

(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? _____

Children? _____

Husbands/Fathers? _____

- 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? _____

Children? _____

Parenting? _____

- 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)?

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

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.

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? _____

Be watchful? _____

Understand? _____

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?

Three 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/black/brown, etc....

People and situations I want to pray for this week: