



(For access to all available commentaries and written sermons of Charlie's click [HERE](#))

## **Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Colossians 3:19**

After instructions to the wives, Paul next addresses the husbands. His words are carefully selected. First he says, "Husbands, love your wives." The word is present imperative active. Thus, "You are to do this now and always, you are certainly to do it, and you are to actively do it... Love your wives!" A man and a woman are one when united in marriage. Because of this, they are to love one another just as they love themselves. Just because a wife is to submit to her husband, it does not give him the right to act in a non-loving way towards her. Rather, the exact opposite is true.

Paul then follows up with, "and do not be bitter toward them." The verb now goes from the active to the passive. Thus it should read, "and do not be embittered toward them." As the woman is the weaker vessel, the husband may get exasperated by her weakness. Or, there may be other ways in which a man gets frustrated with his wife (is it possible?), and so Paul admonishes the husband to not allow himself to become embittered towards her. Each is an individual, and each is designed by God to form a whole. Surely men cause women to get exasperated (surely!), and the same is true with women. The husband, being the head of the house is to not allow bitterness to grow because of this position.

Life application: When we consider the strengths of our spouses, then the failings will be less noticeable. It is so easy in life to focus on the negative, but let us not do so – especially in regards to our spouses. Instead, let us love, cherish, and honor one another. In so doing, the Lord will look with favor upon our marriages.

## **Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. Colossians 3:20**

This verse is a shortened form of Ephesians 6:1-3 –

"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>"Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with promise: <sup>3</sup>"that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν·

The necessity of children to be obedient to their parents is found throughout Scripture, both implicitly and explicitly. Solomon admonished it to the youth of his audience when he wrote –

“My son, hear the instruction of your father,  
And do not forsake the law of your mother;  
<sup>9</sup> For they *will be* a graceful ornament on your head,  
And chains about your neck.” Proverbs 1:8, 9

Having stated this, Paul is speaking of proper things which would be pleasing to the Lord. The words “all things” cannot mean things which are contrary to what the Lord would ordain for people to do. In such instances, disobedience to the parents’ directives would be the proper course of action. Even as children within a household, obedience to God’s word must come first.

However, when the instructions of one’s parents is in line with Scripture, or at least neutral in regards to Scripture, then obedience to them is right and proper. As Paul notes, “for this is well pleasing to the Lord.” Christ was obedient to His Father, and He has set the example for all others to follow. There is a set hierarchy which has been ordained by God, and to which we are expected to adhere. In doing so, we will be pleasing to the Lord.

Life application: Again, Paul has set a standard for conduct within the family which is expected to be adhered to. Concerning children, how obvious it is that they should, in fact, be obedient to their parents. But this is not just a responsibility which is laid upon them. Rather, when they are disobedient, it is time for the parents to enforce the rules of the house. It is something that seems almost foreign to modern families though. But just because it is unpopular to discipline children, it does not mean that it is wrong. As Solomon says –

“Do not withhold correction from a child,  
For *if* you beat him with a rod, he will not die.  
<sup>14</sup> You shall beat him with a rod,  
And deliver his soul from hell.” Proverbs 23:13, 14

Are you going to trust a TV show or the word of God in how to raise your children?

**Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.** Colossians 3:21

This verse is a close match to Ephesians 6:4 –

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.”

ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν·

The word Paul uses for “provoke” is found only here and in 2 Corinthians 9:2. It gives the sense of stirring something up. His intent then is that fathers are not to irritate their children. In acting in such a manner, they are bound to “become discouraged.” This word is one found only here in Scripture, *athumeo*. It gives the sense of being spiritless, and thus disheartened.

It is not appropriate for a father to beat down a child to the point that they become despondent and broken in their spirit. Rather, a father is meant to do exactly the opposite, building their children up so that they will become mature and sound people. Instead of deriding a child for missing the ball with the bat, the father should encourage him. “That’s OK son, it was a great swing.” In the end, such positive, rather than negative, reinforcement will produce the more stable child.

