

Colossians 3:18-4:6

Verses 18-19:

--Paul exhorts the Colossians to live out the divine life in common social structures. In pairs, he successively exhorts wives, children, and slaves to submission and husbands, fathers, and masters to godly leading.

--**(18) Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**

--There are only a few direct calls to husbands and wives in the Scripture: Here; **1 Cor. 7; Eph. 5; 1 Peter 3.**

--Biblical commands for wives to submit to their husbands run directly against the current sentiments of our culture. But for saved women who sincerely want to please God, it is important to realize God had purpose and intention when He made women. Who cares what the world thinks?! There is only one question that matters. *What was in the mind of God when He created the first woman?*

--The Bible clearly teaches God made Eve from Adam, second, and with the express purpose of taking on the helper position (**Gen. 2:18; 1 Cor. 11:8-9; 1 Tim. 2:13**). Eve took the helper position *in the mind and will of God before sin*. God designed her for this function and with this intent. God's purpose remains. He hasn't changed His mind to fit the times. *None of this biblical truth supports abuse or women or the man's God-given place of leadership!*

--Now, "submit" is a small word with a large scope! Paul traces the sphere of a woman's submission in two ways: ***your own husbands + as is fitting in the Lord***

--The Greek word for **submit** is not only used for women. It is used of Jesus with His parents in **Lk. 2:51**; wives in **Eph. 5:22; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1**; servants with masters in **Titus 2:9; 1 Peter 2:13**; citizens with the government in **Rom. 13:1; Titus 3:1**; and believers with God in **James 4:7**.

--***As is fitting in the Lord*** qualifies both the *what* and the *how* of submission. The submission is in respect to the Lordship of Christ and not the worthiness of the husband. Many wives were then, and still are today, witnesses to unsaved husbands. How would the work of God look if a wife became a worse wife after she was saved?! *You can please God while not pleasing a sinful man.*

--**(19) Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.**

--God has designed marriage to be two-sided. The previous command becomes easy because of verse **19** and what God created men to do.

--God created Adam first, gave His commands to Adam first, and then brought him a helper to work with in fulfilling God's purposes. So, men are supposed to remain the head of their own house and the house of God (**1 Cor. 11:3; 1 Tim. 2:12-13**).

--God's mind and intention in men heading the home is seen in such passages as:

***Genesis 18:19: For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the LORD to do righteousness and justice. . . ***

***Isaiah 3:12: As for My people, children are their oppressors, and women rule over them. ***

1 Timothy 3:4-5: one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his how house, how will he take care of the church of God?)

--God made man the head of the home *before* sin. His mind and intention has not changed. God made man the head of the home to use his authority to love. His position should never be leveraged as an excuse to be abusive, unloving, or embittered.

Malachi 2:13-14: So He does not regard the offering anymore, nor receive it with goodwill from your hands. Yet you say, "For what reason?" Because the LORD has been witness between you and wife of your youth, with whom you have dealt treacherously; yet she is your companion and your wife by covenant.

--Men are called to loving companionship and not bitterness. Bitterness is shown in being ill-tempered, inconsiderate, distant, harsh, hostile, etc. And that can happen along the way (***the wife of your youth***) and not just right at the start. We can love the comfort or sexual fulfillment we get *from a wife* without loving *our actual wife* as a companion in God's designs.

--Bad examples do not excuse these commands because there is no other way to get to marriage as it meant to be in God's eyes—a man and woman playing their divinely designed roles (leading and helping) as dual servants before Him in love.

Verses 20-21:

--(20) Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

--The Scripture specifically commands obedience to parents. This too, is a part of God's ordered design in the world. He created men and women, designed them with the ability to procreate after their kind, so His purposes could pass on to their procreation.

--Therefore, obedience to parents is especially pleasing to God. Do you want to serve Him? Start at home! Jesus did so for thirty years—most of us are going to have a much shorter time!

--Of course, the picture here is one of a Christian home. In that scenario, *most* of what our parents command should be easy.

--The ultimate goal, is parents teaching their kids to hear and obey the commands of God by living out those commands in front of them. Young children are too immature to realize what is happening in the moment, but will comprehend embodied truth as they get older. *Wait too long to teach obedience and the cake is already baked!*

--(21) Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

--On the other side—as this is also a two-sided relationship—some parents are so unreasonable their kids feel like it is impossible to please them. *What if a stranger asked your kids if they felt like they could ever make you happy?*

--Our kids are God's adults on loan to us. It is as if God said to us: ***Take this child away and nurse him for me, and I will give you your wages (Ex. 2:9)!*** We will one day be responsible to the Father of their spirits.

