

THE BOOK OF COLOSSIANS • The Greatness of Jesus Christ
Lesson #7 • Colossians 3:18-25; 4:1 • Philemon 1:1-7
“Interpersonal Relationships Under Christ
with Side-Road to Philemon”
• HANDOUT •

► Now, Paul turns to a *new subject*. He addresses the fact that the “new nature” the Holy Spirit gives to the Redeemed of the Lord significantly changes interpersonal relationships. God sees His family as a team with each member having a specific role within the Church.

With these roles in mind, Paul begins by giving guidelines for the marriage relationship under Christ. The ancient world was a man's world. Even among the Jews, the wife was often little more than viewed as chattel. Jew and Gentile alike assumed that the man was the head of the household and he was to wield his authority with the understanding that the women were *obligated* to obey. Paul's counsel in the opening passage is a striking contrast to this attitude. He does not openly challenge this common assumption of the man's absolute authority, but he applies the Christian principles of **mutual love and deference**, thus transforming the relationship between the husband and the wife.

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

Q: What does it mean to submit yourself to another person?

Q: When a wife submits to her husband, what is to be her underlying attitude?

Q: What does it mean that the wife's submission should be “*fitting in the Lord?*”

Q: What are the two responsibilities the husband must have toward his wife?

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

Q: What is the one obligation Paul places on children?

Q: What does the Greek word for “obey” – hypakouete – imply?

Q: What are the two aspects of the children's obedience to their parents?

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Q: What is the Father's responsibility toward his children?

Q: Does this only pertain to fathers?

Q: What does the Greek word Erithizo, which is translated as "embitter," actually mean?

Q: What reason does Paul give for this strong counsel?

Paul broadens his admonishments from the immediate family into the Christian's responsibility toward the Slaves who are part of his extended family and the Slaves responsibility toward his master ...

Colossians 3:22-25; 4:1 • Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, 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 favoritism.

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

Q: What does the Bible say about the practice of slavery, especially in the N.T.?

Q: What aspect of slavery does the Bible address with condemnation?

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- Q: Other than Slavery resulting from war, what was the most common reason slavery in the Bible?
- Q: How does Paul say slaves are to behave?
- Q: What reasoning does Paul give for this admonishment regarding a slave's behavior?
- Q: Overall, are the principles that Paul is setting down in this passage about the individual slave's responsibilities, or is he speaking only about the slave's God-given rights?
- Q: Just as he did with his guidelines for a godly marriage, Paul turns to the Masters of the Slave community and gives them what Godly advice?
- Q: What is the warning that Paul gives the slaves?
- Q: What does it mean when Paul says: *there is no favoritism?*"
- Q: What caution does Paul give to the slave masters?
- Q: What teaching of Jesus does Paul's advice to the slave master remind us of?

This admonishment about slaves wasn't just theoretical for Paul. He had personally dealt with a runaway slave named Onesimus. Onesimus' Master was Philemon, an Asiatic Gentile and a beloved friend of Paul who lived in the Lycus Valley area of Colosse. Many believe Philemon was actually the leader of the house church which met in his home. The letter Paul wrote to Philemon is dated the same time as his letter to the Colossians. Ultimately the letter to Philemon was all about his encounter with Onesimus.

- Q: What do we know about Paul during this time in Rome?

Philemon 1:1-7 · Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home:

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints.

I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

Q: What is surprising about Paul's salutation?

Q: Who does Paul address in this letter?

Q: Who are the three people Paul addresses?

Philemon:

Apphia:

Archippus:

Q: Why does Paul say he thanks God as he remembered them in his prayers?

Q: What does Paul mean when he says: *"I pray you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ?"*

Q: What is it in Philemon that has given Paul great joy and encouragement?

**Following this salutation Paul gets to the reason for his letter:
The issue of Onesimus ...**

This is where we will pick up the story of Onesimus, next time ...

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Next Time ◆ Lesson #8
"Regarding Onesimus"

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