

Home life

Colossians 3:18- 4:1

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.
Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.
Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.
Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favour, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.
Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.
Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favouritism. Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Paul gives instruction about family and domestic life.

Since the Fall, society and home life has been seriously distorted by sin, with abuse and exploitation and rebellion against God's ways being seen in so many ways.

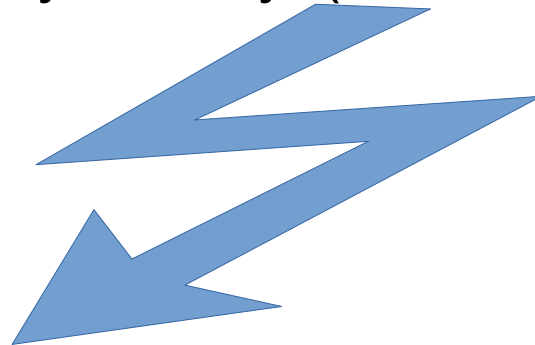
We see prior to the flood in Noah's day that things had got to a very bad state:-

Husband wife issues with Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:12, 16)

Family disharmony, - Cain and Abel. (Genesis 4:8)

Multiple wives – Lamech (Genesis 4:19-24)

Violence and probably slavery. (Genesis 6:5)



These distortions of God's ways for humans continued after the flood cf. Jacob, David, Solomon etc.

Just because the Bible records them does not mean that God approves of them. Rather they serve as examples of 'how not to do it' and give pointers to God's ways.

1 Corinthians 10:11 These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the culmination of the ages has come.



In the light of the previous call to all believers
(cf. Ephesians 5:18 ('Be filled with the Spirit !'))
5:21 ('Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ')

Paul teaches about specific groups in the home structure

What thing is more difficult in each group ?



Wives, husbands, v18

The Lord's institution of marriage for male and female.

"Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator `made them male and female,` and said, `For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh`?"

Matthew 19:4-5



Wives, submit (yourselves) to your husbands,
as is fitting in the Lord. v18

It is in the plural because referring to all married people
This is not slave/master relationship term
Not a verse for domineering men.

It is not about superiority, intelligence etc.
There is equality in salvation

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28'

Does it apply in world of work etc. ie. outside home?

Wives, submit (yourselves) to your husbands,
as is fitting in the Lord. v18

The wife is to respect her husband acknowledging his headship in their marriage as part of the team.

(as is fitting – right as a woman belonging to Lord)

What limitations are there ? Within the Lord's boundaries ?

What is the motive for this?

Be careful who you choose to marry !

Husbands, love your wives v19

Proverbs 18:22 He who finds a wife, finds what is good and receives favour from the LORD.

Is she the most likely to be taken for granted by her husband ?

It is a plural command addressed to a group but it applies to a single wife and husband pair.

Show “Agape” love for her !



Husbands, love your wives and do not be
harsh with them. v19

Harsh – physical, emotional, mental abuse.

To be considerate vs. power domination

What if it appears to be justified?

(no let-out clause? It happens in reverse too)



Proverbs 21:9 Better to live on a corner of the roof than
share a house with a quarrelsome wife.

Children, obey your parents in everything, v20

Children are under greater care -- obey (commander)

Parents = father AND mother

In everything (that is right – who is to judge ?)



Responsibility is with the parents till they are older
(giving increasing responsibility for them)

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. v20

Pleasing to Lord – he sees – and a good motivation
(It's what Jesus did too! Luke 2:51)

It is a preparation for trusting and serving God as an adult

Contrast society breakdown in the last days

But mark this.. There will be terrible times
in the last days. People will be lovers of
themselves, lovers of money, boastful,
proud, abusive, disobedient to their
parents, ungrateful, unholy, etc.

2 Timothy 3:1-2



Fathers, do not embitter your children, v21

Is the father's discipline over the top, not clear, intermittent, contradictory, inconsistent etc.?

Your behaviour will affect your children.

cf. God's ways as your heavenly father.



