

Christ in the Home

A Five-Day Devotional

Based on Colossians 3:20–21

DAY 1

The Lord of Every Room

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 3:17–21, Colossians 1:15–20, Ephesians 5:21

DEVOTIONAL

Most of us have no trouble confessing that Christ is Lord over the big things: the church, the nations, eternity. The harder confession is that He is Lord at the dinner table. Lord during bedtime. Lord when a child refuses to listen and a parent is about to lose patience. That is exactly where Paul takes us in Colossians 3.

Before he ever gets to the home, Paul has spent two and a half chapters establishing the supremacy of Jesus Christ. In chapter one, Christ is the image of the invisible God, the One through whom all things were created, in whom all things hold together. In chapter two, Paul warns the church not to be taken captive by anything that sounds spiritual but quietly moves Christ out of the center. And in chapter three, he turns to the Christian life: seek what is above, put off the old self, put on the new, let the Word of Christ dwell richly in you.

Then he immediately begins talking about the home. Wives and husbands. Children and fathers. And the phrase that governs all of it appears just before these commands in verse 17: “Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.” That word “whatever” is not rhetorical. Paul means it. He proves it by walking into the most ordinary relationships in the ancient world and showing that Christ’s Lordship claims each of them.

This is where theology gets real. It is one thing to sing about the supremacy of Christ on a Sunday morning. It is another thing entirely to live under that supremacy on a Tuesday evening when everyone at the table is tired and someone has already said something they shouldn’t have. The lordship of Christ is not an abstract doctrine. It is a claim on every room in your house, every conversation in your car, every moment of correction, every word of encouragement, every act of forgiveness. Nothing is outside His reach.

REFLECTION

1. Where in your home is it hardest to remember that Christ is Lord? What does His lordship look like in that specific moment or relationship?
2. Paul moves directly from “do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus” to commands for the family. What does that connection tell you about how God views ordinary home life?
3. Is there any area of your family life where you’ve been operating as though Christ’s lordship doesn’t quite reach there? What would it look like to bring that under His authority?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Before your family gathers today — for a meal, for the evening, for whatever is next — pause and pray Colossians 3:17 over that time. Ask God to make Christ’s lordship visible in the specific moments and conversations that are coming. Write down one area of your home life that needs to come more fully under His authority, and bring it to Him in prayer this week.

PRAYER

Father, I confess that I am quicker to acknowledge Your lordship in the church than at the dinner table. Forgive me for treating my home as though it were somehow outside Your reach. You are Lord of everything — the whole cosmos, and also my kitchen, my car, my conversations, my tone of voice, and my temper. I want every room in my home to reflect the lordship of Jesus. Help me to live that out today — not just to believe it, but to actually practice it in the ordinary moments where it costs something. Let Your Word dwell richly in us. Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts. And where we fail, remind us that Christ is not only our Lord but our Savior, and that His grace covers what our obedience cannot. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

DAY 2

Obedience as Worship

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 3:20, Ephesians 6:1–3, Exodus 20:12, Luke 2:51, Philippians 2:5–8

DEVOTIONAL

Paul does something in Colossians 3:20 that would have surprised the ancient world: he speaks directly to children. Not about them, not to parents about how to manage them, but to children themselves as people accountable before God. In a world where children were legally closer to property than to persons, Paul addresses them as moral agents with real responsibilities to the Lord. That is itself a statement of dignity.

The command he gives them is plain: “Children, obey your parents in everything.” The word he uses for “obey” means to listen under authority — to hear and respond. It is comprehensive. Not selective. Not conditional on whether you agree, understand, or feel like it. And Paul extends it to “everything,” which the rest of Scripture qualifies only at the point where a parent would demand what God forbids. Short of that, the scope is real.

But the reason Paul gives is what transforms the command. He does not say obey because your parents are always right, or because it will make life easier, or because they are stronger. He says obey “for this pleases the Lord.” That phrase lifts child obedience out of mere behavior and places it before Christ. Ordinary obedience to parents is an act of worship. When a child hears a request and responds with genuine, willing compliance, they are in that moment honoring Jesus.

The proof of this is Jesus Himself. Luke 2:51 tells us that after the twelve-year-old Jesus was found teaching in the temple — astounding the scholars — He went home to Nazareth and was submissive to Mary and Joseph. The eternal Son of God obeyed His earthly parents. His obedience continued all the way to the cross. Philippians 2 calls it “obedience unto death.” The child who obeys their parent is, in a small but real way, living out the posture that defines Christ’s own life. That is not a small thing.

REFLECTION

1. What is the difference between obeying because you have to and obeying because you want to please the Lord? How does that difference show up in daily life?
2. Jesus “learned obedience through what He suffered” (Hebrews 5:8). What does it mean that the Son of God submitted to human authority? How does that shape the way you think about submission?
3. If obedience to parents is an act of worship, how does that change the way you think about how you obey — not just whether you obey?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Children and teenagers: pick one area this week where your obedience has been slow, partial, or reluctant. Before you respond to your parent's next request, remind yourself: "This pleases the Lord." Then do it fully, the first time, without the editorial commentary.

