

Centered in Christ: New Life in Practice

(Col. 3:18-4:1)

Social Structures

- Paul's focus here is show how our new identity in Christ is not meant to undo existing social structures
 - But rather to transform us in them
- That being said: Read your own mail!
 - Focus on what God is calling you to do
 - Not on what others should be doing

New Life at Home (3:18-21)

- Wives are called to submit to their husbands
 - Submit (hypotassō): Suggests a voluntary willingness to recognize and put oneself under the leadership of another
 - It is to recognize a relationship of order established by God (v. 18b)
 - But it is conditioned by the husband's submission to God (see Eph. 5:22)
- Husbands are called to love their wives
 - Like Christ loves His Church (see Eph. 5:23)
 - Sacrificially
 - "Do not be harsh" = Do not make them bitter, resentful
 - This was counter-cultural
- Children are called to obey their parents
 - Obey: follow their instructions
 - Again, as long as it is not in contradiction with God's truth
 - This pleases God because it means we are living under His rule for our lives (see Eph. 6:1-3; Ex. 20:12)
- Fathers* are called to be encouraging to their children
 - Not give rules for rules' sake
 - Not irritate or embitter
 - Again, this was counter-cultural

New Life at Work (3:22-4:1)

- Bondservant ≠ slaves like in US history
 - They were employees for a fixed period of time
 - Who were often well compensated
 - And were rarely forced into labor
 - The modern equivalent would be employees
- Masters = employers/bosses
- Employees are called to obey their bosses
 - Not just when they are looking
 - Not to just get ahead

- But, by way of service to God
 - The Lord is every Christian's true Master
- Bosses are called to treat their employees well
 - Not exploiting them
 - Not making things unnecessarily hard on them
 - Treating them like God treats you
 - Because you both have the same Boss

What if they aren't Christians?

- What if my spouse, or my children, or my boss, or my employer is not a Christian
 - Am I required to still act this way?
- Yes, and even more so!
 - Because your behavior to them is a testimony to them of the God you serve
 - You are the Gospel they are reading!

So What?

- Are you new in Jesus?
 - Is our life showing that to those around us?
- If we are new in Christ:
 - How we treat our family should reflect that
 - How we act at work should convey that

Meditation Verse: *Colossians 3:23*