God's Gift of Authority

Colossians 3:18-4:1

October 25, 2026

We've been studying Colossians throughout this year, starting in January of this year. We've been rolling our way through Colossians, and it had been my intent to finish Colossians by the end of the year. That ain't going to happen. But we are really enjoying the study, and what we're learning from the Apostle Paul has just been so, so rich.

We come to, this morning in our study, the first set of relationships in the household code, which is the marital relationship, relationship between husband and wife.

And before we get into the details of that relationship, we will again consider all those household relationships in Colossians 3:18 to 4:1, and this morning cite several general principles that inform them all, cite a specific principle at

work in each relationship and then identify what it is that's undermining the pursuit of husbands and wives in their marital relationship in our own day. What trouble do we face? What temptations are unique to our time, though common to all times? That's what we'll spend the latter half of the sermon understanding and covering today.

Let me start by reading the text again, Colossians 3:18 through chapter 4, verse 1. Paul says, "Wives, be subject to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not exasperate your children so that they will not lose heart.

"Slaves in all things obey those who are your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice as men-pleasers, but with integrity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. Serve the Lord Christ, for he who does wrong will

receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. Masters, show to your slaves what is right and fair, knowing that you too have a master in heaven."

At the end of the hour last week, you may remember that I asked about the relevance of this household code in our own time. We're all Christians, so none of us is going to say that these commands are outdated, outmoded, obsolete.

But if we're honest, and if we look closely at our marriages and consider our lives, our families, our work life, we need to ask a question, and that's this: Does the way we live belie what we say we believe? Are we more worldly than godly?

Is our faith in Christ, is our recognition, as we've been learning throughout Colossians, about the absolute supremacy of Christ, his majesty, his glory, his greatness? Is our rejoicing in the sovereignty of Christ in his Lordship? Are these things matters of daily thought and practice for us, or are they only part of our formal confession?

Another way to ask the question is, do we welcome his Lordship into every one of our relationships, private and public? Do we welcome what some might consider to be an intrusion into our private life, our thoughts, our plans? Or do we embrace that, welcome it, invite it?

In asking the question, we can kind of hear the voice of the Lord Jesus Christ echoing down throughout history. "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and do not do what I say?" It's a haunting question, isn't it?

Something that will strengthen us to do as we say we believe is to understand, really, what Paul is commanding, here, and why he commands it, to understand the good of the command, the wisdom in the command, and then further, in light of the wisdom of God and the goodness of God in his commands, if we know what is at work in our own day, in our own time to undermine our obedience to his commands, we're going to understand really what are these obstacles the enemy keeps

throwing up to thwart our faithfulness and what makes practical obedience so hard, why we keep getting off track.

So I've got three points for what is ahead in this hour, starting with the general and moving to the specific. So first couple points: God uses authority to bless us, and God uses authority to train us. He uses authority to bless us and to train us.

And the first two are going to have three sub-points each; and the last main point, which will take most of our time, is this, that Satan opposes authority to destroy us. Satan opposes authority to destroy us.

So first of all, number one, God uses authority to bless us. He uses authority to bless us. And it's another way of saying God, he is authoritative. He is the creator of all things, after all. And so he is authoritative. What he says goes. How he created the universe, the heavens and the earth, invisible, metaphysical, things that are created, and physical things as well. He created all the laws and the rules that

govern all things, physical and metaphysical, material and spiritual, creates all things, and so he is in authority.

But we could see even in the creation of the heavens and the earth that he used that authority to bless the heavens and the earth, to provision it, to form it and fill it, to fill it with all of his goodness.

So three general principles, sub-points underneath this heading that God uses authority to bless us. We'll start with the first principle: authority and submission, that's God's idea, and it's good. Authority and submission is God's idea, and it's good. The concept is good; it can be no other way. By virtue of the creator-creature distinction, God is always in authority over us. We're always in submission to his authority, full-stop.

But God goes further, and he inserts the principle of authority and submission into the created order. It's how creation is structured, set up, organized, designed. In the three sets of household relationships, the principle that runs

through each set is the outworking of a divinely delegated authority and then a submitting to and obeying the one in charge, the one who is in fact, in each case, a fallible human being.

By God's good design, though, by his predetermined plan and good intentions of the world, God intended authority to be exercised among us for his glory and for the blessing and benefit. Some have actually used the word flourishing. It's a good word, too. But this authority brings glory to God, and it brings good to us.

Let me be quick to add this: God's good purposes in choosing to create and command a hierarchical structure of authority in human relationships, his good purposes are realized and enjoyed if and only if we choose to live in submission to that. Submit and rejoice; rebel and suffer. Those are the choices before us.

