

## THE NEW LIFE MAKES A NEW HOME

### *Perfecting One's Private Life*

Colossians 3:18 - Colossians 4:1

In this section, Paul turns to *practical interpersonal relationships* that should *flow from a believer's position* in Christ. We face major *social problems* in our *culture* and *society* today. But the one that must be addressed first is the *inability of people to get along with each other*. From *sibling rivalry among children*, to the *break-up of marriages*, to *crime in our communities*, to *political discourse*, all the way to *international conflicts...even divisions within the church*. Why this exist can be summed up in *three words*:

**Amorality**...means that *man apart from God has no absolute moral or ethical standard to regulate his behavior*. The result is *moral relativism* or *situational ethics*. Man does what's *right in his own eyes*.

**Identity crisis**...means that *man doesn't know who he is or why he is here*. He doesn't know his *ultimate purpose in life*. His life has *no meaning* as far as he can see. The result is *emptiness*...trapped in an *impersonal universe*. It's *man's search for meaning*.

**Alienation**...the *Fall alienated man* not only *from God*, but also from *himself* and from *other people* (Cain and Abel). The result is *loneliness*. He feels *isolated* and *alone*.

Ultimately, *all three problems are due to man's separation from God*.

### I. A WORD TO WIVES: (vs. 18)

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord (vs. 18)...

*“Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.”*

~Ephesians 5:22-24

Some want to say that this command was *cultural* and *limited to the time* that Paul wrote it. What's interesting is that the very next command given to **husbands** in **verse 19** is to be taken *literally*...not *culturally*. This command wasn't limited to the time that Paul wrote this, as is obvious from *two reasons* he gave in his other writings.

- *The order of Creation...man was created first, then woman* (I Timothy 2:13). Paul doesn't trace the order of submission back to the **Fall** as many proclaim. He goes back to *the order of creation*.
- *The order within the God head*...Christ submits to the Father (I Corinthians 11:3).

**Be subject to...or submission**...doesn't mean *inferiority*. It simply means that the **husband**, not the **wife**, is *head of the home*...assuming the *responsibilities* that accompany that *position*. It's all about *order*...not *subordination*.

**Be subject to**...Gk. *hypotasso*, is a *specific command for the wife to submit to her husband...to subject one's self*. Even though it is a *command for submission...a necessary duty*...the **Greek** suggest a *voluntary submission* based on a *commitment to proper order in the family*. *Subjection* or *submission* out of *respect*.

**As is fitting in the Lord**...doing this as *unto the Lord*. Note that there are *moral limits* to this *submission*. It's only **as is fitting in the Lord**. She isn't obligated to follow her husband's leadership if it *conflicts with Scripture*.

### II. A WORD TO HUSBANDS: (vs. 19)

**Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them** (vs. 19)...

*“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her...So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.”*

~Ephesians 5:25, 28-29

In spite of the failings of the church, Christ has *continually loved* her with *grace* and *forgiving mercy*...and has *never become bitter* because of the church's *many sins*. Paul addresses *two commands to husbands*.

- First, they must **love** their **wives**. The **present tense** of the **imperative love** *indicates continuous action...keep on loving*. It expresses a *willing love...not a love of passion or emotion or feelings*. It's a *love of choice*. A *covenant kind of love*.

- Second, husbands also **must not be embittered** against their wives. The **imperative** could be translated *stop being bitter* or *do not have the habit of becoming bitter*. It refers to something that has a *bitter taste*. Husbands aren't to call their wives *honey* and then act like they are *vinegar*.

Though there is *authority* and *submission* by God's design...there is also *spiritual equality*...and there must be a *mutual longing* for each partner to *please the other* (**I Corinthians 7:33-34**).

### III. A WORD TO CHILDREN: (vs. 20)

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

*“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother (which is the first commandment with a promise), so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth.”*

~Ephesians 6:1-3

This *relationship* cannot be right unless the *relationship* between **husband** and **wife** is *right*.

**Children**...a general term *not limited to a specific age group*...but for *any child still living in the home and under parental guidance and authority*.

Notice the difference between **Colossians** and **Ephesians**, and the **Ten Commandments**. Key words...**honor** and **obey**.

*“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.”*

~Exodus 20:12

**Be obedient**...is in the **present tense imperative** which *demands continuous action...a continuous obedience*.

**Parents in all things**...As with *wives*...the *only limit* placed on a child's obedience is *when a parent demands something contrary to God's law*.

