



# CAPITOL COMMISSION™

## *The New Effects on Relationships (Colossians 3:18-4:1)*

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Paul Meinsen / (573) 418-2077 / www.capitolcom.org / paul.meinsen@capitolcom.org

### **This Week's Bible Study Schedule**

- **Tuesday, May 3 at 7 AM in HHR #5**  
**-Breakfast Provided**
- **Tuesday, May 3 at 8:30 PM in Room #225**  
**(Sen. Bob Dixon's office)**

*"...the manner in which an individual enjoys certain advantages over others is a test of a true gentleman. The power which the strong have over the weak, the employer over the employed, the educated over the unlettered, the experienced over the confiding, even the clever over the silly--the forbearing or inoffensive use of all this power or authority, or a total abstinence from it when the case demands it, will show the gentleman in plain light. The gentleman does not needlessly and unnecessarily remind an offender of a wrong he may have committed against him...he strives for that nobleness of character which impart sufficient strength to let the past be but the past. A true gentleman of honor feels humbled himself when he cannot help humbling others."*

### INTRODUCTION

In the eyes of the author of the above quotation, a "gentleman" is not simply some guy who holds the door open for a lady. He is talking about a man (in our day, it can a reference to any person) who is truly gentle, gracious, patient, and forgiving in his relationship with others. The author himself was known as a man who had a high respect and submission to God; as well as any authority that he found himself under. And that led to his gentle spirit in his life as he related to those who were found under his charge. It was his desire to instruct young men in these virtues after the bloody years of the American Civil War.

In the Apostle Paul's great description of Jesus Christ, he ultimately said the same things about Him: *...although He (Jesus) existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in*

*appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:6-8).*

If anyone had the right to demand and "strong-arm" obedience and submission on this earth, it was God in the flesh, Jesus Christ. He came as a King; but totally different than any other on this earth. He was the perfect example of humility and submission; especially when one considers His rightful status.

The teaching in Paul's letter to the church in Colossae embodies the example of Jesus Christ and fleshes it out in the daily relationships of the followers of Jesus.

Please Note: The following instructions will not work unless one has been made new. It is only when one has a new knowledge, a new attitude, a new standard, a new status and wearing new "clothes"--heart of compassion, gentleness, kindness, patience, forgiveness, love--that the proper roles in relationships can be understood and lived out to the glory of God.

*Colossians 3:18 - 4:1 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. <sup>19</sup>Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. <sup>20</sup>Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. <sup>21</sup>Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart. <sup>22</sup>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. <sup>23</sup>Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, <sup>24</sup>knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. <sup>25</sup>For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. <sup>4:1</sup>Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.*

Unfortunately, the teaching in this passage has been stomped on, abused and/or ignored for centuries, and these distortions continue today. But if properly understood and practiced, these commands, along with the "new" characteristics of the believer, will bring about the joyful type of relationships that many people are searching for today. It is when a person

### CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS & STAFF: TUESDAYS @ 7AM, HEARING ROOM #5

LEGISLATORS: TUESDAYS @ 8:30PM, ROOM #225

ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE: THURSDAYS @ 7AM, BROADWAY BUILDING 3<sup>RD</sup> FLOOR CAFETERIA

PROCLAIMING THE GREATNESS AND GLORY OF GOD IN THE MISSOURI STATE CAPITOL

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thinks he or she knows better than the creator how one should live that problems arise. And the joy that one was seeking suddenly becomes the nightmare that one was desperately trying to avoid.

But when a person is made new by Christ, it truly affects every aspect of his or her life--as has been discussed in the last several studies from Colossians. It also has an effect in the relationships of those made new; relationships in marriage, family and work.

### MARRIAGES AFFECTED (3:15)

In Christ, the walls and distinctions found in society have been erased (Colossians 3:11; Galatians 3:28). In Christ, there is no difference in the value and importance in people, but there are still different roles that God has set up for the good of family and society. In Christ, all are important, necessary and valued. But each has a role to be carried out in all humility and obedience to the King of Kings.

### WIVES (3:18)

The first role that Paul addresses is the one of a wife. He teaches that the wife is to voluntarily submit herself to her husband. This command is consistent throughout Paul's letters to the churches (Ephesians 5:22-24; 1 Corinthians 11:3; 1 Timothy 2:11-14; Titus 2:5; cf. 1 Peter 3:6). The word "submit" carries "the concept of putting oneself under, not by compulsion, but willingly."<sup>1</sup> It is the word that describes Jesus' subjection to his parents (Luke 2:51), one's subjection to governing authorities (Romans 13:1, 5) and one another's subjection to each other (Ephesians 5:21). A wife is called to submit herself to the authority of her own husband.

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A TRUE GENTLEMAN OF HONOR FEELS HUMBLING HIMSELF  
WHEN HE CANNOT HELP HUMBLING OTHERS.      -R.E. LEE

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John MacArthur notes some misconceptions about this submission. First of all, it does not imply inferiority. Jesus, while on earth, was not inferior to God the Father, yet He humbly submitted and obeyed Him. Galatians 3:28 teaches that there is no spiritual difference between men and women; thus, none are inferior to others, just different roles. Second, this submission is not absolute. If a husband's desire is contrary to God's Word, God's Word is to be obeyed. Third, this does not allow the husband to exercise authority in a demanding, overbearing manner. The wife's submission is in the context of a loving relationship.

### HUSBANDS (3:19)

The first command given to husbands is that they are called to "love your wives." In Ephesians, Paul teaches that this love is to be modeled as the love that Christ has for the church (Ephesians 5:25). When properly understood, this is a tall order for any husband. Christ died for the church. He put the needs of the church before His own. He continues to show grace and forgiveness, even when His church fails in her submission.

This love is an "agape" love. It is not the superficial, emotion-based, feeling that passes off as "love" today. It is the type of love that is motivated by a person's will and is seen in his or her action. It is seen in his conscious decision to care for and to look out for the interests of his wife--over and above his own.

The second command follows right along. The husband is not to be "embittered against" his wife. They are not display hot-temperdness and resentment. They are not to irritate, but to display a loving leadership in the relationship.

Again, this teaching can be carried out when people who have been made new exhibit the characteristics and attitudes of the new.

### FAMILIES AFFECTED (3:16)

The second relationship Paul addressed it the one between children and their parents. This relationship is best when the parents are already living out the roles laid out in the previous verses.

### CHILDREN (3:20)

The call for children<sup>2</sup> to obey their parents is found all throughout Scripture; including a listing in the Ten Commandments: *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). The disobedience and dishonoring of parents was a serious offense in the Mosaic Law; calling at times for the death of the defiant child (Exodus 21:15-17; Leviticus 20:9). Disobedience to parents is also a mark of the ungodly (2 Timothy 3:2; cf. Romans 1:30).

Instead, children are to listen to and obey their parents (Proverbs 1:8; 6:20). Even in this, one can see the model set by Jesus as He placed Himself in submission to His earthly parents (Luke 2:51).

But similar to the wife's submission to her husband, there is a limitation to the submission a child is to give to his or her parents. If obedience to a

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command by a parent causes a child to disobey God, then God is to be obeyed over the parents.

### PARENTS (3:21)

Paul addressed the second element of this relationship by commanding the parents not to exasperate their children. In other words, parents (the Greek term translated “fathers” should be understood as applying to both parents) are not to stir up, provoke or, as it may be said today, “to not nag” their children. If they are stirred up to anger (Ephesians 6:4), they can “lose heart”; becoming sullen and dispirited.

Parents can exasperate their children by being overbearing, over protective, critical, and neglectful. This can also be done by placing unrealistic expectations upon them or being inconsistent with standards and affection.

Again, children take notice of the actions and attitudes of their parents. Thus, the need for the “new” is so important. Children need to see in their parents the kindness, gentleness, patience, love, and thanksgiving that comes from being made new in Jesus Christ. They need to see the Word of Christ dwelling in their parents.

### EMPLOYMENT AFFECTED

The third relationship Paul addressed is the one between the master and slave; which in our day and culture, can be applied to the employer and employee--which is how it will be treated in this study.<sup>3</sup>

### EMPLOYEES (3:22-25)

In essence, the work of the employee who is a follower of Jesus Christ is a work not out of mere duty. He or she is called to work diligently coming out of a “sincerity of the heart.”

Why? This diligence and sincerity is not dependent on the type or “value” of the work, nor does it come from the integrity or worthiness of the boss. It comes because the employee is actually serving Jesus. Three times Paul mentions the work and fear of Christ in this passage; including the pointed statement, “It is the Lord Christ whom you serve” (3:24b). The worker is reminded that he or she is called to serve and work for one’s employers as they would if Christ Himself was standing over him or her.

Paul then gives two reasons for this type of service. The first is that Christ will repay with the ultimate, eternal rewards that His followers will receive (3:24). The second is that the one who does wrong will be disciplined and be held accountable (3:25).

Once again, the Christian employee is called to represent and resemble Jesus and to serve in the name of Jesus (3:17).

### EMPLOYERS (4:1)

The exhortation to the other side of this relationship is a reminder to the employer who is a follower of Christ that they also have a master over them--none other than the Sovereign King of the Universe. Thus, the employer is to show “justice and fairness” to those whom are under them.

Think about this: If the employee is also a follower of Jesus Christ, then the employer needs to remember that he or she is equal in Christ (3:11); therefore worthy of all respect, honor and fairness. If the employee is not a believer, then the employer is called to represent, resemble and glorify Jesus. They need to see the gentleness, kindness, humility and love in one who claims to be made new in following Jesus Christ.

SIDE NOTE TO LEGISLATORS: These principles can be used in guiding you as you serve and work with your constituents. Yes, you serve them, but you have also been called to lead and represent them. You are called to show to them much kindness, gentleness, respect, and love; even to those who did not vote for you. If you genuinely live out these principles that have been discussed for the last several weeks, your people in your district will know it. You may win some over; others may still oppose, but will know that you care. Above all, they will be able to see the person of Jesus in your life--and who knows what God may do with that.

### CONCLUSION

The “new” of a new person raised with Christ (3:1-2) includes a radical change in relationships. And the truth be told, these changes in relationships bring about the type of relationships for which all people are truly looking. But these can only be found in people who have been made new and are wearing the “new clothes” that befit the follower of Jesus.

Friend, God can forgive you of your sins and you can be made new--are you interested?

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<sup>1</sup> John MacArthur, *Colossians & Philemon* (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1992), 168.

<sup>2</sup> The word translated “children” in this passage is a general term with no particular age group in mind. It is a reference to children who are still living under the care of parental guidance.

<sup>3</sup> Dr. MacArthur writes, “It should be noted that although the Word of God never advocates slavery, it does recognize it as an element of society that could be beneficial if both slaves and masters treated each other as they should...New Testament literature accepts slavery as a social reality and seeks to instruct those in that system to behave in a godly manner.” (MacArthur, 174).