

Digging Deeper: The Greater Meaning of Colossians 3:19

Sunday, October 11, 2026

“You husbands, keep on loving your wives and do not be bitterly angry with them.” (Colossians 3:19)

Paul wrote this letter to the Christians in Colossae while he was a prisoner in Rome, and in this part he gave counsel to each member of the family. The main point is that a husband's love must show up every day in how he treats his wife, in his actions, his words, and even his thoughts. The day's text reminds us that Jehovah takes this personally: a husband who mistreats his wife damages his friendship with God, and his prayers may even be hindered.

1 “Keep On Loving”: A Love That Keeps Going (ἀγαπάω, *agapaō*)

The Greek word ἀγαπάω (*agapaō*) means to love in an unselfish way, by choosing to care about another person's good.

Paul wrote it in a way that shows ongoing action, which is why the New World Translation says “keep on loving.” It is not a feeling a husband has once on his wedding day; it is something he keeps doing day after day.

Paul set the highest standard for this love: “Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and gave himself up for it.” (Ephesians 5:25) Jesus never bullied or used those he loved. He put their needs ahead of his own.

- A loving husband asks himself each day, “What can I do to make my wife's life better?”

2 “Bitterly Angry”: Words That Wound (πικραίνω, *pikrainō*)

The Greek word πικραίνω (*pikrainō*) comes from a word for something bitter or sharp to the taste. It describes becoming bitter, resentful, or harsh toward someone. The NWT footnote says it can also be rendered “be harsh.” Paul was warning husbands not to let irritation turn into a sour, cutting way of treating their wives.

This is why the day’s text points to Ephesians 4:31: “Put away from yourselves every kind of malicious bitterness, anger, wrath, screaming, and abusive speech, as well as everything injurious.” Harsh words can hurt as deeply as a blow. James adds that a man who “does not

keep a tight rein on his tongue” is deceiving himself, “and his worship is futile.” (James 1:26)

- How a husband speaks to his wife at home is part of his worship, not separate from it.

3 “Passion”: Loyal Even in the Heart (ἐπιθυμέω, *epithymeō*)

In Matthew 5:28, the word for “have a passion” is ἐπιθυμέω (*epithymeō*). It means to set one’s heart on something, to long for it or desire it. Jesus said: “Everyone who keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28)

Jesus showed that loyalty in marriage starts in the heart. The day’s text applies this to pornography, which feeds wrong desires, degrades a man’s wife, and damages his relationship with Jehovah. A

husband who truly loves his wife guards his eyes and his thoughts, so that his heart belongs to her alone.

- Faithfulness that Jehovah values is not only what others see, but what we allow into our minds when no one is watching.

Key Spiritual Reflections

- **Daily Love:** What is one practical thing I can do this week to show my wife that I keep on loving her? (Ephesians 5:25)
- **Gentle Speech:** When I feel frustrated, do my words to my wife stay kind, or do they turn harsh and bitter? (Ephesians 4:31)
- **A Loyal Heart:** Am I guarding my eyes and thoughts so that my heart stays loyal to my wife and to Jehovah? (Matthew 5:28)