Because to defy his order is like defying gravity. You can do it, but it's going to hurt. Same thing in the relational

realm as well. So authority and submission is God's idea. It's God's concept, and it's a good concept.

Here's a second principle: Everyone in the world lives under authority. Everyone. Every individual submits. I think that's beyond dispute, isn't it? Some people live as if it's not, but everyone must submit to someone. Everyone must obey someone, live under law and order at some level.

And that is clear in these three sets of relationships. The man who is married, though he has authority over his wife in marriage, presumably he is outside the home of his own father. And while not under the stricture to obey father and mother any longer because he has his own family to tend to, he still has a duty to honor his parents. It's a lifelong duty. It's a blessed duty, but it is a lifelong authority over him.

And so if he's the one in authority in the first set, the marital relationship, even if he has authority in the second set, the parental relationship, he's also under obligation to the parents who are over him.

We come to the third set of household relationships. And when we do, that's a set of relationships, there, it's economical in nature. Even in Paul's day, most of the men in the church, most of the men reading Colossians 3:18 and 19, they did not hold position of master in the household. Many in the church of that day, they were slaves. Some of them manumitted slaves, some of them hired servants or freed-men, but in the employ of another.

So we all live under authority. Even the people in this passage live under authority. But let's press the question just a little bit further for the sake of a hypothetical, okay, to consider the relationships in this list.

It is conceivable that one man could be in a place of authority in each relational set. That is if to say, if a man is a husband and a father and a master, then we need to ask the question, does he never have to submit to anyone, but does he only walk around through life with quite a swagger, exercising

authority, wielding power? Is he the oppressor in every relationship?

Even that we can say that, no, even if a man is a husband and a father and a master, that he, too, must live under the authority of the state. He's submissive to governmental authority as Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2 and elsewhere describe.

Jesus set forth the principle, it's repeated in Matthew 22:21, Mark 12:17, Luke 20, verse 25; and that principle is "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar and unto God, the thing that are God's." So even the husband, the father, the master, must pay his taxes, that is, live under Caesar's authority.

So the terrifying prospect that there might be some man somewhere under no submission whatsoever, but only wields authority, only issues commands, swaggers through the world with unmitigated power like some emperor, conqueror, suppressor, enslaver, that's really a bit of a myth.

Okay, let's scroll this back even further. What about Caesar? Okay, there's, there's a man who, husband, father, master, ruler of the known world, what about him? Even Caesar must render unto God the things that are God's, right?

Jesus set forth the principle to govern all, including the very few on earth like Caesar throughout history. Luke 12:48 says, "'From everyone who has been given much, much will be required.'" Even Caesar has an account to give, and that's, I'm setting aside issues of Roman senate and all those issues of history. But even Caesar had to submit. After all, he had a wife to account to as well, didn't he?

But he's been given much. If Caesar's been given, that means he's received. If he's received, he's in a position of submission, dependency. He is not God, and therefore he has an account to give for the stewardship of all that God has given him.

Hard to see, isn't it, how monarchs, kings, emperors, dictators are able to sleep at night? So as Shakespeare said through *King Henry the IV*, "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." Robs him of sleep. Authority and submission, we need to realize, are good. The concept of authority and submission are a good gift of God.

And then, secondly, everyone lives under authority. Everyone. Every single human being lives under authority, even Caesar. Yes, even Donald Trump, even though he finds his ways around. Everybody lives under authority.

Third principle: God delegates authority to us, and he requires us, when I say "us," I mean humanity, human beings, he requires us to submit to delegated authority, and he does this to reveal things about himself to us and to teach us to trust his authority over us.

I'll repeat that in case you're scrawling it down as fast as you can. God delegates authority to us, to human beings, and he requires us to submit to authority that's delegated to human

beings. Yes, we have to submit to fallible human beings. That's all that there is, fallible human beings. But God delegated this authority and requires submission. So he reveals things about himself to us, and so that we learn from the instruction of that, that we trust his authority over us.

God's delegation of authority among humanity is neither arbitrary nor oppressive, nor is it, theologically speaking, a response to the Fall, as if the unruliness of human beings in their sins had to come under the firm control of authoritarian hierarchies. So authority and submission wouldn't be a part of this world if it weren't for the fall into sin. And so woe is us. Now that we are under sin, we're also under authoritarian hierarchy of power and authority, and we have to submit to that.

That is not the way God set up the world. Authority and submission to authority are in the original blueprint prior to the Fall. The structure ensures God's very good created order not only continues to bless his image-bearers, but also inculcates trust in God and his authority for generations of human beings to come. There's a structure that's set up and an

authority and submission hierarchy so that we're all learning about God bringing his blessing to us for the future.

