**IT IS THE LORD CHRIST YOU ARE SERVING**

Colossians 3:18-4:1

Key Verse 3:24

“Since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”

**Introduction**



 In this passage Paul teaches the believers how to manage their family and social relationship. As people in the Lord we have to treat others in the right way before God as husbands and wives, parents and children, and masters and people under authorities. Even though we live as citizens in this world we have to live like citizens in heaven according to the godly way and heavenly value system. We can learn practical lessons through his passage.

1. Read verses 18-19. Why does Paul encourage wives to submit themselves to their husbands? (18) What is Paul’s instruction to husbands? (19)

1-1. Read verses 18-19.

**18** Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord **19** Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

1-2. Why does Paul encourage wives to submit themselves to their husbands? (18)

· ***Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.***

- It is fitting in the Lord: Wives in the Lord, those who accepted Jesus as the Lord are supposed to submit to their husbands.

- Husbands and wives are a part of the same team. So a husband are like a coach. Wives are happily united with husbands and they served the Lord together. Wives may first respect their husbands because God established a family.

- ‘as is fitting in the Lord’ means that for wives, submission to their husband is part of their Christian life, esp., at home.

 - When a wife doesn’t obey this word to submit to your own husband as is fitting in the Lord, she doesn’t just fall short as a wife, but falls short as a follower of Jesus Christ.

 - This means that the command to submit is completely out of the realm of “my nature” or “my personality.” Wives are expected to submit because it is fitting in the Lord.

 - This has nothing to do with your husband’s intelligence or giftedness or capability. It has to do with honoring the Lord Jesus Christ.

 - But it is not absolute or blind in nature, for there may be exceptional cases as follows. (AS IS FITTING IN THE LORD);

* When the husband asks the wife to commit sin.
* When the husband is medically or spiritually incapacitated such as drug or abandoning faith and mission by compromising with the world.
* When the husband is violent or abusing.
* When the husband breaks the marriage bond by committing adultery

 Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. (Eph 5:24)

- ‘Wives submit to their husbands’ does not mean that they should follow the cultures and costumes in the world that oppress the women, but they should respect and honor the Lord.

- Rather it should be done voluntarily through honoring the Lord, not being forced.

1-3. What is Paul’s instruction to husbands? (19)

·  ***Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them***

- Husbands should love their wives just as Jesus loves his church.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her 26 to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, (Eph 5:25-26)

* Here ‘love’ is agape love just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her. It is based on self denial and self sacrifice.

- The relationship between Jesus and church is the model for the relationship between husband and wife.

- Husbands should not be harsh with their wives. Jesus is never harsh with the church. He treats church with gentleness, kindness, and loving heart.

- Treating wife harshly is like treating his own body harshly because husband and wife are one body.

2. Read verses 20-21. Why should children obey their parents in everything? (20) Why shouldn’t a father embitter their children? (21)

2-1. Read verses 20-21.

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.**21** Fathers,[[c](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+3&version=NIV#fen-NIV-29539c)] do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

2-2. Why should children obey their parents in everything? (20)

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

- For this pleases the Lord: obeying parents pleases God because that is God’s will for children. God wants children to grow through obeying parents and respecting their authority that came from God.

- Disobeying to parents displeases God, and disobedient children cannot expect blessing from God because they are disobeying God and God’s will. Children should obey parents by fearing and respecting him.

- In everything, Children should obey parents in everything. It should be complete obedience, not partial obedience.

- By obeying parents, children can learn how to obey God. It is hard to expect that disobedient children would obey God.

2-3. Why shouldn’t a father embitter their children? (21)

· ***Fathers can embitter their children by treating them harshly.***

· Parents can bitter their children by being too harsh, too demanding, too controlling, unforgiving, or just plain angry(rage). This harshness can be expressed through words, through actions, or through non-verbal communication.

. They will become discouraged: they lose their heart and discouraged and could build up anger, hatred, and rebellion in their heart. And also they could give up their desire to live a good life.

· Parents should treat children with gentle heart. We should be as gracious, gentle, forgiving, and longsuffering with our children as God is with us.

3. Read verses 22-4:1. How should slaves obey their earthly masters? (22-23) What will happen as a result of their actions? (24) What is the warning for anyone who does wrong? (25) What should masters do? (4:1)

3-1. Read verses 22-4:1.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. **23** Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, **24** since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. **25** Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism. Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

3-2. How should slaves obey their earthly masters? (22-23)

***· Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters,***

· Not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor: They were encouraged to obey their masters not considering their eye, but God’s eye on them and God’s favor.

· With sincerity of heart : Paul encouraged them to serve their master with sincere heart, not just pretending or serving them reluctantly.

· With reverence for the Lord: Paul encouraged them to obey with reverence for the Lord. The motive to serve their master should be reverence for the Lord. Whatever we do we should do it with reverence for the Lord so that we may please the Lord and glorify him whatever we do.

· Work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord, not for human master- whatever work we do we should do it for the Lord so that all our work may become offering to the true Master, our God in Heaven and we may live for the Lord only.

· God wants us to do all things with all our hearts whatever we do.

· We obey authorities because we honor God who established the authority.

3-3. What will happen as a result of their actions? (24)

***· since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving***

· you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as reward: When they serve their masters with sincere heart, there will be reward from the Lord.

- Even though they serve their master, the Lord recognizes it and gives them reward because they do with reverence for the Lord.

- The Lord never forgets to give reward to those who do things for Him.

- Our human masters may not recognize our work with sincere heart. They may try to take advantage of us only, but the Lord gives us rewards.

· It is the Lord Christ you are serving: whatever we do we are serving the Lord. We have to do all things just as we are serving the Lord. Then everything is so meaningful and we can do everything with sincere heart.

3-4. What is the warning for anyone who does wrong? (25)

***· Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.***

· Just as the Lord rewards those who do right things he repays those who do wrong things. We should not do wrong things fearing God’s judgment. Even though we could deceive others, we can’t deceive God.

· There is no favoritism: Even though we are children of God if we do wrong things God judges us in the same way how he judges others with justice.

3-5. What should masters do? (4:1)

***· Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.***

· Masters should treat their slaves with what is right and fair because their also have a Master in heaven.

· Masters are the servants to the Master in heaven. They are entrusted with the authority by the heavenly Master. They have to treat the people under their authority fearing the Master in heaven.

· Masters will be judged by the Master in heaven according to how they treat people under their authority.

. Under the Roman empire, people might have been unfairly and unjustly treated, especially slaves. But when apostle Paul served the word of God based on what is fair and just at God’s sight, all human imposed government would end at God’s due time. Only God’s eternal kingdom will last for good simply because it is fair and just for good! Praise our true Master in Heaven!

**Conclusion**

 We have to perceive all our relationship with others in the Lord and have to treat others in the way that is right and fair in the Lord. Whatever we do, we should do it just as we do for the Lord with reverence for him. God sees everything in secret and reward accordingly. May God help us to treat others and do everything to please him with sincere heart.

**One word: IT IS THE LORD CHRIST YOU ARE SERVING!**