Fathers, do not embitter your children,
or they will become discouraged. v21

Who gets blamed when the child loses it ?
Frustrated / discouraged

Is there any praise when they try, and fail and when
try and get it right?

Paul doesn't mention the positive here but he does
in Ephesians 6:4

Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead,
bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.



Slaves, v22

Slaves – Paul is dealing with reality on the ground in the Roman empire. There were many slaves in empire, and in the church. He is not condoning slavery ... but he is dealing with something much more important than social status, -something of greater value, their eternal well-being.

Some Christians have used this to say slavery is OK. It is not.

"`Woe! Woe, O great city, O Babylon, city of power! In one hour your doom has come!` Revelation 18:10

In Revelation 18:13 God judges those who treat people as commodities.

Slaves –

Oppression of fellow humans is found in all cultures around the world both past and present.



Some Christians aimed to abolish slavery – eg, Wilberforce, Clarkson – and eventually succeeded stopping the slave trade in the British empire but the evil trade still continues with boys, girls, men and women sold into sex slavery, or exploitation in other ways around the world. These are evils to which the following instructions are not aimed to apply.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; v22

Slaves –

Obey (why not rebel ?) Do as you are told !

They didn't have much choice in the matter!

Paul's use of the term "earthly master" points us to the greater heavenly master and the limitations of humans.

His instruction can be applied to the modern boss\worker model



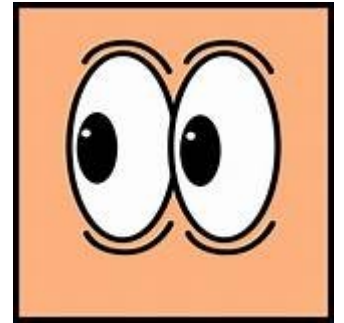
and do it, not only when their eye is on you
and to win their favour, but with sincerity of
heart and reverence for the Lord. v22

He says there are 2 ways of obeying
When the boss is watching – looking for favour

A lazy, unreliable Christian worker is a bad witness

All the time – genuine service because the Lord calls you
to do it. This is dignified work !

You are 'on show' as a Christian even if the boss isn't
watching

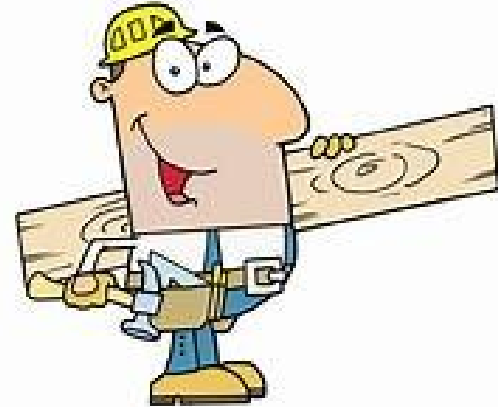


Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for men, v23

He is still addressing slaves but applies it to everyone of us.
What about those unable to work?

If a job is worth doing....
(but beware perfectionism)

Consider you are working for the Lord -
changing the atmosphere of work



since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. v24

A slave's reward from the Master of all !
(This didn't usually happen in the Roman empire – there were exceptions.)



An inheritance?

Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'

An incentive to do it – reward – what is it?

Salvation is by grace --- but

God gives a 'reward' for effort !

It is the Lord Christ you are serving. v24

This is the reality you need to see behind your work
Whatever the job...

There is no such thing as sacred vs. secular

This view should transform everything we do.



Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. v25

Fair pay ! Judgement day is coming
No dodging the consequences
No special exceptions – pulling rank etc.



v 4:1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Seeds of slavery's destruction are in this verse.

Consider what is right and fair for the person you are dealing with ! Responsibilities also apply!

It starts to shift it to the employer/worker relationship.

Remember we are all under the ultimate authority 'slaves' to Jesus.

Romans 1:1 Paul, a slave/servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God

These instructions set the high standard for our lives in society. We have been called to be witnesses in all areas of our lives and to be the kind of church that Jesus is working to bring about by the grace of God.

Ephesians 5:25-27

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