And each set of these household relationships has something crucial to teach us about God's authority, his exercise of sovereign authority. It's by the exercise of his authority that he communicates blessings of his goodness and love to us, which are first and foremost relational in nature. His blessings and his goodness are not about the stuff that we get from him, but his blessings and his goodness are because of his love for us that's known in a relationship with him.

And that's what Satan attacked at the very start. He went after the most vulnerable of the human pair, the woman. Not because she's less intelligent than Adam, not because she was unequal to Adam, but because she was created second, not first. She was created after Adam had received all the commands verbally from God, and she's placed into a position to trust even further.

So she's in this vulnerable position, and Satan goes after the woman to disrupt her trust in God, to drive a wedge between her and her God. We can see in Genesis chapter 3 that Eve took part in the very first gossip session, entertaining devilish slanders against God and his character. She listened to the devil. In fact, the Greek word *diabolos* means slanderer.

So she's listening to the devil, which means she's listening to one who is inherently slanderous. She's receiving slander. She's entertaining it. Women, don't listen to gossip, don't listen to slanderers, don't do what Eve did. Eve started to doubt God's motives, questioned his agenda, began to suspect he isn't good, but he's selfish. The modern term is, He's a narcissist.

So she rebelled against God's authority. She led her husband into her rebellion as well. By the way, Adam is no victim in this. He is morally responsible, and he, because of his failure, led to the entire race of humanity falling. It's his responsibility to correct this situation, but he did not. He turned and followed her into sin.

So what is the way back? Is it a constant war between men and women, each one pointing the finger? No, that happened at the very beginning. After God confronted them, they pointed the finger at each other. That is not the way back. The way back is by faith, by trust, salvation by grace through faith in God, by faith in the Christ of God to see the love that God demonstrated toward us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

That's the way back, and we continue to walk in that saving faith when we go back to the original design of God and live in the relationships of authority and submission that God set forth in the very beginning.

We can, as those who are saved by God's grace, as those who have a new nature, who are regenerate, born again, born from above, who have a new spirit within us and the Holy Spirit living within us, by the guidance of God, by his Word, by the leadership of the Lord Jesus Christ, we can and we do live in this pattern.

And as we live according to the pattern that he designed from the very beginning, we rediscover God's goodness. We receive his blessings. We become, then, conduits. As we learn and receive, we become conduits of his blessing and his goodness and his love to our families. Through our families, our families become conduits of goodness, blessing, and love to many, many others. So what do we do? We "trust and obey, for there's no other way to be happy in Jesus than to trust and obey," right?

So to restate those three general principles: authority is a good gift from God; number two, everyone lives under authority; and number three, God delegates his authority to us. He requires submission to authority to teach us to trust him, to train us to obey him and thereby receive his blessing.

Now, having established those three general principles, let's see how they inform the specific principles at work in each set of relationships in the household. Here's where we come to our second main point: God uses authority to train us. God uses authority to train us.

Keep in mind that each of these human relationships, you might call these horizontally oriented relationships, okay, horizontally because we're looking at men and women around us. You take children-parents, older-younger, men and women, and just put them all on the same level because that's horizontal, or humanity interacting with humanity.

And yet in those horizontally oriented relationships, there is a hierarchical rank among human beings. That rank does not imply inequality; it doesn't imply better or worse. It just implies difference: different rank structures, different roles.

Each one of these, though, and the ones just outlined here, intend to teach us something about God. They're used to point us upward to our vertically oriented relationship, which is with God and God alone.

Just to state it again, everything on a horizontal level is instructive, is training us to learn about this relationship on the vertical level. And everything we learn and appreciate and

love on a vertical level filters down to inform how we treat each other on a horizontal level, too.

So in the first place, Colossians 3:18-19, in the husband-wife relationship, the practice of authority and submission is for the purpose of fellowship. Just write that word fellowship down. That fellowship is fueled by conveying and responding to love. Love is the principle that informs this fellowship.

What's the purpose? Well, we know from our Bibles that God was portrayed, and he portrayed himself, as husband to Israel. We know from our Bibles Christ is portrayed as the bridegroom of his church, his church who is his bride.

In either case, we see that God has drawn us into fellowship with him for the partnership of exercising a dominion in creation. We are his image-bearers. We exercise dominion in his name, spreading his glory.

So marital relationships, so important, they're meant to train us to give and receive love, to love and respond to love, to share in a deep and intimate privilege of a loving fellowship.

Secondly, in the parent-child relationship, verses 20 to 21, the practice of authority and submission trains us in discipleship, in discipleship; write down the word discipleship. This is the giving and receiving of instruction and practicing a principle of imitation.

Since God is the Father of us all, we are all his children, and so there is a parental relationship on a horizontal level that trains us to learn about a parental relationship on the vertical level, to learn from God, to heed his teaching, to obey his instructions, to imitate his character and his ways.

And in this practice of discipleship of parent to child, teacher to student, there's an affection that grows, isn't there, between student and teacher, a deep affection fostered between children and parents. So little girls love their

mothers, little boys love their fathers, look up to them, think fathers and mothers can do no wrong until they become adults themselves, and then they're like, "Look how you ruined me with all your sin."

And then they get through that stage, and they realize, when they have children of their own, they learn to be gracious, merciful. They learn to understand that there are no perfect homes, perfect families. The dysfunction began in the Garden, and it's continued.

Even all of that is intended by a good sovereign God, who decrees all things, so that everything that comes to pass is an out-working of his perfect will. Even in our difficulties, in our homes, all of it is instructive, all of it is teaching us to love and honor, respect, regard, cherish. It's all instructive in the vertical relationship, isn't it, teaching us to appreciate a God in whom there is no fault, sin, foolishness at all. He is our Father.

Thirdly, in the master-slave relationship, Colossians 3:22 through 4:1, the practice of authority and submission is for the purpose of a good and noble, productive, fruitful stewardship. So in the first case, fellowship; in the second case discipleship. Here the word is stewardship, so that not just individually but together and in cooperation with each other, we live out a good stewardship before God.

As we learn in our horizontal relationships, we learn about a vertically oriented relationship with God, that God is the master of the household and we are his slaves. Christ is the King of the Kingdom, and we are his citizens. Christ is, you could also say, the commander of the heavenly host, and we are his soldiers, submitting to all of his commands.

The practice of stewardship and the partnership of masters and slaves, governors and citizens, when we pursue our roles within that hierarchy and that structure of authority and submission, we pursue each with a heart to fear the Lord and to please the Lord, to hope to receive his reward and not a

paycheck. This trains us to live our lives as a stewardship before God.

Every one of these relationships practiced on the horizontal level teaches us about the vertical level. As we learn to worship and love and appreciate our God on the vertical level, that translates into what we do on the horizontal level. They feed each other. You see that?

So we're learning a specific principle in each set of household relationships. In the marriage relationship, it's the principle of loving fellowship. In the parental relationship, it's the principle of intimate discipleship. And in the economical relationship, it's that of a productive stewardship.

This has been God's design for us as his image-bearers since the very beginning, to draw us into loving fellowship and to teach us through an intimate discipleship, to deploy us and send us out to exercise dominion in a productive stewardship.

And at each step God is glorified. And as he's glorified, we enjoy the blessing of his goodness; and the chief communicable attribute of God, which is his love, is conveyed through us to spread his glory throughout all creation.

That's been the plan from the start. It's not changed because of sin. That plan remains. That blueprint is still in place; and now in Christ, God intends to see it through.

And that is why, as we come to this final point, number three, Satan opposes authority to destroy us. That's why Satan's attacking the home. His attacks throughout history on Christianity have been to go after the home, to destroy the husband-wife relationship, which then destroys the parental relationship, which then unravels all of society and all of its economy and all of its wealth and all of its prosperity.

Since God uses authority to bless us, to train us, it's no mystery that Satan is going to do everything he can to oppose and undermine God's authority, and to try to make principles of authority and submission look utterly ridiculous, or to so

pervert them out of shape that they turn into tyranny and seem unreasonable, oppressive, even harmful and dangerous.

When Satan insinuates a suspicion into the husband and wife relationship, when he undermines principles of authority and submission by distorting, subverting, inverting them, he's attacking the heart of the home, the marriage.

And after that, the other dominoes of human relationship fall one right after the other, disrupt a loving fellowship between a husband and wife, or better, turn them against each other in a perpetual hostility that's sometimes open warfare, sometimes a cold war. Each generation engages in its own way in the battle of the sexes. And with that loving relationship disrupted by suspicion, destroyed by divorce, the intimate discipleship and the productive stewardship become casualties of war, as we see all around us today.

It's been going on since the beginning of time, ever since Adam followed after his wife in silence rather than leading his wife by love, by speaking to her, by telling her things, by

having a relationship with her, using his words, by engaging with her, loving her, giving her the instruction she needs and the correction she needed.

Instead, Adam kept quiet, followed her, and the rest is history. When God confronted them both, Adam blamed his wife rather than taking personal responsibility for his sins. Eve wasn't better than Adam. She blamed the serpent, but at least she didn't throw her husband under the bus.

