

Colossians 3:18-4:1

In this text, Paul addresses 6 different groups of people: wives, husbands, children, Fathers, Slaves, and Masters.

1. He is showing that every relationship, every area of life, must be brought into subjection to Christ.
2. We are going to see an almost perfect parallel in Ephesians that will help us.

I. Wives v18

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Ephesians 5:22-24 *Wives, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything.*

Note those words, as is fitting in the Lord.

1. In other words, you have to obey God first, so if what your husband asks of you would cause you to disobey God, you have to obey God rather than men.
2. But you know as well as I do, that there is a way to be submissively disobedient.
3. And it is God's design that your submissive and respectful behavior toward your husband might cause him to look to Christ.
4. 1 Peter 3:1-6 *In the same way, you wives, be submissive to your own husbands so that even if any of them are disobedient to the word, they may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives, 2 as they observe your chaste and respectful behavior: 3 Your adornment must not be merely external--braiding the hair, and wearing gold jewelry, or putting on dresses; 4 but let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the imperishable quality of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this way in former times the holy women also, who hoped in God, used to adorn themselves, being submissive to their own husbands; 6 just as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, and you have become her children if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear.*

Wives being subject to, submissive to, their husbands is God's design for marriage.

1. This has nothing to do with the worthiness or abilities of your husband, but with God's design
2. Women who have issue with submitting to their husbands often have no issues submitting to their boss...who is usually someone else's husband.

Note that the Holy Spirit through Paul is directly addressing the wives...he doesn't need to address them through the husbands in the room.

II. Husbands v19

19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

Ephesians 5:25-27 *25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless.*

1. If she is a believer, we are part of the same body...she is part of Christ's body.

2. 1 Peter 3:7 *You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman; and show her honor as a fellow heir of the grace of life, so that your prayers will not be hindered.*

28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 FOR THIS REASON A MAN SHALL LEAVE HIS FATHER AND MOTHER AND SHALL BE JOINED TO HIS WIFE, AND THE TWO SHALL BECOME ONE FLESH.

1. Husbands are the head of their wives.
 - a. This isn't referring to "head" as in the head of a corporation or company
 - b. Instead, it is referring to the head of a body...like Jesus!

2. *"Headship will not seem often to the outside world to be 'being the head of one's house' at all. Headship will look, in many cases, like weakness. So does the cross."* Russell Moore

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. 33 Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband.

This is a picture of the Gospel

1. The husband is to represent Christ in how he loves, leads, and protects
2. The wife is to represent the Church in how she submits, honors, and respects him
3. I know that this is not culturally relevant, but it is biblical and vital to our testimony!!!
4. Our marriages are supposed to be a picture of the gospel to the world....after all this is how it all ends!
5. This is where we are headed.
 - a. To the bride coming down out of heaven adorned for her groom.
 - b. To the wedding feast of the Lamb

III. Children v20

20 Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

1. Obey

Ephesians 6:1 *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.*

2. Honor

Ephesians 6:2-3 *HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.*

- a. You all need to recognize how serious this is!
 - b. 2 Timothy 3:1-4 *But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come. 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers, disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy, 3 unloving, irreconcilable, malicious gossips, without self-control, brutal, haters of good, 4 treacherous, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God*

IV. Fathers v21

21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

1. Ephesians 6:4 *4 Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

2. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 *Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

V. Slaves and Masters v22-4:1

22 Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Ephesians 6:5-6 *Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.*

We can't flesh out everything there is to flesh out here, or answer all of the questions that might surface in regard to these verses, but I want us to see what it clearly here.

1. We often try to apply these verses to the employee, employer relationship.
2. That is a disservice to the text because the Greek Word that Paul uses in both Colossians and Ephesians is the word "doulos" and it is the word for slave.
 - a. Not servant...they had a word for that and Peter used in in 1 Peter 2:18
 - b. This is the word for slave and that is what Paul is discussing here.
3. Well...that is the application that we have today. Really?
4. It is not a better application to say...do you want to know the power of the gospel? Look at how it has utterly transformed the attitude of these slaves, the lowest of the low!
5. Look at their joy...those who have the least reason to be joyful! That is an application.

How can they be this way?

1. Because when a slave comes to know Jesus Christ as His Lord, Savior, and Master they cease to be slaves in Spirit.
2. In Spirit, slaves cease to be slaves as soon as they begin to work for the Lord...no longer in the first place for man.
3. Read on...

23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.

Ephesians 6:7-9 *With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him*

It is estimated that in Rome roughly 1/3 of the population were slaves.

1. Slaves and Masters were both part of the church at Colossae, Ephesus, and at Philippi.
2. This was his teaching across the board!
3. 1 Timothy 6:1-2 *All who are under the yoke as slaves are to regard their own masters as worthy of all honor so that the name of God and our doctrine will not be spoken against. 2 Those who have believers as their masters must not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but must serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.*
4. Titus 2:9-10 *Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters in everything, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good faith so that they will adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect.*

Paul's direction was NOT to show partiality to the poor of the disenfranchised in an effort to even the "playing field."

1. Paul's goal was not leveling the playing field.
2. It was Christlike hearts and lives that reflect the gospel and that advance the Kingdom of God.

Conclusion:

The Word of God transcends culture. In fact it creates culture!

1. It creates culture by dealing with the root...not the fruit.
 - a. Wives, there are 1000 things we could say
 - b. Husbands, there are 10,000 things we could say
 - c. Children, there are 1000 things we could say
 - d. Fathers there are numerous things we could say
 - e. Slaves...Masters...there are 100 things we could say or do
2. But Paul puts at the center of everything He says one thing: the Gospel
 - a. The power of the gospel will work in the hearts of wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, and masters!
 - b. The power of the gospel will affect change from the inside out.

THE GOSPEL