her place. Now do husbands need to hear this ? Yes they do. For they are to regard this love, as a sacred guardian to which no one else intrudes. 1, 2,

### **3. Love Your Wives Realistically:**

Do not allow your love for them to be diminished because you discern faults, sins weaknesses in them. “ *Husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them.* ” Is it not so that we don’t really know someone till we marry them ? Then we marry get to know them intimately, discover faults and become bitter against them. One wife turned to her husband and said, “ *Will you still love me when my hair turns grey ?* ” “ *Why not,* ” he said. “ *Have I not loved you through five other shades.* ” My .... do you ever think of how Christ deals

and bears with the church ? He bears and forbears with us. Here are two bears that you need to keep in your marriage. Bear and forbear. Now husbands is this the way you love your wives ? My .... a happy marriage does not come automatically, it is something that must be worked at all the time and it is only as we follow the divine blueprint that we’ll know joy in the marital relationship. (1)

## **(2) THE PARENTAL RELATIONSHIP**

Charles Shedd before he was married he had an excellent lecture entitled, “ *How to raise your children.* ” When he became involved with families who had children he changed his lecture and called it, “ *Suggestions to parents.* ” After he was married the Shedd’s first child came along and the title of his lecture was changed again to “ *Feebler hints to fellow strugglers.* ” When the rest of the children came long he stopped giving the lecture altogether. In 1972 Mary Rogers wrote a story called “ *Freaky Friday.* ” It was later made into a movie. The story is about one “ *Freaky Friday,* ” when a mother woke up in the body of her daughter and the daughter woke up in the body of her mother. At the end, the moral of the story was both the mother and the daughter had a better understanding of each other because they had to switch roles for a day. “ *My parents just don’t understand me.* ” Do you ever say that ? “ *If only my son and daughter could understand why we have restrictions.* ” Do you ever say that ? A great deal today is being said about the rights of children and they do have rights. One of them is the

right to be born. Another is the right to be born into a dedicated Christian home where they can be brought up “ *in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*”

( Eph 6:4 ) I wonder young folk are you thankful for the home that God has placed you in ? Thankful for godly parents who teach you God’s Word and discipline you in love ? Yes, children have rights but they have responsibilities and here Paul talks about,

#### **(a) CHILDREN AND THEIR OBEDIENCE:**

Now, some of you here are young people and you’re saying, “ *Well, what is a child ?*” Well, the word for children here ( tekna ) is a general term and it refers to any child still living in the home and under parental guidance. As long as you’re in the home, as long as your parents are responsible for you, as long as you’re under their leadership and control, you have one command. Do you see it ? “ *Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*” Now this isn’t anything new. It’s a truth that is taught repeatedly in Scripture ? Do you recall one of the ten commandments ? “ *Honour thy father and thy mother that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.*” ( Ex 20:12, Ex 21:15-17, Lev 20:9, Pro 1:8, 6:20, ) Evangelist Oliver Greene of the Gospel Hour, predicted he would not live to be an old man because He dishonored his father and sent his dad to an early grave. He was right for he died at sixty one years of age. Do you recall that delightful picture we have of the twelve year old boy Jesus accompanying His mother and Joseph back from

Jerusalem to the home at Nazareth where we read “ *He was subject unto them.*” ( Lk 2:51 ) Young folk, are you subject to your parents ? Are you subject to your parents “ *in all things,*” ? Not simply those things that please you. I mean, do you want to know the will of God for your life ? Well, this is God’s pattern, this is God’s standard. This is the way God set it up. “ *this is well pleasing unto the Lord.*” ( 3:20 ) But notice Paul turns from (a) to,

#### **(b) PARENTS AND THEIR OBLIGATIONS:**

For the word “ *fathers,*” could be translated “ *parents,*” as it is in ( Heb 11:23 ) You see, Paul is making it clear that parents must make it as easy as possible for children to obey. “ *Provoke not,*” means to “ *stir up, provoke, irritate or exasperate.*” Another way to phrase Paul’s command is, “ *Stop nagging your kids.*” Failure to obey this can cause children to be “ *discouraged, to lose heart.*” A little boy went to school for the first time and when the teacher asked him his name he said “ *Don’t.*” She thought he had misunderstood the question so she asked again. “ *What’s your name son ?*” Again came the reply “ *Don’t.*” She said “ *I don’t understand.*” He said “ *well wherever I am in the home and whatever I’m doing its always ‘don’t, don’t don’t.*” He said “ *I’m tired of it but that’s my name Don’t.*” Like the mother who sent her daughter upstairs with the instructions, “ *Go and see what Johnny is doing and tell him not to.*” My .... children are “ *little people,*” who have feelings like adults. They are like “ *tender plants.*”

My .... are you encouraging them ? A listening ear and a loving heart always go together. “ *You took time to have me,* ” a child said to his father, “ *but you won’t take time to listen to me.* ” Life is not easy for children and they need all the encouragement they can get. If they do not get it in your home, where will they get it ? (1) (2)

### (3) THE VOCATIONAL RELATIONSHIP

**Masters and Servants.** Now slavery was an established institution in Paul’s day. There were 60 million of them and many of them were well educated people who carried great responsibilities in the homes of the wealthy. In many homes the slaves helped to educate and discipline the children. You see, what Paul is doing here is he is taking us into the workplace and showing us the relationship between an employer and employee. Did you know that there are two kinds of workers ? *Those who do the work and those who take the credit.* Did you know there are three classes of people ? *Those who watch things happen, those who make things happen, and, those who don’t know what has happened.* I heard about one man who had been out of work so long that, when he went back to work, he said that he had lost his taste for it. Now look at this closing section and notice,

#### (a) WHAT AN EMPLOYEE SHOULD GIVE:

He should give his very best. Let me be specific.

#### 1. He Should Work Obediently:

Look at ( 3:22 ) My .... that means what it says. What the boss says you do. Complete obedience. Doing what we are told. Not moaning and saying “ *That’s not my job.* ”

#### 2. He Should Work Conscientiously:

“ *Not with eyeservice as menpleasers ....,* ” ( 3:22 ) Do you know something ? You should be the best worker in your firm. And you ought to be working whether anybody is watching or not. A factory put up a suggestion box to improve working conditions. The first suggestion was that the foreman no longer wear rubber heels on his shoes. They wanted to hear him coming. When asked how she knew that she had become a Christian a maid said, “ *Because I sweep under the carpets now.* ” Listen, in the place of your employment are you giving your best ?

#### 3. He Should Work Enthusiastically:

Do you see ( 3:23 ) I mean do you put your whole inner man into the effort serving your employer as you would the Lord himself ? (a)

#### (b) WHAT AN EMPLOYEE SHOULD GRASP:

That in serving your employer you’re serving the Lord. Do you see how Paul lifts our work to an Eternal Plane: “ *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive **the reward of the inheritance.*** ” We tend to divide work into the *secular* and *sacred* but God doesn’t. All our work will

be judged at the judgment seat of Christ. There will be a reward for the man who follows the plough, just as the man who fills the pulpit.

Do you see how Paul lifts our work to an Evangelical Plane: “ *For ye serve the Lord Christ.* ” In reality we are employed by Christ. Someone has said if you were working in a hotel and suddenly the Queen showed up your voice and facial expressions would change. You would be eager to serve the Queen well, make sure the Queen had everything she needed. But according to Paul there’s much more at stake than serving the Queen. “ *Ye serve the Lord Christ,* ” Can you imagine the difference it would make in your life if tomorrow you started treating your boss and your customers as if they were the Lord Himself ? As you go into work tomorrow picture the Lord with you, sitting at the desk beside you. I mean would such thoughts not solve many of our problems ?

Paul lifts our work to an Ethical Plane: “ *But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done...* ” ( 3:25 ) Shoddy service will be rewarded. Shoddy service will be rebuked. A young assistant was minding the shop while the boss was out at lunch when a commercial traveler and suggested something shady. On seeing that the young man hesitated, he said, “ *Its all right, its all right the master’s not in.* ” To which the young assistant replied pointing his finger toward heaven, “ *My Master is always in.* ” Now listen, have you grasp the fact that in serving your employer you are serving the Lord ? (a) (b)

### (c) ***WHAT AN EMPLOYEE SHOULD GET:***

They are not to be underpaid but treated with respect. ( 4:1 ) In other words, do unto others as you would have the Lord do unto you. Treat them fairly, as God, you would hope, would treat you. Now let me ask you as a Christian employer, how do you treat your workers ? Like Boaz as a godly employer do you treat them fairly, generously and tenderly ? Realizing that their heavenly master is yours too ? Now do you see where Paul has taken us ? *He has taken us to the Marriage Altar, to the Family Home, and to the Work Place.* He has spoken of ***Making your Relationships Work.*** Well, what about your Marital Relationship, your Parental Relationship, your Vocational Relationship are they working ?

I heard of a stranger who walked down a long, dusty road and came to an old, dilapidated farmhouse. He knocked on the door, and the farmer's wife answered. He asked her, “ *Does God live here ?* ” She answered, “ *We belong to the church in town.* ” He asked her again, “ *Does God live here ?* ” She replied, “ *My husband is a deacon, and I am a member of the Women’s Missionary Union.* ” He asked her a third time, “ *Ma’am, you haven’t answered my question, does God live here ?* ” The woman did not know how to respond, so the stranger walked away. All through the afternoon the wife, and her husband pondered that question, “ *does God live here ?* ” They came to the conclusion that they had only been playing acting and that their home was not a place where God could live, or did live. Can I ask, concerning your home, does God live there ?

