

## Colossians 3.18-4.1

Legacy Standard Bible 2022

Fifth century or earlier manuscript variants: [inserted] [~replaced] [-omitted]

### Learning objectives

- Participants will love their spouse more.
- Participants will treat workers fairly.
- Participants will judge social injustice.

### Working Outline of Colossians 3.18-4.1

- I. Co-workers and I greet you. 1.1-2
- II. My co-workers and I write to strengthen you. 1.3–4.6
  - A. We thank and pray to God for you. 1.3-12
  - B. Because Christ ranks above all others. 1.13–3.17
  - C. Therefore You must behave as Christians. 3.18 – 4.6
    1. In Christian households. 3.18 – 4.1
      - a. Husbands and wives. 3.18-19
      - b. Parents and children. 3.20-21
      - c. Masters and slaves. 3.22 – 4.1
    2. Praying and behaving wisely. 4.2-6
- III. Co-workers and I share with you. 4.7-18

**18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.**

Subject: Submit oneself to legitimate authority.

In the Lord: Compare 1 Cor 11:3

Love: Action from affection. Cp. John 3:16

Embittered: Disappointed expectations.

**20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is pleasing to the Lord.**

Obey: 'To follow instructions' BDAG. Verb root = 'to listen'.

Query: Name an example of an obedient child. (Isaac)

Query: Under what circumstances ought a wife not to submit, or a child not to obey? (When ordered to deny Christ or to commit illegal or immoral acts.)

**21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.**

Exasperate: 'to provoke ... irritate' BDAG.

Lose heart: 'losing motivation' BDAG.

Query: What are some ways in which thought-less fathers lose their children's respect? (Discuss)

Query: What are some ways in which thoughtful fathers gain their children's respect? (Discuss)

## Colossians 3.18-4.1

**22 Slaves, [*in all things*] obey those who are your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but with integrity of heart, fearing the Lord [*God*].**

Obey: same verb as in verse 19.

Masters ... Lord: same noun!

Query: Why did Paul not urge the Christians to rebel and to overthrow injustice? (They would have been slaughtered by the Roman government, or sent to mines, quarries or galleys.)

**23 Whatever [*All*] you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. Serve the Lord Christ.**

Query: Who is the subject of the verbs? (Slaves? Or all believers?)

Heartily: Literally, 'from (your) soul (psyhé)'.  
Receive: Literally, 'be paid back'.

Reward: 'that which is given to someone in exchange for what has been done' BDAG.

**25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.**

Do wrong: 'violation of human or divine law ... cheating' BDAG.

Partiality: Compare Eph 6:9.

'Slaves numbering in the tens of thousands were condemned to work in the mines or quarries, where conditions were notoriously brutal.' Oxford Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece and Rome (2010) p. 323.

**4:1 Masters, show to your slaves what is right and fair, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven [*in the heavens*].**

Masters ... Master: Same noun.

Query: Who decides what is right and fair? (Roman law, Torah and the Gospel)

Query: How could they know? (They knew)

Query: What limits had Torah placed on servitude? (Jubilee release after six years. No harsh treatment.)

Never try to defend slavery from the Bible. The biblical ideal remain 'the freedom of the sons of God' in the New Heaven and Earth.