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AN EXEGETICAL STUDY OF COLOSSIANS 3:18 – 21 AND ITS
IMPLICATIONS FOR THE NIGERIAN CHRISTIAN FAMILY

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ABSTRACT

The title of this work is “An Exegetical Study of Colossians 3:18 – 21 and Its Implications for The Nigerian Christian family”. The problems leading to disintegration of the families are lack of submission of wives to their husbands, lack of love from husbands to their wives, disobedience of children to their parents and parents also provoking their children to anger and discouragement. Consequently, there is increase in the number of single parents, broken relationships and divorce among couples, disorderliness in families or marriages, half-baked or ill-nurtured children and unstable homes.

The method adopted for the research is historical interpretation which depends on the Biblical facts that are obtained from exegesis of Colossians 3:18 - 21. The study conducted into the world of ancient families to see how they were run, and the instructions given to the first century Christians on the management of their homes, were examined through the exegesis of the selected text. This exegesis goes on to spell out the responsibilities of individual members of the family as submission, love, obedience and even-handed treatment of children by parents.

The implications of this are: wives are to submit to their husbands, husbands are to love their wives; children are to obey their parents, and the parents are not to provoke their children to the point of discouraging them or making them to become angry. If the biblical injunctions as contained in the passage considered i.e. Colossians 3:18 – 21 are faithfully followed, it will go a long way to helping the family to stay healthy.

In conclusion, the study is divided into five chapters: chapter one deals with introduction while chapter two is on literature review. Chapters three and four are on exegesis and implications of Colossians 3:18 – 21 for the Nigerian Christian family respectively. Chapter five rounds it up with summary, conclusion and recommendations.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study is as obtained from the exegesis of Col. 3:18 – 21 and its implications as derived from chapter four. These bring about the research findings. The exegesis is seen as an adaptation of the Greco-Roman household responsibilities.

Paul through his teaching was able to teach them the correct Christian virtues in the Christian homes or how Christian homes should look like. Paul addressed the wives first to give great priority, and human value and recognitions to the women than did the Greco-Roman society. This is seen in when population is to be taken, women are usually not counted (cf. Matt. 14:21; 15:38). He also married the gospel with culture. He did not condemn the culture; rather he found a way of how to marry the two. The abolition of culture may cause socio-political disorder. He therefore tried a way of modernizing its practices along with the gospel.

An ideal Christian home as instituted by God is a 'monogamy' form of marriage, one husband and one wife. This is seen in the Garden of Eden where God gave Eve to Adam. No other names of women were mentioned apart from Eve. This is also reflected in the letter of Paul to Timothy his true son in the faith in 1 Timothy 3:2 that a leader / overseer must be "...the husband of but one wife..." So, an ideal Christian home is seen to be one husband and one wife. All other forms of marriage are prohibited as abominations.

The family is seen to be a unique thing in the divine plan of salvation of God's programme. Paul then tried to make the members of the family to perform individual duties, codes or responsibilities in order to be within the divine salvation of God. It is also seen that the love the husbands lavished on their wives will not stop at homes, it will extend to their local church and members of the church also share out of this love and also the society is affected.

The study will be an eye opener to Pastors, marriage counselors and couple's fellowship leaders in preparing their clients for the Christian homes during premarital

and marriage counseling sessions. It could also be used for conflict resolution where need be.

Christian home sets the pace for other men and women in the society to be instruments of peace and harmony for the whole world. It also brings about increased peaceful co-existence of people of different races in the world. The Christian homes help to contribute to the society through their positive behaviours and morality and to the world at large. It also helps to boost the spiritual values in the society and in the world at large.

Every member brought up in Christian homes also reflects positive characters and try as much as possible where need be to influence their immediate environment positively. In other words, they are vessels of honour to their environment and they are instrumental in checking the issues of divorce, separation and any form of threat of disintegration to the Christian homes.

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Looking at the outcome of the exegetical study of Col. 3:18 – 21 and its implications for the Nigerian Christian Family, it is glaring that there are solutions to the threats or forces of integration that are confronting the Christian homes (or staring at the faces of the Christian homes). The following recommendations are suggested to help the household of God's members, would-be couples, churches, societies and the world at large to resist any form of threat of disintegration that is staring the homes at the face.

1. Christian couples should take the issues of marriage seriously because the tripod survival of the family, the local church, the society and the

advancement of God's kingdom here on earth rest wholly on it. The role of the pastors is to teach and preach more on the importance of the family to the individuals, the local church, the community, the nation and the Kingdom of God. The Pastor and church leaders must show and teach the members the pride of place that the family takes in God's divine programme of salvation.

2. Pastors, church leaders and family members should find a way of marrying both the gospel and the culture together since there are aspects of culture that are not in any way detrimental to the Christian faith. Culture could even be a medium for propagation of religion.
3. Christian wives should not see any need to compete with the husbands in the homes as two pilots could not be in a plane without a conflict. They should also strive to avoid any form of women liberation programmes that will be a detriment to their homes.
4. It is a mandatory duty for Christian husbands to love their wives and not be embittered with them. The love of Christ must take preeminence as this will help to avoid any cultural beliefs, sayings, or practices that present wives as property or second class citizens and to embrace the scripture that says, "...bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh ..." (Gen. 2:23 NIV).
5. It is a thing of joy for Christian children to take obedience to Christian parents as a way of life. This will help them to receive and develop Christian virtues that help them to live for god and survive in any part of the world they find themselves. God Himself also promises them long life as they obey and honour their parents, "Honour your father and your mother..." (Exo. 2:12 NIV).

6. It is pertinent for African Christians and setting to understand that 'monogamy' is God's ideal form of Christian home whereas 'polygamy' poses cultural issue which is contrary and against the will of God for Christian homes. Therefore, Christian homes should encourage monogamy form of marriage.
7. It is also recommended that further study or findings be looked into to proffer solutions to some of the other fundamental or problems that are confronting the Christian homes.

Looking at the summary, conclusions and the recommendations of this research work, it is pertinent that the readers must have gained one insight or the other as to what an ideal Christian home is and what Paul was trying to pass across to Christian homes about the responsibilities of the wives, the husbands, the Christian children and the fathers which when they are well performed will bring about reduction to the threat of disintegration to the Christian homes. This will also go a long way to increase the joy of the family, local church, society, nation (Nigeria), and the whole world at large. The importance of an ideal Christian home is likened to heaven on earth.