--Fathers, as the head of your house, you are responsible to God to run things for Him. We should all be able to sincerely say what Joshua said: ***But as for me and my house, we will serve the LORD (Josh. 24:15).***

--Unsure if you are discouraging your kids? Why don't you ask them? If you don't have enough humility to do so, you are probably a discouraging parent.

--Parents are called to help bend their child's will to God's will without breaking their spirits. That may be a fine line, but it is how godly discipline and obedience should look. Teaching obedience and disciplining disobedience.

--A sullen, discouraged child is evidence of a hard, ungodly father.

Verses 22-24:

--(22) ***Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.***

--It is important to start by recognizing the Bible is not promoting slavery because it speaks to slaves. It is promoting Christian reality! Paul's heart is clearly seen in his command for slaves to seek their freedom (**1 Cor. 7:21**) and the epistle of **Philemon**.

--Paul is instructing Christian slaves on their new life in Christ because so many slaves (of all different levels) were saved (Notice how much instruction he gives in comparison with even husbands and wives). What special and incredible promises from the Holy Spirit to slaves!

What does the world have to say to them in comparison with this?!

--Christian slaves were to serve their fleshly—or earthly—masters while fearing God, the Heavenly Master of their spirits. The life of God hidden in Christ Jesus even elevated slaves.

--How? Some of the greatest men and women of the Bible were slaves! Joseph; Daniel; Nehemiah; Esther; etc. Could they honor God as slaves without the Holy Spirit and we cannot with the Holy Spirit?

--Paul encourages slaves to serve ***in sincerity of heart***, not with ***eyeservice*** or as ***men-pleasers***. ***Eyeservice*** is only while eyes are watching. ***Men-pleasers*** is used only here and in **Eph. 6:6** where the combo is repeated. Men-pleasers have mixed motives Vs. Singularity or purity of heart. Something single or pure is unmixed.

--(23) What is the unmixed motive? ***And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.***

--The Greek word for ***heartily*** (*psyche*) is most often translated *soul* or *life* in the NT. It describes the source of our vital life force. We might say it is "pouring ourselves" into our work.

--This is how the angels serve God. They don't care what the job is. Whether bringing judgment, blessing, baking cakes, killing Assyrians, taking Elijah for a ride, announcing babies, strengthening Christ, or chaining up Satan—it only matters that the job is *for* and *from* the Lord.

--(24) Why is God worthy of a slaves poured out life? Why can God justly ask a slave to serve Him by serving sinful men? ***Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.***

--Two reasons:

1) ***Knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.*** . . In Paul's day, pay or reward was often dishonestly given or unjustly withheld. *Jacob with Laban: ***changed my wages ten times...****

--We are called to give genuine service to God who will one day hand us genuine reward for rights and wrongs at the Bema Seat. God is fully impartial (**Rom. 2:11; Eph. 6:9; James 2:1**).

--Not only is it a reward, but Paul calls it an ***inheritance***. An inheritance is not for slaves. It is for family. For sons and daughters. Every servant of God is more than a servant. They are family and our reward is a sure part of our inheritance of all things in Christ Jesus.

2) ***For you serve the Lord Christ.*** . . The One who commands service is worthy of all our lives. No human will ever be called to humble themselves for Him more than He humbled Himself for us! Our marriages and homes, our character in workplaces should reflect the life of God.

****Titus 2:9-10: Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.****

--When we stand before God our Savior, we will know there is no service, sacrifice, or cost He is not worthy of. What reason does God need other than: *Because I have asked you?*

Verses 3:25-4:1:

--(25) Nothing excuses sin against God—the Perfect Master—for either side. It was important for masters and slaves to hear that God was an impartial Judge. There is a Master over all of us and that is the ONLY ultimate hope for any true justice in this world.

--(4:1) Paul takes what is ***just and fair*** in the eyes of earthly masters and transfers it into what is ***just and fair*** to their ***Master in heaven***.

--If this command was truly followed through history, it would have effectively ended all slavery by transforming the various levels of slavery into regular, fair, honorable jobs.

Verse 2:

--***Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.***

--***Continue earnestly*** could also be translated *endure towards* prayer. That might not sound like normal English but it is normal experience for anyone seeking to pray!

****Mark 14:38: Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.****

****Luke 18:1: Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.****

****Romans 12:12: Continuing steadfastly in prayer****

Ephesians 6:18: *praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.*

--Why does God give us all these repeated warnings to press on in prayer? Because we need them! *On a personal level, I have thought of these exhortations so many times when I grow weary praying for those who are not walking with the Lord!*

--***Being vigilant in it.*** . . . has the idea of alertness and awareness. When we pray, we need to be conscious of what we are doing—intentional. We need to be awake and alive! --A watchman on the wall must be present (continuing) and awake (vigilant) to be worthwhile.

