

Living to Honor Christ # 12

Colossians 3:18 – 4:1

I think you would agree that our world is filled with conflict and turmoil. Nations rise up against each other. Social classes have disagreements and stand in opposition to each other. Coworkers have problems getting along on the job. Employers and employees have their differences. Husbands and wives often live under the same roof, but have lost the joy of marriage. Children and parents clash over generational differences. It is evident that society as a whole has a problem interacting and living peaceably with one another. Conflict seems more prevalent, and even expected, in many situations than peace and harmony.

This should come as no surprise. With the fall of man, anger, bitterness, hatred and strife entered the family unit and it wasn't long until the conflict spilled out into society. This is all due to our fallen nature. Some are more peaceable than others, but I am sure we have all encountered conflict in this life. Conflict and lack of harmony are detrimental to society and the home. Paul experienced such activity in his day and it continues in ours as well.

As believers we have an obligation to live peaceably and portray Christ-likeness in our lives. This passage deals with the lives we are to live within the home and out in public. We encounter others every day and we must learn to interact with them in a way that pleases the Lord. Let's examine the [directives](#) given to the believer in these verses as we consider the thought: [Living to Honor Christ](#).

I. The Order for our Personal Lives (18-21) – Paul addresses the relationships and God given order for the home. He speaks of the responsibilities of each member of the family. Consider:

A. The Submission of the Wife (18) – [Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord](#). This is a verse often quoted by men and sometimes resented by women. However, we need to consider it from a biblical perspective. It can't be viewed as optional. God has ordained the husband to be the head of the home. (Men love that thought, but often neglect the responsibility associated with leading the family.) With the husband as the head, the wife is to submit unto the husband. This carries the idea of "*placing under in an orderly fashion*." It has to do with rank and order. It speaks of her loyalty to her husband and the home. It does not imply that the wife is inferior to the husband. It does not imply that she is enslaved to the husband, bound to carry out his every command. It reveals her respect for the God given order of the home.

- Keep in mind, this is pleasing unto the Lord. Paul didn't command this. It wasn't given from an egotistical male, but from the Lord Himself. Wives who willingly submit to the leadership of the husband are pleasing to the Lord.

B. The Devotion of the Husband (19) – [Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.](#)

Men may relish the thought of a submissive wife, but fail to remember our obligation in the relationship. We are to love our wives, not being bitter against them. Many wives have problems being submissive because their husbands have problems loving them as they should. It is much easier for a wife to fulfill her role in the home if the husband is willing to fulfill his. We are commanded to love our wives and show that love through our actions. The husband must not be unreasonable in his demands of the wife. She is not to be viewed as a maid, being in the home to for the sole purpose of waiting upon him at his beckon call.

- Loving our wives is a big responsibility. [Eph.5:25 – Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;](#) Take a moment to consider that thought. We are to love our wives as Christ loved the church. That is no small undertaking. That is sacrificial love. That is love without bounds. That is a willingness to love even in the worst of times, even if we feel as if it is undeserved. If you desire your wife to live in a way that pleases the Lord, love her in a way that pleases Him.

C. The Obligation of the Children (20) – [Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.](#) Children are to be submissive and obey their parents in all things in order to please the Lord. I am uncertain of the issues families faced in Paul's day, but I am certain this is needful in ours. It seems as if the God given order of the home has been turned upside down. In many homes the children make the decisions and dictate the activity. I was raised to honor my parents and submit to their authority. I fear the lack of authority and respect in the home has created a generation that lacks respect for authority in society. We must train our children to respect authority, obeying their parents, if we expect them to respect authority in society. If obedience is rejected in childhood, rebellion will often be prevalent in adulthood.

D. The Direction of the Father (21) – [Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.](#) The husband is again addressed here, being the father of his children. Just as the wife's submission is directly related to the husband's devotion, the children's obedience is directly related to the father's instruction. We cannot provoke or mistreat our children and expect them to be obedient to us. We must love and nurture them, seeking to point them to Christ, rather than creating hard feelings and skepticism concerning our relationship with the Lord. We are responsible to set a godly example before our children.

- This responsibility rests on the shoulders of the father. May we love and encourage our children in this difficult day in which we live. If we expect them to come to Christ and be successful in life, we must provide a godly example. Statistics reveal children who are nurtured and encouraged in the home typically perform better and live happier lives.

II. The Objective in our Vocational Lives (3:22-4:1) – Here Paul addresses the lives we live in public, particularly concerning the work environment. Notice he gives:

A. An Exhortation to Servants (22-25) – Paul first speaks to the servants. This literally speaks of a bond slave, one bound in service to another. We do not face slavery in our day, but there is great application for the expectation reserved for employees. The servant is exhorted regarding:

1. Our Compliance (22a) – *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh.* Here we find the recurring theme of submission. The servant is expected to submit to the authority of his master. From our perspective, we are to submit to the authority of our employer. They have hired us to perform a particular task for a particular wage. The employer sets the standards for employment, the expectations of the employee, and deserve respect for their position.

- I know we have all complained at some point about our boss or the company we work for. We may not like or agree with everything they say and do, but the employee is obligated to obey the employer, as long as it doesn't conflict with biblical teaching. Everybody is accountable to someone. We all have someone that we must give account to. It is biblical and pleasing unto the Lord to submit to the authority over us.

2. Our Conduct (22b-23) – *Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: ^[23] And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men.* This speaks of our conduct and accountability while on the job. We are not there to serve with “*eyeservice*,” working only when the supervisor is watching, or laboring one way in the presence of others and slacking off when alone. We are to be reminded to whom we belong, working in fear of the Lord and realizing our efforts are done in order to please the Lord and not men.

- It is a bad testimony for a Christian to be lazy and deceptive while on the clock. If we have agreed to work for a set time in order to receive a prearranged wage, we are expected to fulfill our end of the agreement. God is not pleased with those who seek to take advantage of others.

- Whether we like it or not, our lives are a representation of Christ in everything we do! His work on the cross was not done to please men, but to honor the Father. His body was not offered for His reconciliation, but ours. He bore the sin and shame of the cross in a way that honored God. Surely we can work on the job in a way that pleases Him!

3. Our Compensation (24) – *Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.* This exhortation has a couple applications. First of all, this world and what it offers is not all there is for the child of God. Some fall upon unfortunate circumstances and live a difficult life. The saved are promised a benefit package that is beyond this world. We are assured eternal life in Christ.

- Also this presents a challenge to work hard, being honest and diligent in all we do, knowing that our Lord is keeping a record. All that we do in the name of Christ, bringing glory and honor to Him will be rewarded in heaven. You may feel as if you are being mistreated or taken advantage of on the job, but as long as you keep your end of the agreement, Christ will reward you accordingly.

4. Our Chastisement (25) – *But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons.* God expects us to behave and work with integrity. He will reward those whose actions honor Him and He will chastise those whose actions bring reproach. Our accountability on the job is not exempt from this expectation. God requires we be honest and hardworking in all our pursuits. We cannot expect God to bless our lives if we are not being honest with our employer and seek to cheat them in regard to our wages. Sin is sin in the eyes of God. He is no respecter of persons and He will chastise our disobedience, whatever the source!

B. The Expectation of Superiors (4:1) – Now Paul addresses the godly expectations of those who are in positions of authority over others. They are expected to be:

1. People of Integrity (1a) – *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal.* Just as the servant was expected to give an honest day's labor for an honest day's wage, the master is expected to be just and fair with the servant. He must be willing to pay an honest wage for labor given. He must seek to ensure a safe and respectable environment for the employee to work. He must not neglect the employee in order to retain a greater profit. Those in places of authority are expected to rule with integrity and respect.

- This is especially true of Christian business owners. It is a bad reflection on the Lord when a business owner claims to be a Christian and fails to be fair and just in dealing with his employees. If you are in a place of authority, God expects you to be mindful of your position, not seeking to take advantage or manipulate others with the power you possess.

2. People of Humility (1b) – *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.* As we discussed, everybody is accountable to someone. The business owner may feel as if he has the authority to make all the decisions and is ultimately accountable to no one, but ultimately he is accountable to God. We all must recognize the lordship of Christ and submit unto Him. This will guide our attitudes and actions toward others.

- The Christian supervisor or owner may be in a position that demands their authority, but at the end of the day they remain a sinner saved by grace, purchased by the blood of Christ. We are all servants of the King. We will never reach a place in life where we are no longer accountable to the Lord. He knows our hearts and our motives. May we please Him in all we do!

Conclusion: As I studied this passage, I was reminded again that I am a Christian everywhere I go and in every situation in life. God has established the order of the home and certain expectations in the workplace. As His child, I am to submit to His authority and the authority of others above me. Through submission I bring honor to Christ.

Maybe there are areas in your personal or vocational life that need addressed. Maybe you need to pray about the situation within the home or relationships at work. The Lord has given us biblical instruction and I pray that we are willing to live accordingly.

I will admit it is difficult at times to submit to others, but I want to honor the Lord in this life. Maybe you have trouble with submission. Maybe you have never submitted to Christ, surrendering your entire being to Him. Maybe you have never trusted Him in salvation. If there is a need in your life, I urge you to bring that before the Lord.