But that tendency of women bucking authority and yet covering for feckless, disobedient husbands, that tendency of men to passively acquiesce to their wives, the female resistance to authority, and then blaming women when inevitably things go off the rails, that pattern keeps on repeating itself over and over and over.

You can find a biblical example of this, kind of a humorous example, in Esther, the book of Esther, set in the Persian kingdom. The Persian King Ahasuerus wanted to parade his wife

Vashti to show off her beauty to his people and his princes. She refused to be gawked at. She didn't come when she was summoned.

And so foreseeing the implications of her actions, one of his wise men advised the king, "Look, you can't let that go. Better do something," "for this day," in Esther chapter 1, it says, "This day the noble ladies of Persia and Medea who have heard of the Queen's conduct, they'll speak in the same way to all the king's princes, and there will be plenty of contempt and anger." Another translation says "spite and indignation" or "no end of disrespect and discord."

You know what they didn't have in their day that we have in our day that makes this little scenario really, really difficult? Social media. Pull out her phone: Queen Vashti, Hey, ladies.

Strategic, isn't it, of Satan? Turn the king and queen against each other, turn the nobles and the nobles' wives against each other; sows no end of disrespect and discord in all of Medea and Persia, that great empire. He creates spite and

indignation between the sexes, destroys marriages with contempt and anger. Satan knows that as go the marriages, so go the homes; and as go the homes, so goes the entire kingdom. Well, it's the same thing, history repeating itself in our own time, is it not?

So instead of following that same pattern of destruction, God tells us through the Apostle Paul, "Wives, be subject to your husbands." It's passive voice in its structure, but it's a reflexive idea, kind of in the middle voice: "Submit yourselves to your husbands."

In other words, it's not for you, oh husband, to enforce the submission of your wife with authoritarian dominance. That command is delivered to her by her God. You pray for her, and you make it easy for her to submit to your authority.

Wives, be subject. You submit yourselves to your husband "as is fitting in the Lord." We'll talk about that more, what it means to be "fitting in the Lord." Why would she, why is that fitting?

Verse 19, "Husbands, love your wives." You want to make it easy for them to cement to your leadership and your authority? Love them. Love them and "do not be embittered against them." Be patient toward them, kind, gentle. There's to be loving fellowship, the pursuit of intimate partnership, not hostility, contempt, anger.

In our time, in this modern era, here where we live in the Western world, a social revolution has been underway for about a hundred years now. Some would say longer, but it's something that has now been identified as what's called the Great Feminization.

And the thesis of the Great Feminization is about the increasing representation of women throughout all institutions of society. Women have not only achieved parity with men in higher education and academia, but in many white-collar professional fields as well.

And they've not only achieved parity, but they have excelled, either to take over many of those fields, or they're on track to do so in the next decade. It's an unprecedented moment in Western history, which is acknowledged everywhere, now, sometimes celebrated, sometimes mourned. And the pivot toward female authority and a feminine ethos throughout all the institutions of society is very unlikely to be reversed.

None of this would have happened or could have happened apart from large-scale advances in industry and in technology. So when Rosie the Riveter went to work in the factory in support of the war effort in World War II and used her strong arm and her keen mind to help the Allies win World War II, women learn something from that.

They learned that they can build tanks, airplanes, ships, guns, bombs just as well as men, as they roll through the assembly line. In fact, they learned that they could shoot those guns, drop those bombs, fly those planes, drive those tanks because the technology was an equalizer. It didn’t take great

strength to pull a trigger. In fact, I'll wager that I've seen some women way better shots than men.

They also said in those factories and on those assembly lines, they said, You know what? That guy who's in charge, he's kind of an idiot. I think I can do the job better. And if it takes more training and more education to make that job my job, I'm going to take advantage of the opportunity.

Feminist voices came alongside them and said, You know what, you can do that and you can make a lot of money, and you don't have to be saddled any longer with children pulling at your apron strings, holding you back. You can get out there and you can go after it and get it for yourself. Let somebody else take care of the kids. You've got a world to conquer.

I want you to know up front, and even though I'm going to say some things that sound hard to hear, this is no screed against women. I love women. I'm married to one. I have two of them in my home or raised in my home. I actually was born from a woman. She's right over there.

This is no screed. It's just an acknowledgement of the kind of challenges that we face in trying to put God's Word into practice in our own time, in our own day. And so I say this with sympathy and a tenderness of heart. You need to understand, do not hear me in any way as demeaning the fairer sex because women are every bit as competent and intelligent and skilled and gifted as men are.

The difference that God wants to make and the distinction he wants to make, he did so by giving men stronger, bigger bone structures and greater strength, and giving women wombs, and giving men more of an aggressive, conquering, truth-seeking, combative spirit; and women more of a nurturing, kind, gentle, compassionate, merciful spirit.

On the whole, in general, he made distinctions among us, and he called it "good." And the more we see his goodness in our design, the more we rejoice with that goodness and do not demean one another: one sex pointing the finger at the other, one sex fighting against the other. All of us appreciate one another.

But we need to see that the Great Feminization could not have happened without technological advancement because technology is a democratizing force in society; and for all of its practical benefits, there are social costs as well. They've shown up in the family. New challenges face us; there's no going back.

Today's changes in women's involvement in the institutions of society, just keep in mind that's not happening really in the trades, in the blue collar jobs, which remain male-dominated. You don't see a women's movement wanting to go dig ditches and saying, Hey, give us our equal rights in the ditch. No, they'll leave that to the men, happily.

It's the white-collar jobs, academia, law, law courts, social sciences like sociology, psychology, medicine, journalism, these are all professions that exert the most influence at a top-down level on society, institutions with the most power to enculturate coming generations.

The demographics have shifted quite dramatically in the last fifty years. Numbers of women attending colleges, universities, graduate schools, earning undergraduate and graduate degrees; women are excelling in higher ed. Why is that? Is it because they're not smart, because they're being favored?

No. They're intelligent. To illustrate, in 1970, women earned less than 10% of doctoral degrees in this country, and that number has been steadily rising, finally reaching parity with men in 2005, and then from then on surpassing men in more women receiving doctoral degrees in this country than men. Same phenomenon has been incurring in other Western countries as well.

So these women, gifted, educated with degrees conferred on them, are stepping into the faculty positions now being vacated by the predominantly male members of the baby-boomer generation. As that generation times out, ages out, women step in. Whereas in 1987 less than one-third of higher education faculty were women, today that number is more than 50% and rising.

So from elementary education and secondary education and all the way through university graduate-level education, the numbers of women in education have been on the rise since the 1970s, far outpacing men. In fact, many men are retracting from education all together.

So what's the problem, you ask, with more women having more opportunity and taking greater advantage? First answer to that question is, well, nothing *per se*, as long as female advancement in these fields is fair, which is often not, and not a socially engineered advancement of women in these white-collar fields, which it often is.

New York Times journalist Ross Douthat suggested in an interview that women are just out-performing men. And he said to the man he was interviewing, his male guest, he said, "Maybe you should just suck it up and actually compete with women on the ground that we have in the 21st century in America." Fair.

Helen Andrews, though, in her article on the same subject, noted that suggestion from Ross Douthat and then wrote this:

"This is what feminists think happened, but they're wrong. Feminization is not an organic result of women out-competing men. It is an artificial result of social engineering. And if we take our thumb off the scale, it will collapse within a generation." End quote.

Affirmative action policies for higher education along with DEI, diversity, equity and inclusion policies, hiring policies in the workplace, enforcing feminine ideals and ethos in the workplace, have all tipped the scales in favor of women, and now institutions of higher learning are predominantly female and so are an increasing number of workplaces.

Affirmative action laws and policies go back to the civil rights campaigns in our recent history. Obviously, much of this started well. Who would argue that the emancipation of slaves is not a good thing? It is a good thing. Women's suffrage. Desegregation.

But leftist academics, social activists, took advantage of women, weaponizing their compassion to pass family labor laws

that sent more women into the workplace in increasing numbers, by securing childcare for them, releasing them of burdens of family, giving employer-funded very generous maternity leave, fighting for the right to abortion, to kill kids that would get in front of their career, to then enforce affirmative action, and then to further weaponize women's compassion toward gay rights, now trans rights. And the list goes on.

So the second answer to the question, what's wrong with having more women having more opportunity in white-collar professional fields, considering the implications of increasingly female dominated workplaces, journalism, law, courts, politics, homes, marriages, now churches?

Well, a lot is wrong with that. Again, it's Helen Andrews who points out that anti-discrimination law requires that every workplace be feminized. She writes this: "Women can sue their bosses for running a workplace that feels like a fraternity house, but men can't sue when their workplace feels like a Montessori kindergarten. Naturally, employers err on the side of making the office softer."

That is just an economic and a practical solution on the part of employers because no man, no HR director wants to be responsible for a lawsuit worth hundreds of thousands of dollars or higher against his company. So he caves, or in many cases, an HR director, she caves.

Softer, making the office softer, that doesn't necessarily mean nicer, more just, fairer, kinder, better. What happens when conflicts arise within the workplace, as they often do? Hard decisions have to be made in the workplace.

