LSB Colossians 3:18 - 25 pt. 2 Doing the Right Thing

NASB77 Col. 3:18 Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them. 20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart. 22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever 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. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

This morning we come again to this most extremely practical section that embraces fallen humans interacting with other fallen humans.

I've referred derisively from time to time to the immortal words of Rodney King. "*Can't we all just get along*?" Such a profoundly simple and elegant solution. If only.

Thinking of simplistic but impossible solutions made me remember John Lennon's song, Imagine. I searched the lyrics. Equally profound as Rodney King. And equally ridiculous.

Then I flick on the TV and I find out, I'm the problem. I'm the one that's holding the rest of the world back from joining together in perfect harmony. Knuckle draggers like me that won't join in.

John Lennon was right. In order to achieve nirvanna you have to jettison; heaven, hell, God, nations, religions, possessions, greed. That's all. And then the world will achieve Rodney King's brilliant objective.

I can't imagine the frustration of being an ideologue. It's so simple! Just get rid of those things that seperate us and join in a group hug forever. Why can't we just do that?

Is there a book that actually addresses the problem, that identifies the root cause, and then offers solutions? Maybe. In the book you hold in your hands, in the first chapters, man abandons God and God removes Himself from man. A separation. Spiritual death. Man without God and without the purpose God designed him for.

Then you keep reading, and the first kid born after creation murders the second kid born because he wants what his brother has. The problem is evident. We are born sinners. Sin dwells in us.

Well you have to read the rest of the book for the solution. But understanding the reality of the problem turns Rodney King and John Lennon and the rest of their ilk into idiotic nonsense.

We aren't going to just get along . . . until sin is eradicated. And there is a future cataclysm when that actually happens. But for now, the only hope for sinners is to cry out to God for forgiveness and renewal.

Jesus shed blood is efficacious to remove the sin, and He will regenerate your old sinful self into a new living person who has been re-joined to the God who was removed.

When and only when that happens, we have a new helper living inside our quickened from dead to alive hearts. We're still in a murderous world, but we have new life. Our old self is gradually being changed into the likeness of Jesus as we spend time gazing at Him in this book.

These commands of Paul's here are for christians who have the benefit of the Helper. The indwelling Holy Spirit makes getting along a reachable viable possibility. We've moved from the realm of ridiculous idealogue nonsense to possibility.

Christians have the expectation of living differently than the hopelessly lost sinful world we dwell in. So Paul helps us deal with our old self that still wars with our new person.

Last week we looked at some very basic building blocks for married partners. Wives, respect your husbands leadership and follow his lead. Husbands, love you wives, and be gentle with them.

And now Paul turns to kids and parents, but specifically dads. And then finally to our relationships in the work place.

20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.

Paul speaks directly to children. He doesn't say, parents, now you tell your kids that I said this. He speaks directly to children.

I remember the impact that had on me when I was a little older than Wolfram. My mother opened up the Bible and read what Paul had written to me. Children, obey your parents. Maybe i'm different from all other kids, I don't know, but to me, that was God telling me His law.

I didn't know about apostles and inspiration and Paul. To me as a little guy, it was obvious. God says I should obey my parents. It's the law. From God.

That doesn't mean I did. I'm as rotten as any kid ever. But in the back of my little mind, the sin of disobedience was a thing. What a good mom to read those words to me and help me understand there is a God who tells me, do what mom and dad say.

Notice that parents is very plural here. Mom's, you don't have to wait for dad to get home for punishment to happen. Moms have instant authority

over children according to this verse. Either parent and both must be obeyed. Either parent and both should share the powers of instant response to willful disobedience.

I remember as a very small boy when mom and dad were still a team that a mom punishment was actually a desired outcome. Dad would pull his thin belt out of the belt loops and he would say, "this is going to hurt me more than it hurts you." My young logical mind would think; "that's nonsense."

It was much later that I understood the use of hyperbole. But both parents have authority to insist on obedience and punish wilfull disobedience. I don't like seeing moms and dads playing good cop bad cop.

Read a little further in this powerful verse.
Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

All things. Pam and I were a united front when the kids were little. We concentrated on willful disobedience. Did you understand what mom or dad said. Did you understand the limits. And was crossing over those boudaries a willful act.

We never punished for spilled milk. But the kids could count on it if they understood what mom or dad had said and then wilfully decided to disobey. Pam's brother was working alongside a pastor, Gary Ezzo, who had written a book called Growing kids God's way.

Later there was some discredit like anything that goes too far. It doesn't work with cheerless non christian people who are legalists without love. But our kids thrived understanding the balance of unconditional love with punishment for wilfully disobeying mom or dad. We set achievable common sense boudaries and there was always more laughter than tears. Far more. And our kids all landed on their feet.

To this day we roll our eyes when we're in public and a 3 year old tyrant is

controlling the parents. It's so easy at that age. Later on when they're teens, my mom always used to say, the cake's in the oven by that point and you have to wait to see if the ingredients make a good bake.

Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

For this is well pleasing to the Lord. Why is it that God would be pleased with children who obey mom and dad?

It's because God designed the family interaction to mirror our interactions with Him when we grow up. The family is a mini me picture of my interaction with God. Children respect and obey parental authority, and then when they are adults, the transition of being in God's family as a respectful obedient child that responds to His love is natural.

The whole point of social and cultural liberalism is to rage and rebel against authority. Murder the sky God. Get rid of that idea of authority, and then rage at anyone who says anything besides what you are doing, is either right or wrong.

Authority and submission. Or. No authority, no submission. We're right back to Rodney King, aren't we. Can't we all just get along.

Parents, the best gift you can ever give your kids is to model a strict authority and submission, with love, relationship with them, and then, obviously, be that model of an adult life that joyfully responds to God's authority with obedient submission, and who then enjoys the everlasting benefits of being a son or daughter in God's family. It starts when they are very very small.

Children, obey your parents, and then when you grow up it will be natural to obey your heavenly Father.

I was interested to reflect on where we've come since Shirley Temple sang

the little spinach song in 1936.

You've gotta eat your spinach, baby, children have to do as they are told. Children shouldn't be so very bold. Or you will be a meanie when you're old.

90 years ago it was accepted norm. Children have to do as they are told. In 2026, your 9 year old might hire a lawyer and sue you for parental harassment if you actually forced them to do what you say.

Next; Dads, don't overdo it.
21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart.

We've all witnessed dispirited kids with dad's that have set an unachievable bar. Worse case scenario is a dad who uses love as a weapon. No love until you achieve the impossible.

I've got a very tender heart for kids. Perhaps too tender. But it breaks when I see dad's who either ignore their kids as a nuisance that mom has to deal with, or they set impossible to achieve goals that overwhelm the poor kids.

I was listening to Al Mohler, on The Briefing this morning, it's friday as I write this, and according to Dr. Mohlere, *A recent study undertaken by researchers at Pennsylvania State University* had some fascinating conclusions.

They had target families with dad's who have a big interaction with their toddlers, and dad's who were neglectful. And they checked in at age 2 and again at age 7, and discovered some bizarre patterns.

Here's a quote about the kids with dads who didn't pay attention. "*And at age seven, the children of those fathers were more likely to have markers of poor heart or metabolic health such as inflammation and high blood sugar*."

David, in the Psalms, makes those connections of joy with physical metabolic health. We are not surprised. Dad's get busy and tickle your babies. It's important work. There is a real connection between joy and metabolic health. Wellness. And it was dad's that were root cause.

OK, time to move on. Slaves. That scary scary word may be as far as we get this morning.

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

The Bible makes no apology for conditions in the cosmos of Satan's rule. Jesus called Satan, the prince of this world, and the ruler of this world.

Like being the ruler of the sewer pond. It isn't a lofty position to be ruler of this world. This world is a disaster and precisely so because it is under the rule of an evil usurper. So, in Satan's cosmos, slaves have always been a "thing".

If you research the greek word it's douloi which is the plural of doulos. It means slaves. People who are under the authority of and are subject to someone else's will.

This entire section is about different scenarios of authority and submission. Wives submit to your husbands leadership. Children submit to your parents authority. Slaves submit to your masters.

Christianity is the antithesis of marxism. Rebel and burn down all authority says marxism. Don't stop the fires until we're all reduced to equal ashes. Then we can rebuild with true equality. Then John Lennon's song can be a reality. And the world will be one.

OR

We can admit that we're a fallen race of sinners and the best possible source of thriving is to submit to God given restraints of order in family, and government and worship. Submission brings order. And thriving.

Thankful submission to those who we've landed under; some authority that rewards our service with food and security and comfort effects nearly every human.

We react to the word slave, but the truth is, in a fallen world, all of us are subject to someone. It's a different world now in this version of Satan's cosmos, than in the first century one, but we still are under authority. We can quit our job, but if we do, the bills are going to pile up, and someone is going to call Jeff to come and change the locks, and you'll be sleeping in the snow.

Call it whatever you like, but face the truth. Most of us are going to get up most days and perform necessary services that have value to someone else. And not doing that brings consequences we don't want, so paint the word doulos any color that makes you happy.

God says, submit to your boss. Retirement is great. But I paid into Social security for 55 years continuously. I got up every morning and went to work. For many years we lived paycheck to paycheck. I was painfully aware that I had to be of value to my employers or my kids were going to be hungry and cold. We understood the God given reality of submission to bosses who needed to make a profit. And we thrived.

