



Community Group Discussion Guide

Christ In Your Home

November 5, 2023 | Colossians 3:18-4:1

Motivate

Starter Question

- ⇒ *What was your home like growing up?*
- ⇒ *If you were to make up a slogan that describes your family today, what would it be? Why?*

DISCUSS

Christian commitment affects every area of life, especially in the family. Paul and other biblical writers frequently identified the Christian's responsibilities in the home. In Colossians 3:18-4:1, Paul was specific as to what our everyday lives should look like in contrast to families not characterized by biblical guidance and values. In this passage, Paul looked at three different aspects of a typical person's life and described how being a Christian should affect each one. Paul's words demonstrate that putting the life of Christianity into practice begins at home.

- ⇒ *How does our culture today react to the Christian worldview on family relationships?*

Colossians 3:18-19 Wives submit to your husbands as is fitting in the LORD. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

- ⇒ *What is your first reaction to this list of instructions for husbands and wives?*

Paul began with the relationship of husbands and wives. He stated that wives are to submit to their husbands and husbands are to love their wives as Christ loves the Church (see also Ephesians 5:25) It's needful to discuss the issue many seem to have today with the way the Bible, especially Paul, sees women. Some people look at the idea of submission in the Scriptures and see it as a way of subjugating women and taking away their freedom.

Before the gospel came along, in the majority of cultures in biblical times women were seen as little more than property with very few, if any, rights of their own. Judaism was no exception with its low view of women. Many a Jewish man in morning prayers gave thanks that God had not made him "a Gentile, a slave, or a woman."

William Barclay states, "Under Jewish law a woman was a thing; she was the possession of her husband, just as much as his house or his flocks or his material goods were. She had no legal rights whatsoever. Under both Jewish and Greek laws and customs, all the privileges belonged to the husband, and all the duties to the wife."

According to Strong's Enhanced Lexicon the word "submission" (hupotasso) is a Greek military term meaning "to arrange oneself under another." It indicates a voluntary submission, not an unthinking obedience. In non-military use, it was "a voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden."

The idea of submission does not mean inferiority in any way, just as Christ Himself, being in submission to God the Father, did not imply His inferiority. Rather, submission is self-denial out of love for God and others. It denotes willingly putting yourself under someone or something.

- ⇒ *How would you explain biblical submission of wives?*

Jesus' view of women was countercultural and revolutionary for His time. For Christ, women were seen as having value equal to that of men. We can see His respect for women in His encounters with them, treating them differently than most men of His day. Jesus loved and respected women as people, while at the same time, not glossing over their sins.

⇒ ***Can you give an example of Jesus' treatment of women?***

In the case of the husband and wife, God placed the responsibility of the spiritual and physical well-being of the family in the hands of the husband and father. He ultimately is responsible to God for making sure all are taken care of and treated with the proper dignity and respect that should be afforded a co-heir of Jesus Christ.

⇒ ***How can seeing our family members as co-heirs of Christ make a difference in how we treat them?***

The world is selfish but the Christian is to look out for the welfare of others. For the husband and father, his priority is to be with his own family. If the husband himself is in subjection to Christ then he won't knowingly do anything that Scripture forbids or ask his wife and family to do so either.

⇒ ***What does it look like for a husband to show love to his wife?***

⇒ ***How can the relationship between a husband and a wife reveal their relationship with Christ?***

Colossians 3:20-21 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

⇒ ***Why should children obey their parents?***

⇒ ***What is true obedience?***

Jesus' treatment of children was also counter-cultural. Before His gospel took hold in the ancient world, children were seen as little more than property. It was Jesus who said in Matthew 19:14, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

Paul commanded children to "obey." The word "obey" (*hypakouō*) is stronger than the word "submit," used of wives earlier. The text reinforces this by the use of the phrase "in everything." Obedience was expected. The term "children" primarily describes children in relation to their parents, so the assumption is that they were at home and under their parents' supervision. The motivation occurs at the end of this verse: "for this pleases the Lord." Children have a responsibility in the Christian family order. To be pleasing to the Lord as a Christian, they should obey their parents.

⇒ ***Why does a child's obedience please God?***

After Paul addressed children, he addressed fathers. The father's whole goal with his children is to rear them so that when they are older, they will love and serve the Lord with their lives and bring up their own children to do the same. Of course, the child ultimately has a mind of his or her own and may not choose to do so. However, Christian parents should constantly be thinking of how they can teach their children in the ways of the Lord, so the children can make good choices in the future.

⇒ ***If you have children or grandchildren, what are things you do to help them learn about Jesus and focus on God? How can our Community Group help you continue to do this?***

In the Lord, parents have a mutual responsibility to children. There is a command and a practical reason. Parents are told not to embitter their children. Paul used the term “fathers” in addressing the parents. The term may easily encompass both father and mother as it does here, but it also serves to remind that fathers bear a primary responsibility for the children in the home.

Paul meant parents should not provoke nor irritate their children. Parents embitter children by constantly picking at them, nagging them, or perhaps refusing to acknowledge their efforts. To be discouraged as a child means to think things like: I'll never get it right. All they do is criticize me. They'll never love me.”

⇒ ***If you have children or grandchildren, how do you strive to encourage them?***

If correction is needed, it should be toward the behavior of the child, not the child's personhood, and it should be enforced quickly. Discipline should not be so prolonged that nagging occurs. The reason for the command was to avoid discouragement. Constant badgering produces a situation where children are discouraged either because they cannot please those they love or because they feel they are of no worth.

⇒ ***How is Paul's message about family still applicable to us today?***

Colossians 3:22 Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord;

Colossians 4:1 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

The Judeo-Christian view of man being created in God's image revolutionized the world. It ultimately led to the abolition of slavery in parts of the world where the good news of Jesus Christ has fully taken root.

There were millions of slaves in Paul's time and he and the other apostles didn't approach the situation by telling people to release their slaves. In order to do that, they would have had to totally restructure ancient society. The apostles' mission wasn't to do this. It was to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to all of humanity. This is what changes societies, as we have seen in our own country on the matter of slavery.

⇒ ***How can the category of slave-master be likened to our modern employee-employer relationship?***

⇒ ***What important principles can we glean from these verses that can be applied in our workplace?***

Colossians 3:23-25 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.

⇒ ***Discuss how verse 23 is similar to Colossians 3:17.***

⇒ ***How does knowing you will receive an inheritance from the Lord affect your daily life?***

- ⇒ *What caution does verse 25 give? What difference should this make in your daily life?*
- ⇒ *How can we keep in mind that whatever we do, it is for the Lord?*

Paul's words remind us that, regardless of our station in life, God is the one ultimately judging all we do, so all of our service is really for Him. From the most mistreated slave to the highest-paid leader, every person is called to work for God's honor. We do not work "for men" or simply earthly goals, but to glorify our heavenly Father and Master. Living for the Lord's honor is relevant in one's personal life, immediate family, and work contexts. Every interaction in all of our relationships is done first and foremost to Jesus.

- ⇒ *Discuss this quote: You serve the Lord Christ in every second of every day. Every single thing we do, every step we take, every word we utter, should be thought of first and foremost as an offering to Jesus.*
- ⇒ *What do you think your life would look like if you took seriously the command to "work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters?"*

TRANSFORM

1. Personal application: As Christians we are under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. We are to consider how we can honor the Lord by daily putting on the character of a child of God. His Lordship should affect every part of our lives, including the husband and wife relationship, the parent and child, and the relationship we have with our employers.

- ⇒ *What are the primary roles, relationships, and spheres of influence you have?*
- ⇒ *How can you be a faithful disciple of Christ in your roles and relationships?*
- ⇒ *If you are married, what are practical ways you can show honor and love to your spouse this week?*

2. Pray: Ask God to help us create families that honor Him in our culture as well as marriages that mirror Christ's love for the church. Pray that God will lead us to bring Him honor at work and in our fields of influence. Praise Him that we live our lives "for an audience of One."

STUDY: Resources used, compiled from, and quoted:

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- William Barclay, *The Letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1959), pp. 192, 193.