Women want decisions to be made collaboratively, rather than the cut-and-thrust of debating ideas, dealing with cold hard facts, stoic analysis. Women would rather there's a collaborative environment, with everything, every hard truth being encased in a compliment sandwich so that everybody feels affirmed going into the very hard thing and then affirmed coming out of it, protecting feelings, wanting to mitigate risk, avoid any harm, avoid any hurt feelings.

And so if a woman's feelings get hurt in the workplace, in fact, I see this really everywhere; I'm not saying all women are like this, but this is a tendency. If a woman's feelings are hurt, she can say that it's really somebody else's fault. If I'm hurt, there's a problem with you. If I feel emotionally disturbed, somebody must have done something.

So in many cases, this woman who's hurt in the workplace will avoid direct confrontation. She'll avoid a hard conversation with a co-worker. Instead, she'll take an indirect approach to her conflict, expressing her anger in gossip, slander, character assassination. She may even file an HR complaint, and get that rival fired. Often that, if it's a man, often that man is replaced, you guessed it, by one of the growing number of qualified, well-educated female applicants.

And so it continues. The more women in the workplace, the more women in positions of political, journalistic influence, the more feminine traits, tendencies, preferences, priorities set the tone, not only in society writ large, but that filters

into schools and all the workplaces, into homes and, yeah, into churches, too.

What are these feminine traits, preferences, tendencies, priorities that set the tone? Sometimes it's a resistance to plain, direct speech. It could be taking a victim posture: hurt feelings in me mean there's something to blame in you; resistance to any authority that is non-collaborative or resistance to authority that is direct and truth-seeking, solution oriented, shortest line from point A to point B is a straight line; a bias toward one who seems weaker, who seems marginalized, wanting to pull that person in, make him part of the process.

For example, authors Corey Clark and Bo Winegard cite evidence of how the increased presence of women in higher education changes the entire culture in the academy. Women and men weigh relevance of issues very differently, they say.

They write this: "A 2017 YouGov survey of 2,300 US adults on issues related to free speech and tolerance on college

campuses found that," I'll give you several things here, "56% of men said that colleges should not protect students from offensive ideas. 64% of women said that they should.

"College campuses are usually the place for putting forth those ideas and then dealing with them through debate. Men say 'Don't protect students, teach them.' Women say, 'Cover their ears. Cover that person's mouth.'"

"When presented with a variety of controversial claims made by speakers, for example, 'Men are better at math,' 'All white people are racist,' 'Police are justified stopping African Americans at higher rates,' when presented with a variety of controversial claims made by speakers, a majority of men supported nine of the eleven speakers' right to speak on campus. A majority of women opposed all eleven speakers' right to do so. 'Shut them up. Don't let them speak.'"

The risk-averse, harm-averse, is that bad? It's nature, and it's nature that is really, really good in the home. It's really good when parenting. It's really good when a mom has five kids

and one is popping off at the mouth, and she says, "Be quiet" and he says, "Why?" and she says, "Because I said so."

She has shopping to do. She has kids to care for. She has things to take care of. She doesn't have time to mess around. That kind of silencing is good when those kids are young in the home to learn, to respect mom.

You take it in the workplace, onto the college campus, it's a different story. Fifty-one percent of men said colleges should not disinvite speakers if students threaten violent protest; 67% of women said they should.

These authors cite survey after survey, study after study. I'm not going to take you through it all, just one more. A 2018 Knight Foundation survey of 4,407 full-time college students, on issues related to free expression on campuses and diversity and inclusion found that 71% of men reported that protecting free speech is more important than promoting an inclusive society; 59% of women said promoting an inclusive society is more important than protecting free speech. It's getting up at like

two-thirds of women saying free speech is less important than inclusion.

Fifty-eight percent of men said it's never acceptable to shout down speakers, try to prevent them from delivering their remarks; 58% of women said sometimes it’s always acceptable to do that.

Look, that's enough to illustrate the point. There is a revolution afoot, one that explains really the rise of woke-ism and collectivism and socialism and even Marxist ideas; one that provides evidence that Satan is alive and well in dividing the sexes, which means he's attacking marriages and dividing homes.

With a greater number of men and women mixing in the workplace, think about that. More wives spending more time away from their husbands: Is it any wonder at rates of adultery are always on the rise, women thinking of their income as theirs, children watching working moms leave the home, wives having other authorities making demands on them, their time, their energy. All the authority of husbands is weakened, attenuated,

put in ranking structure with others who command their conscience.

How then do we think that men today are responding to all this? Well, men from the baby-boomer generation already gave up the fight long ago. They didn't probably even see it coming. They acquiesced, abdicated their authority, and went on passively with the Great Feminization.