--***with thanksgiving.*** . . . God will answer! When He does, we would return to Him with gratitude and praise. In the end, we pray because we love Jesus and desire to please Him. It is so easy for us to take the incredible gift of prayer for granted.

--What if this gift of prayer was taken from us as it was with the rebellious King Saul?

1 Samuel 28:5-6: *When Saul saw the army of the Philistines, he was afraid, and his heart trembled greatly. And when Saul inquired of the LORD, the LORD did not answer him, either by dreams or by Urim or by the prophets.*

--***Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving.*** . . . you will not regret it on the day you stand before the One who heard all your prayers.

Verses 3-4:

--**(3) *meanwhile praying also for us.*** . . . Paul was never ashamed to ask for prayer! *Are we?!*

Romans 15:30: *Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me.*

--See also (2 Cor. 1:11; Eph. 6:18-19; 1 Thess. 5:25; 2 Thess. 3:1-2). Begin the habit of praying for your spiritual leaders.

--***that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains.*** . . . Paul knew that what he required in his service to God was a true spiritual dynamic that could only come through prayer and the work of the Holy Spirit. *Man made methods cannot secure spiritual fruit!*

--Paul knew only God could really give him a ***door*** (1 Cor. 16:9; 2 Cor. 2:12) for the Word of God to enter into hearts and lives. That was the purpose of Paul's life. How do we know?

--Paul isn't praying for a door out of prison! In fact, he is praying for more opportunities to speak the Word of God, which is the very reason he is imprisoned in the first place.

Ephesians 6:19-20: *And for me, that utterance may be given to me, that I may open my mouth boldly to make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.*

--**(4)** Wonderfully, Paul also adds: ***that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.***

--Paul needed boldness and clarity. Paul knew when he spoke clearly and boldly, stuff happened. He saw that right from the beginning with Stephen.

Acts 6:10: *And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke.*

--I am glad that Paul asked for prayer so that he would speak what he **ought to speak**. Those three words are a serious challenge, because we also struggle at times to speak as we “ought” to speak to people. May God answer this prayer for us as He did for Paul!

Acts 18:9-10: Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, “Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city.”

Verse 5:

--**(5) Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time.**

--Our **walk** is always in reference to normal life processes. Paul exhorts them to *walk about* in wisdom toward those that are **outside**. Let this be very clear—we are not to hide from those that are *outside* because we desperately want them to be *inside*!

--Walking in wisdom doesn’t mean we will make all the unsaved people we know happy. The point is we need wisdom to walk so we are witnesses but not worldly. In the world but not of the world.

--Christians are stereotyped by the world as much or more than we stereotype the world! No doubt, in many lives, Jesus Christ and the life of Christ has been distorted by a bad example—some by mistake and some because there are wolves and tares!

Philippians 1:27: Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I am come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

--We live in confusing times, but also very important times!

--Paul commands: **redeeming the time**. The Greek for **redeeming** has the idea of *buying up the opportunity*! *As some Black Friday shoppers did with certain seasonable deals!*

--This is so important because we only have passing opportunities. Each of us is in a season of life that changes, so it is imperative to recognize and redeem what is there! *Home, high school, college, marriage, young kids, job, church, etc.*

--We live in a special season of God’s grace, never to be repeated in the history of the world. Soon this season will be over: no more walking in wisdom toward those outside, no more gospel, no more witness, no more suffering, no more churches, preachers, or intercessors, and no more forgiveness!

Verse 6:

--**Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.**

--Paul is saying Christian speech results from the operation of God’s grace in the heart. It is out of the heart the mouth speaks. Therefore, in all we say, there should be a particular character (or should I say flavor profile?)—**grace & salt**.

--This was the example of Christ:

****Psalm 45:2: You are fairer than the sons of men; grace is poured upon Your lips; therefore God has blessed You forever.****

****Luke 4:22: So all bore witness to Him, and marveled at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. And they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?"****

--We have received grace from God—as a gift—and we live in grace as the very spirit of our current age. Like Jesus before us, we should carry that tone until He changes it Himself.

--***Seasoned with salt***. . . has the idea of being *fitly-prepared*. This is a well-ordered reply. Our speech should have the characteristics of salt: enhancing, preserving, cleansing, purifying, etc.

****Mark 9:49: Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another.****