Life application: In dealing with your children, ask yourself if you would like to be treated the way they are being treated. How often we expect more of our children than we would of ourselves. It is true we should want them to become even better people than we are, but growing is a process which takes time and encouragement.

**Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. Colossians 3:22**

Verses 22-25 closely match Ephesians 6:5-8 –

“Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; <sup>6</sup> not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, <sup>7</sup> with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, <sup>8</sup> knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.”

There are some differences in the two passages though which will be evaluated. So far, Paul has noted relations in the immediate family within the household. This one is almost as close, and maybe even closer, as far as daily contact is concerned. The term “bondservant” is as good as one can get from the Greek word *doulos*. The term applies to one who is bound to the service of another. This could be a voluntary subjection or an involuntary duty, and it can also go as far as being a slave.

Their rights were extremely limited even in the best of cases. In some instances, they had virtually no rights at all. And yet, there is the note of a reward, even for them, which will be fully revealed in verse 24.

For the Christian bondservant, Paul instructs them to “obey in all things your masters.” Despite the many difficult rigors often suffered under cruel masters, Paul simply makes the command.

ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν·

He doesn't qualify it with, "If they are good masters," nor does he give any hint that they have a right to rebel. The status of slaves or bondservants was simply a fact of life. Those who were so bound were to accept it. However, he does give a note concerning slaves elsewhere that is worth citing –

"Let each one remain in the same calling in which he was called. <sup>21</sup> Were you called *while* a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use *it*."

-1 Corinthians 7:20, 21

However, as long as a person was bound, they were to be obedient to their masters. And yet, Paul adds on a descriptor for them to consider. It is a master "according to the flesh." In other words, there are human limitations which are being spoken of here. Paul is implying that they are bondservants of Another as well, which is not according to the flesh. It is for this reason that they were to be obedient to their human master.

Paul then asks that such bondservants be obedient "not with eyeservice." It is a word used only here and in Ephesians 6:6, and it appears to be a word invented by him. The use of it is to indicate someone who serves only when the eye of his master is present. When the master is out, he refuses to conduct his duties as he should. Paul says that this is inappropriate. Rather, a servant is to serve his master in the same manner as he would serve the Lord, which means at all times.

He next explains what that means by saying (not as) "men-pleasers." This word is also found only here and in Ephesians 6:6. It indicates someone who is willing to please man rather than God. The idea of both of these words is that a bondservant is to look to his duties to his master (whether he is a good master or a crummy one) as if he was actually serving the Lord. In so doing, he would be a responsible representative of the Lord in the presence of his master. This is explained in the next words, "but as bondservants of Christ."

By acting as a bondservant of Christ, even for his earthly master, he will then be doing it "in sincerity of heart, fearing God." Paul puts a stress on the value of the heart being sincere in the performance of the bondservant's duties. In this sincere attitude, a demonstration that one's heart is directed toward a proper fear of God is seen. And it is God who looks upon the heart to determine the value of all people's actions.

As we have a different system of employment in the world today, we need to adapt that system to Paul's words. Rather than masters, we have bosses. However, we are to treat our bosses with the same respect that the bondservant is called to for his master. We are not to be employees who perform with mere eyeservice, nor are we to simply be men-pleasers. We are to act as if we are reporting to Christ, making the most efficient use of our time under the employ of our employers.

ἐν ᾧ ἔχομεν τὴν ἀπολύτρωσιν διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ, τὴν ἄφεσιν τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν·

Life application: In the world, it is so easy to fall in with the “labor union” mentality. The liberal attitude, both in government and in private industry, says that it is OK to not work to the highest standard of integrity and diligence. But the Bible tells us otherwise. If you act like a democrat in your work environment by failing to give your all to your boss, you are not acting as the Lord would have you to work. It is time to mature out of your self-centered work attitude, and to become a devoted, dedicated employee. And this is regardless of the attitude of your employer. If you can't deal with him, then it is you who needs to find another job. Think clearly! Apply the Bible and its precepts to your life! Be honoring of the Lord through your employment.