Parents: this is a good week to talk with your children about why you require obedience — not because you're in charge, but because it matters to the Lord. Frame obedience as worship, not just household policy.

PRAYER

Father, thank You that You dignify even the small moments of daily life by making them an opportunity to honor Christ. I confess that so much of my obedience — to You, to the authorities You've placed over me — is slow, partial, or reluctant. Forgive me for treating obedience as a transaction rather than a form of worship. Teach me to obey the way Jesus obeyed: willingly, completely, from a heart that trusts Your wisdom and wants to please You. Where I have modeled the wrong kind of obedience to my children, give me the grace to repent and do differently. And remind us all that the One we are ultimately obeying is not a harsh taskmaster but a good Father who sent His Son to save us. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 3

Authority That Does Not Crush

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 3:21, Ephesians 6:4, Hebrews 12:5–11, Psalm 103:13, James 1:19–20

DEVOTIONAL

After commanding children to obey, Paul turns to fathers with an immediate and striking counterweight: “Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.” The word translated “provoke” means to stir up, irritate, or embitter. And the word translated “discouraged” — *athymos* in the Greek — means more than a bad mood. It means to become spiritless. Without the inner fire to engage life with hope. A child in that condition does not simply have hard days; they have lost the fundamental confidence that their effort matters, that love is real, that they can ever be enough.

Paul is describing a pattern, not a single angry moment. The nagging that never stops. The standard that perpetually shifts so that nothing is ever quite good enough. The discipline that arrives driven by a parent’s wounded pride rather than the child’s genuine need. The emotional distance that makes a father present in the house but absent in the relationship. The hypocrisy of demanding self-control while losing it yourself. These are the patterns that take the heart out of a child, and Paul forbids them.

But the command is not just negative. Paul’s picture of fatherhood is drawn from God’s own. Hebrews 12 describes God’s fatherly discipline as purposeful, loving, and aimed at our good — producing “the peaceful fruit of righteousness.” God never abandons His authority, and He never uses it to crush what He is forming. He disciplines every son He loves. He does not discipline in contempt. Psalm 103:13 puts it simply: “As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him.”

A father who chronically provokes his children does not reflect the God who disciplines in love. He gives his children a distorted picture of what fatherhood looks like — and many of those children will carry that distortion into their understanding of God for years. The stakes of verse 21 are not merely emotional or psychological. They are theological. Fathers are called to image God, and how they use authority in the home is one of the most significant ways they either do or fail to do that.

REFLECTION

1. What specific patterns in your parenting — not just isolated moments — might be provoking your children toward discouragement rather than forming them in faith?
2. Hebrews 12 describes God’s discipline as always purposeful and loving. How does that description differ from the way you tend to discipline when you’re tired, frustrated, or embarrassed?
3. How might the way you exercise authority in your home be shaping your children’s understanding of God as their heavenly Father?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

This week, ask yourself honestly: when I correct my children, is this for their good or for my relief? Before the next disciplinary moment, pause — even briefly — and ask the Lord to give you His patience rather than your instinct. If you have been consistently harsh or distant, take a concrete step this week: go to your child, name what you’ve been doing, and ask for their forgiveness. That is not weakness. It is the most Christlike thing a parent can do.

PRAYER

Father, I am humbled by how far my authority falls short of Yours. You are the perfect Father — firm and gentle, consistent and patient, full of discipline and full of compassion. I am none of those things on my own. I confess the ways I have provoked my children — through harshness, impatience, inconsistency, and distance. I confess that I have sometimes used authority to protect my own pride rather than to form my children in Your ways. Forgive me. Give me a fatherhood — and a motherhood — that reflects You. Let my children see in the way I lead them a faint but real image of the God who disciplines in love and never abandons those He is forming. And where I have already caused damage, I trust You to heal what I have broken. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

DAY 4

The Gospel and the Home

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 3:1–4, Romans 5:18–19, Philippians 2:8, Hebrews 5:8–9, Romans 6:1–4

DEVOTIONAL

Here is the honest problem with Colossians 3:20–21: none of us can actually do what it requires. No child has obeyed their parents fully, quickly, and from the heart. No parent has governed their household with consistent patience and love. If these two verses are just law — a standard to achieve by trying harder — they will crush every family that reads them honestly. And they should. Because the standard is real, and none of us meets it.

But Paul did not write these commands in isolation. He wrote them inside a letter that begins with the supremacy of Christ and the sufficiency of His work. He wrote them to people he has already described as dead to sin and raised with Christ. He wrote them immediately after declaring that the Word of Christ is to dwell richly in believers by the power of the Spirit. The household code is not a self-improvement program. It is resurrection life applied to four walls.

The gospel's connection to this passage runs deeper than most people realize. Adam's first sin was a refusal to obey God in the one thing He had commanded. Every act of disobedience since — every child's resistance, every parent's harshness, every household marked by self-rule rather than grace — is a continuation of that original rebellion. But Christ entered human history as the Second Adam. Where Adam disobeyed, Christ obeyed. Where Israel failed, Christ was faithful. Where we fall short in every relationship and every room, Christ was perfectly obedient — all the way to the cross. His obedience does what ours never could: it satisfies the justice of God and opens the way for sinners to be forgiven, renewed, and empowered to live differently.

This means the call to family life in Colossians 3 is ultimately a gospel call. Children obey not to earn God's love but in response to it. Parents lead not out of natural virtue but out of the resurrection life they have in Christ. The power to do any of this comes from union with the One who did all of it perfectly in our place.

REFLECTION

1. When you read commands for family life, is your first instinct to try harder or to draw on the grace of Christ? What does your instinct reveal about how you're approaching the Christian life?
2. How does the obedience of Christ — His perfect submission to the Father all the way to the cross — change the way you think about your own failures in obedience and authority?
3. What would it look like, practically, to parent or to obey your parents "out of" the gospel rather than "toward" something you're trying to achieve?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Before you engage with your family today, spend five minutes reading Colossians 3:1–4. Let the indicatives — “you have died,” “you have been raised,” “your life is hidden with Christ” — settle into your heart before the imperatives make any demands on your day. The commands of verses 20–21 only make sense as fruit of the life described in verses 1–4. Start there.

PRAYER

Father, I am grateful that the Christian family is not a project I maintain by effort but a reality I live from by grace. Thank You that Christ obeyed where I have not, that His righteousness covers my failures as a parent and as a child, and that His resurrection is the power behind every act of genuine obedience and genuine love in my home. I don't want to treat these commands as a self-improvement checklist. I want to live them as someone who has died and been raised with Christ — someone whose life is genuinely hidden in Him. Remind me every morning that I am not trying to earn anything. I am living out what is already mine in Jesus. Let that freedom produce something in my home that law alone never could. In Jesus' name, Amen.

DAY 5

A Home Under Christ

SCRIPTURE READING

Colossians 3:12–17, Ephesians 5:25–27, Hebrews 12:14–15, Psalm 103:8–14, 1 John 1:8–9

DEVOTIONAL

Paul gives us both commands in Colossians 3:20–21 for a reason: they belong together. Verse 20, read alone, can be weaponized by parents who demand obedience without examining their own hearts. Verse 21, read alone, can produce homes so afraid of discouraging children that they never require anything of them. Together, they give us a vision for something the world rarely sees: a home that is genuinely governed by the lordship and grace of Jesus Christ.

A Christ-centered home is not a perfect home. It is not a home without conflict, without failure, without difficult conversations or moments of genuine regret. It is a home where sin is named rather than excused, where repentance is practiced rather than avoided, where forgiveness is given because it has first been received. It is a home where the Word of Christ actually governs how people speak to each other — not just displayed on a wall, but alive in the way correction is given, in the way apologies are made, in the way grace is extended after someone has gotten it wrong.

Some of you are reading this and carrying real grief. You grew up in a home where authority was harsh, inconsistent, or absent, and you know firsthand what it is to lose heart. The Lord sees that. Your earthly father may have failed you, but your heavenly Father is not like sinful fathers. He disciplines in love, never in contempt. He does not break what He is forming. Psalm 103:13 says He shows compassion to His children the way a good father does — and He is the definition of what a good father looks like.

Others of you are in the middle of parenting and feeling the weight of how far you fall short. The gospel does not ask you to pretend otherwise. It asks you to bring it to Christ — your failures, your patterns, your regrets, your fears — and trust that His blood is stronger than all of it. His grace is not a footnote to family life. It is the only foundation on which a Christian home can be built. Every act of obedience, every moment of patient authority, every repentance and restoration in your home is evidence that Christ is alive and that the resurrection has reached all the way to your living room.

REFLECTION

- 1.** What would it look like in your specific home for sin to be named honestly, repentance to be practiced regularly, and forgiveness to flow freely? What is the biggest obstacle to that right now?
- 2.** If your children or your parents were asked to describe the atmosphere of your home, what would they say? What would you want them to say? What would need to change?
- 3.** Where do you most need the grace of the gospel in your family life right now — not a technique or a strategy, but the actual grace of Jesus Christ?

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

End this devotional week with a concrete act of grace in your home. If you are a parent, speak a specific word of blessing over each of your children this week — not general praise, but something specific you see God doing in them. If you are a child or young person, find one way to honor your parents this week that goes beyond what is required. And as a family, if possible, read Colossians 3:12–17 together and talk about what a home shaped by those verses would look like. Let the Word of Christ dwell richly — starting today.

PRAYER

Father, thank You for the grace that reaches into every room and every relationship. Thank You that You do not leave us to figure out family life on our own but have given us Your Word, Your Spirit, and Your Son as the pattern for everything. I am grateful that a Christ-centered home is not a perfect home but a forgiven one — a home where the gospel is not a Sunday word but a daily reality. Teach me to obey like Your Son obeyed. Teach me to lead the way You lead — with authority that serves rather than dominates, with patience that forms rather than crushes, with love that keeps showing up. Where my home has been marked more by the old self than the new, bring renewal. And where it has been marked by grace, let it grow. May Christ be honored in every room, in every conversation, in every act of obedience and every act of forgiveness. In Jesus' name, Amen.