**For this is well-pleasing to the Lord**...the  *motive*  for obedience is that it is *commendable* before God Himself.

### IV. A WORD TO PARENTS: (vs. 21)

**Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart (vs. 21)...**

*“Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”*

~Ephesians 6:4

**Exasperate**...Gk. *erethizo*, means to *stir up, provoke, irritate, or infuriate...to take their heart away*. The idea is to *be without courage or spirit*...the sense of being *listless* or *despairing*. It's a picture of someone with *drooping* or *dropped shoulders*.

- Parents can exasperate their children by *overprotection...not teaching them responsibility*. Allowing *age appropriate responsibility*.
- Parents can exasperate their children by *showing favoritism*.
- Parents can exasperate their children by *demanding performance based acceptance*. (The Little League syndrome).
- Parents can exasperate their children by *failing to show affection*.
- Parents can exasperate their children by *failing to properly disciplining them. Inconsistent disciplining...excessive discipline...abuse*. You *discipline* for *willful disobedience* and *temper tantrums*. You *teach* for *childish irresponsibility*.
- Parents can exasperate their children by *harsh criticism...and continuous criticism*. (They can never do anything right).
- Parents can exasperate their children by *neglect*.

As a parent, we must **shape the will without breaking the spirit**.

*“...Bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.”*

~Ephesians 6:4

### V. A WORD TO SERVANTS: (vs. 22-25)

**Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity 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. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who**

does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality (vs. 22-25)...

*“Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.”*

~Ephesians 6:5-8

In our day, this relationship can largely be compared to that of an *employer* and an *employee*. But it must be noted that although the Word of God *never advocates slavery...it does recognize it* as an *element of society* and emphatically addresses the *relationship* between *slave* and *master*...how they must *relate, respond, and treat* each other.

*Far from seeking to abolish slavery*, the Lord and the apostles use it as a *means for spiritual instruction*, by likening the *believer*...one who belongs to Christ and serves Him...*to a slave* or *bond-servant*.

**In all things obey those who are your masters on earth**...this *continues to emphasize* the *principle of authority* and *submission* as in the *relationships* between *husbands* and *wives* and *parents* and *children*. Again, it deals with *order*...not *inferiority*.

**In all things**...a *comprehensive phrase* referring to both *enjoyable* and *distasteful duties*.

**Not with external service, as those who merely please men**...not doing a duty with a *reluctant attitude*...or *only working hard* when the *boss* or *supervisor is present*.

**But with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord**...holding God and His will in high regard...*desiring to please the Lord*. Knowing that **whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men**.

Paul gives *two reasons* for *slaves (employees)* to *obey* their *masters*.

- **Positively**...the Lord will *repay* them for their *faithfulness*... knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. As an *employee* on the job or a *servant* in one's

house...**it is the Lord Christ whom you serve**. The Lord will **reward** them...pay them back with *grace* and *eternal rewards*.

- **Negatively**...the one who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without **partiality**. The warning is that the Lord will *discipline without partiality* in cases of *disobedience*. The Christian servant isn't to presume on his Christianity *to justify disobedience*.

*“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap.”*

~Galatians 6:7

## VI. A WORD TO MASTERS: (Colossians 4:1)

**Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven (vs. 1)**...

*“And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”*

~Ephesians 6:9

**Masters** are to treat their **slaves** with the same **justice and fairness** they expect to receive from the **Master in heaven**. God will *judge masters* who *mistreat* their **slaves**, just as He will **slaves** who fail to serve their **masters**.

As stated in **verse 11**...**slaves** and **master** are *spiritually equal* in Christ. **Masters** must accordingly treat their Christian servants as *bothers in Christ*...enacting towards them *all the virtues* required for *holy fellowship* (ie. Paul to **Philemon** regarding **Onesimus**). It's the same today with *bosses*. They should *treat their employees* like they desire the Lord Jesus to *treat them*.

## LESSONS WE CAN LEARN:

- **Christianity isn't designed to be a RELIGION**. It's designed to be **RELATIONAL**. First a relationship with God...then to develop relationships with others.
- **As a believer, we are not called to ISOLATE ourselves from society...but to INFLUENCE it for Christ**. We can begin to do this particularly through our relationships.
- **When Christians begin to display the characteristics embodied in the principles of this text in their relationships...they will become LIGHT shining in the midst of DARKNESS**.

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**22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.**

**4 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.**