

12-04-22

Colossians 3:18-4:1.

If Christ is Lord, He is Lord of all. If Christ is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all.

How we live in our family says a great deal about our faith. There is no more difficult place to exercise these virtues day in and day out than in the home. The home reveals where the heart is. Someone has said that character is who you are when nobody is looking (in this case, nobody other than your family).

How we handle relationships says a great deal about our spiritual temperature. Especially those closest to us. Most of us can put on a false front out in public, but behind closed doors, at our places of employment, or the businesses we run, those relationships reflect the most. How we treat the least of these in each of these relationship units is telling.

Paul speaks about 3 relationship areas, marriage, parental, and work.

I. In Christ everyone has equal RIGHTS but different ROLES.

Galatians 3:28, There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ESV

Colossians 3:10, In this new life it doesn't matter if you are a Greek or a Jew, circumcised or not. It doesn't matter if you speak a different language or even if you are a Scythian. It doesn't matter if you are a slave or free. Christ is all that matters, and he is in all of you. ERV

- Paul was not simply upholding the cultural norms of his day. Back then, wives and children were looked down upon. Christianity elevated women and valued children.
- Many in the first century saw Christianity as a threat to society because it allowed women to have influential positions in the churches (**Rom. 16:1-2, 3, 6, 7, 12; Col. 4:15**) and slaves were permitted to regard their masters as **"brothers" (Philem. 16)**.
- In Christ everyone has equal RIGHTS but different ROLES. One's role does not determine one's worth. In Christ, we are equally loved, equally saved, equally blessed.
- Anyone that tries to apply **Colossians 3:18-4:1** without living out **Colossians 3:12-17** is given a strict warning in **verse 25**.

II. In Christ, our relationships should focus on what I can GIVE, not what I can GET.

A. A wife is to GIVE SUPPORT to her husband. She does this by submission.

- **Read verse 18.**
- There is probably no biblical teaching more controversial than that of a wife's submission to her husband. The fact that a teaching is not popular is no reason to discard it. If we did that, we wouldn't have much of the Bible left.
- The verb **"submit"** can imply a voluntary submission. It makes the wife's submission her willing choice.
- **"The Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him'" (Gen. 2:18).**

- Our English word “helper” doesn’t sound very important. The original Hebrew word, however, is much more meaningful. It conveys the idea of someone who “assists another to reach complete fulfillment” Husbands in Christ, our wives help us, assist us in reaching our complete fulfillment.
- Nowhere does it say that a wife is to obey her husband. Children are to obey in **verse 20** and slaves are to obey in **verse 22**, but wives are to submit. There’s a difference.
- Both husbands and wives are to submit to the Lord and to each other. **Ephesians 5:21: “Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.”**
- The reason for this submission is found at the end of **verse 18: “As is fitting in the Lord.”** Another translation puts it this way: **“This is what the Lord has planned for you.”** A wife is to submit to her husband out of the same allegiance she shows to Christ. This is not a cultural deal but represents God’s sense of order in the marital relationship.
- Submission carries the idea of entrusting oneself to the leadership of another to accomplish a task. When a Christian woman is submitted to the Lord and to her own husband, she will experience a release and fulfillment that can come no other way. The result will be an environment of intimacy, growth and a ministry partnership that will make a difference in the world.
- **In Christ, our relationships should focus on what I can GIVE, not what I can GET.**

B. A husband is to GIVE LOVE to his wife.

- **Read verse 19.**
- God says more about the quality of the husband’s leadership than He does about the wife’s submission. Unhealthy marriages are usually the result of the husband’s inability to love his wife instead of the wife’s refusal to be submissive.
- The word “husband” originally meant one who holds the house together. As husbands, our responsibility is to love our wives by holding things together and providing an atmosphere for growth and fruitfulness in our homes.
- This word love is agape, which is the type of love that is based on commitment, not emotions or romance. If you’re here this morning and you no longer feel like you’re in love with your wife, let me shoot straight with you. It doesn’t matter whether you feel love or not. Biblical love is a verb and a command.

1 Corinthians 13:4-5 reminds us that, “Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.”

- If you don’t have the feelings, it doesn’t mean that you can take a pass on your responsibility. Act with love, and the emotions will usually follow. A healthy God honoring marriage does not come automatically because we are naturally self-centered and prideful. It’s like the woman who complained to her marriage counselor that when her husband won a trip for two to Hawaii, he went twice!
- The last part of **Colossians 3:19** challenges husbands to **“do not be bitter towards them”** with their wives. This phrase can also be translated, “Don’t become resentful toward her.” That means that even if a wife is not perfectly submissive, the husband is not to become resentful. Husbands must prevent a sour attitude from taking root.