Are there abuses in a sinful world? Unfairness? Inequalities based in race and gender? Good old boy policies that aren't fair? How could any of those things be possible in a world where Satan rules? My mama used to say, ask a stupid question, get a stupid answer. Of course there are abuses. Sinners are sinners. We have to work within that reality.

Satan wishes christians and the restraints of this book could be removed so

he could really show the world some inequalities. In Satans best case reality, name the name of Jesus and get your head cut off. That's his idea of fair. And it's only the restraints that christianity, based in these words we're looking at this morning, brought that makes the world livable. His wish is coming soon.

Bread lines and marxism are childs play compared to what Satan wants to bring to a town near you.

So, slaves, or employees, if that makes you feel better, obey your bosses. The best possible scenario for thriving in this fallen world is the order and profit that happens when slaves work and profit the thriving of their masters. It's the best we're going to get in this world.

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Notice that Paul qualifies this authority and submission obedience.
Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth

We said that the family is a mini me. A picture of ultimate authority and submission to God our heavenly Father.

The workplace is also a mini me. Of God's relationship to His doulos, His slaves. Us, beloved. We have earthly masters we must obey for a short while. But we have a heavenly master who we will worship and adore and serve forever.

The apostles adopted the word doulos to describe their relationship to Jesus. We are joyful slaves of Jesus who purchased us and placed us into His family, to share in His wealth forever.

Slavery doesn't have to always be considered as a negative. It all depends on your Master. If Jesus is Master, sign me up! I was a slave anyways. He

bought me from the evil taskmaster and gave me freedom from sin and an eternal inheritance in light with Him.

We were slaves of an abusive and cruel master who desired death for us. How magnificent it is to have been purchased by a loving and generous Master. Jesus speaks of that transition into a blessed and benevolent slavery of a Master who loves us.

Mt. 11:28"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29"Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and YOU SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS. 30"For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

Don't repel that word, slave. We are purchased slaves. *You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body*.
1 Cor. 6:20

But while we remain on this earth, in this world, Paul instructs us to submit to all authorities over us, including our bosses.

Each area of necessary submission that Paul addresses here is a picture of our greater submission to our God. Wives submitting to a husbands leadership in the home, children submitting to loving parents who want the best for them and who are older and wiser, and slaves submitting to masters, working for the good of someone else that provides a living for your family too.

Each of these is a mini me picture of our ultimate submission to our Lord and Saviour who purchased us out of cruel bondage and gives to us all good things.

But finally now, in verse 22 we move beyond exterior obedience to the inner attitude. This is the hard part. This is the hard part.

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with

external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

I've had a lifetime of people telling me my attitude stinks. I can obediently grind out the required work, but how do I get my heart to honestly get on board?

And for God, it's always about the heart. Hebrews 4:13 states the reality; *Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight; everything is uncovered and exposed before the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.*

Many times in the gospels it says Jesus looked inside the hearts of men. He answers what they were thinking to themselves. I might fool the boss, but I can't fool Jesus with outward compliance while my attitude stinks.

This is where worldly religion and true regeneration with a new heart and God living in my heart to help me are starkly different. All man made religion can do is crank out the externals. It cannot change heart attitudes.

God looks inside our hearts. And so as we are trained up from the time of little childhood to submit to authority, and we carry that into our adult roles in life, it's natural to repent to our heavenly Father and admit our inner failings to submit to His loving leadership.

The heart condition is where we must cry out for mercy. The pharisees thought they were righteous. Cranking out all the outward laws. But God requires an inner right ness that we don't have. All we can do is ask Him to forgive us.

Paul brings this idea home for us in the final verses. Wives serving husbands and families, children obeying mom and dad, and workers honoring their bosses and masters are all the little dramas, the little pictures of the bigger picture.

Ultimately this life is 5 minutes long. All of those things are just beginner

practice sessions for out worship and service and heart felt love for our Saviour on the day when we meet Him in the air.

So Paul says, get along and submit to folks here because, ultimately, it is the Lord whom you obey and serve in all these things.

23 Whatever 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. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.

This life, with all of it's challenges, is just a 5 minute practice session for eternity with our Lord who bought us out of cruel slavery to an evil taskmaster and became a loving master who gives us all good things.

We need to think that way. All the little drama's here, although they seem so important in the moment, are just practice for eternity. Little blips on the radar that are there for a moment and then pass along.

But our God honoring attitudes as we plow through the obstacles is of eternal value. Every challenge here is a chance to honor God as we ask Him to supply a submissive and honoring heart attitude.

Ultimately, in all things, *It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.*