And that's true of the next generation as well, my generation, Gen-Xers, who failed to see the danger. The Gen-Y or millennial generation is now feeling this strain as these women, unbelieving women out there, are flouting their independence.

They're walking away from domestic duty. They party, vacation with their girlfriends, go dancing at bars and restaurants after work, go out to concerts. They live their best life now away from their husband. Used to be the partying man at the office with all his office buddies. That's been flipped. Gen-Y men are at home, changing diapers, cooking meals, running kids to and from sports practices, helping kids with homework,

putting them to bed at night. It's a tragic set of affairs. It's wrecking marriages everywhere.

Gen-Zers have taken notice. An increasing number of Gen-Z men are now growing resentful toward women; and sadly, this bitterness, which is a seething anger, has even entered into the hearts of some young men who enter into Christian churches, including our church, beloved.

Some academics are watching the unfolding of the Great Feminization; they predict that we are going to decline as a society, whether it's steadily or suddenly, maybe catastrophically, because a female-dominated nation can't stand up against a China or a Russia or significant Islamic threat that are not female-dominated but are male-dominated.

Others predict an uprising of angry young men tired of women scolding them, ostracizing them, suing them, wagging their finger in their faces, clutching their pearls. And the pendulum seems to, many times these days, be swinging toward a coarser, more caustic, more combative form of manhood that is not only

tolerated but is even, by many young men, preferred because at least those men are standing up and doing something and saying something.

All that is happening out there. We as elders, when we see that kind of stuff coming into the church, we guard; we do not want that kind of a spirit infecting the church.

But all that is happening on the horizontal plane. The devil's tactics are on the horizontal plane, but his strategic aim is vertical, to separate us from our God. If he can turn us against each other on the horizontal level and disrupt the principle of loving fellowship that we practice as among husbands and wives, thwarting our partnership of intimate discipleship with our children, undermining our stewardship together, well, he retards our growth in fellowship and discipleship and stewardship before God. That's what's at stake.

Paul says throughout Colossians, “Put your eyes on Christ.” He is supreme over all, and he has power over all. He has power over this cultural moment and every moment that's passed. He

remains Lord, and he remains our Savior. He's the one who died for all of our sins, cultural things we've sinned in, male and female sins.

Whether you have male-oriented sins, female-oriented sins, whatever they are, he died to reconcile you to God. He has given you of his Spirit and his Word so that you can, so that you must, repent of your sins and give yourself to Christ, give yourself to his church, give yourself to one another.

When you "set your mind on things above, not on the things that are on the earth," you mortify that internal drive towards sin. You put off the old nature and all its sins, and you put on a new man, and you're being renewed in his image with new hearts and renewing hearts of compassion and kindness and humility and gentleness and patience, as Paul has talked about in Colossians 3, here.

You bear with one another; you graciously forgive one another. You put on love, the perfect bond of unity, and that love is the bond that cements the fellowship of marriage. So in

that loving fellowship, you wives "be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." And you husbands, you "love your wives and do not be embittered against them."

Want to know more about how to do that? Come back next week, and we'll find out together, shall we? Let's pray.

Our Father, what can we say but "Help us"? And we know and confess that you have helped us. You have never hidden the truth from us, but you've revealed it. You've actually printed it in black and white, so we can go and study it and see the grand design, see the blueprints, see the reasoning behind it, see your wisdom and your goodness.

And now we plead for your power. And we ask that you, by the power of the Spirit, by the power of the Word, to shape us, to change us, to renew our minds and transform our lives and transform our homes; that we, Father, would bring glory and honor to you, that husbands and wives would work out that loving fellowship with one another, that they together return and, and exercise that, that intimate discipleship with their kids,

raising them in the fear and admonition of the Lord together; and that that family, as it goes out into the world, would execute a productive, fruitful stewardship to your glory and to all human good and flourishing.

We pray, Father, that you would help us and give us great wisdom because we know that we're fighting against cultural winds. We're swimming upstream, and we are going to be branded as misogynist and anti-woman and all that stuff. And it’s, we're going to be very unpopular when we live the way we do and when we speak the way we do.

Brace us for impact. Help us to grow an extra layer or two of skin so that we can stand against the persecutions that we face. And inasmuch as we do receive blowback from the world, let us rejoice because we suffer for your name's sake.

We pray that you would give us strength to push back and to push forward, not to engage and go out there to fight the cultural battles, but actually to do it right in the heart of the home, where we can affect change, starting with ourselves.

Help us, we pray; in Christ's name, for your glory we pray.

Amen.