- Husbands, we are to love our wives with agape love, an unconditional love, a love that Christ has for the Church.
- Many of our homes are in shambles, and God is not the center of it, because the wife isn't supporting, in submission to their husbands. They are nagging and usurping the role that God did not give them. Or the husband is nonexistent, checked out, and not leading, or showing love to his wife. Even better yet, he is overbearing and abusive, maybe not physically but emotionally. Then there is the combo of wives that cover for the sinful behavior of their husband or the husband covers for the sinful behavior of the wife.
- **In Christ, our relationships should focus on what I can GIVE, not what I can GET.**

C. A child is to GIVE OBEDIENCE to his or her parents.

- **Read verse 20.**

Exodus 20:12, "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you"

Ephesians 6:13, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother'—which is the first commandment with a promise—"that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth"

- In **1 Samuel 15:22-23**, God puts rebellion on a par with witchcraft and idolatry. Because of the ramifications of disobedience and the blessings of obedience, parents must take seriously the task of training children to obey. We need to be engaged and encouraging, but we must also expect obedience from our children.
- If you learn obedience in the home, it will help you in life. You're ALWAYS going to have people telling you what to do. You need to learn how to respond to authority while you are young.
- **Read verse 21.**
- Father's, don't you love how God comes back to us, like he knows we are slow learners, knuckleheads.
- Ray Stedman lists three things that fathers do that can lead a child to discouragement. Ignore them, indulge them, and insult them.
- Fellow fathers, we must make it as easy as possible for our kids to obey! The way we treat them has a lot to do with their ability and willingness to fulfill their responsibility in the home.
- Where would our church, homes, marriages be if we focused on what we can GIVE, rather than what we can GET?

I. In Christ everyone has equal RIGHTS but different ROLES.

II. In Christ, our relationships should focus on what I can GIVE, not what I can GET.

III. In Christ, the person with the greater AUTHORITY is to GIVE the greater SERVICE.

Mark 10:42-45, And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,[d] 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Phil. 2:3-4, "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others"

- **Read verses 22-25.**
- Beginning in verse 22, we come to some teaching about slaves and their masters. Most homes had slaves in them, so this fits in the general section of how to live out our faith in the family. The Colossian church no doubt had slaves and owners as members - in fact, it was probably the only place in that society that they would get together on the same level, without racial or class distinctions.
- In **verses 22-25** where we can draw some principles to our role as employees.
 1. Always do your best at your job. We're to work hard not just when the boss is around, but even when he isn't.
 2. Worship at your work. Properly understood, your job, no matter what it is, can be an act of worship. Sometimes we get this backward as we look to our jobs to provide us with meaning and significance. Instead of looking for meaning in your career, bring meaning to it as you work in an attitude of worship.
 3. Recognize Jesus as your boss. Since Jesus is your Master, work as His servant in your job.
 4. Work for a raise in the next life (**v.24-25**).
- **Colossians 4:1** provides a challenge for employers as well. Masters are not free to set their own standards on how to treat their slaves; rather they must do so with what is right and fair. If slave owners were to treat their slaves with integrity, then bosses today must also. If you have people working for you, it's important to deal fairly with them, just as God himself treats you.

Conclusion

Wives: Tell your husband today that with God's help you are going to follow his lead. If you can think of one thing that you've been holding out on, then mention it to him.

Husbands: Think of one thing you can do today to put your love into action, even if you don't feel like doing it. If you have any bitterness toward your wife, confess it to her.

Children: Practice first-time obedience. When your parent asks you to do something, or tells you not to do something, say something like this: "Yes, mom I will obey." Instead of pouting or yelling, honor God and your parents by obeying.

Parents: Ask your children this week what one thing you've been doing that causes them to be exasperated. Get alone with each child to reaffirm your love.

Employees: Try to picture Jesus as your boss this week. Think through how your work will be different with Him behind the desk of your supervisor.

Employers: Pray for your employees by name every day this week. At the end of the week ask each one if they think you are treating them fairly.

Everything we do in marriage, in the family, and in the workplace must be done in recognition that we have a Master over us. As such our attitude should always be to please Him, whether through submitting or loving, obeying, or encouraging, working, or supervising. Our master will reward us for our

service to Him. We come back to the Colossian question: Is Jesus supreme in your life? If He is, then He will alter you - if you allow Him to.