

(18) Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

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

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

(2) Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the Word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison --- that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.

(5) Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.

Think on these things:

- 1) From vs. 18-21, list the command for wives, the one for children, and the three for husbands-fathers:

Wives? **Submit to YOUR husband (not men in general, or other women’s husbands). (NOTE: A key matter for marriage is for the future wife to ask herself, “Am I willing to submit [yield] to this man leading our home when we disagree on a decision?” This is to obey Christ.)**

Children? **Obey your parents.**

Husbands/Fathers? **1) Love your wives; 2) Don’t be harsh to your wives; and 3) Don’t provoke your children (lest they become discouraged)**

- 2) Why do you think Paul says it’s “fitting in the Lord” for a wife to submit to her husband? (Consider the marriage problem announced in Genesis 3:16b.) Why should children obey their parents (see also Exodus 20:12 and Ephesians 6:1-3)? What parenting efforts do you think embitter our children against us (opinion)?

Wives? **Genesis 3:16 speaks to household strife resulting from wives trying to usurp their husbands’ roles and lead the family (‘your desire will be for your husband’). There cannot be 2 leaders in the home.... God ordains it should be the husband’s duty and responsibility.**

Children? **Colossians – It pleases the Lord. Exodus – That children may enjoy long lives. Ephesians – This is the right thing to do that things might go well for us.**

Parenting? **Personal answers may vary. Perhaps children get embittered when we ride them endlessly over things. Also, when we fail to show personal integrity and they see our hypocrisy as adults. Maybe we don’t let them take the steps needed to grow up, fail to support them, or engage in lying or half-truths.**

- 3) What is Paul’s primary discussion concerning slaves (workers) in vs. 22-24? What does he say is the needed understanding for workers to consistently do a good job for their masters (bosses)?

Notice that v. 23 can easily serve as a life verse for one's personal work ethic! What are our true wages (v. 24)?

Primarily, all believers really work for the Lord, not people or businesses. Working to honor Him (i.e., working heartily), we will do quality work, and we won't work just to impress our bosses while they watch. Our true wages are a godly inheritance!

- 4) Do you think God will reprimand and discipline us for poor or deceitful work efforts (v. 25)?

Without partiality, God will pay back wrongdoers (lazy workers?) for the wrong they do!

- 5) Masters (employers) are also directed to do something with their workers/employees. What is it, and what is the sobering equalizer? See 4:1 and Jesus' words in Matthew 18:23-35.

Bosses are to treat employees "justly and fairly" because bosses, too, have to answer to their Master also --- God Himself! The Matthew passage is the Parable of the Talents, where God handed out 10, 5, and 1 talent to three workers. Those who developed the talents responsibly were given commendation. The lazy one lost his one talent, which was given to the steward who started with 10. God holds us accountable for what He has given us in life to work with!

- 6) What are we all directed to do with our private prayer lives (v. 2)? Are you? Why do you think we are told to "be watchful" and thankful? What do we need to understand about prayer (see Mark 9:29, 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18, and James 5:13-16)?

Directed to? **Continue in steadfast prayer, be devoted to it. (+ Personal response Q)**

Be watchful? **Faith in prayer expects answers. Look for them and be grateful.**

Understand? **Mark – Some things will NEVER happen *without* prayer! Thess. – Always pray with thanksgiving. James – The prayers of righteous people have great power!**

- 7) How are we Christians supposed to conduct ourselves in the presence of "outsiders" (i.e., the unsaved, v. 5a)? Explain how you can make "the best use of your time" (i.e., opportunity, NIV) as it relates to the unsaved. What three things are identified to be part of your conversations?

Be wise among them, making the best use of our time. We can't always just talk about sports, food, weather, family, etc...; we need to talk about faith in God also!

Three Things? **1) GRACIOUS (kind and caring, forgiving and compassionate),
2) SEASONED WITH SALT (able to inject and explain the role and meaning of faith in Jesus in our lives when we talk with them), and
3) KNOW HOW TO ANSWER (knowing them and the Bible well enough to respond to their Qs appropriately, sharing helpful and truthful things).**

Notice that Paul specifically asked the Colossian church to pray for him in these ways in vs. 3-4. Also, we covered the "**mystery of Christ**" in Colossians Lesson 4, chapter 1:24-27. The gist is that in Christ, social distinctions and categories are wiped out: all believers are to be united as "Christians," no longer segregated as male/female, Jew/Gentile, white or black or brown, etc....

People and situations I want to pray for this week: