

## Colossians Bible Study

3:18-4:1

Questions will be posed and space will be allowed for a written response. Make every effort to answer the questions before looking below for the answer. **The answers will be in bold print.**

1. Paul now applies the principle of doing “all in the name of the Lord Jesus” (3:17) to family relationships. In light of the following references, what is meant by a wife’s submission to her husband?

Ephesians 5:22-24

Galatians 3:28

2. All of the instructions in this section on family relationships are reciprocal. Therefore, how is a husband to treat his wife (v. 19)? See also Ephesians 5:25-33.

3. Using Paul’s words as a springboard, if you had the opportunity to speak with a man and woman as they make marriages plans, what additional truths from God’s Word would you share to guide them?

4. Paul includes children in his family instructions beginning with verse 20. This verse as well as verse 21 mirror Paul’s instructions for children and parents in Ephesians 6:1-4. Paul tells children to “obey your parents in everything” (v. 20). What does “everything” include? See Acts 5:29.

5. Verse 21 is reciprocal to verse 20. What does verse 21 say concerning how parents should discipline their children?

6. What further instructions for father (parents), do the following references provide?

Ephesians 6:4

Proverbs 22:6

7. In Paul’s days slaves were also a part of family relationships. As the Gospel spread throughout Roman Empire, many slaves became Christians. In verses 22-25 Paul gives instructions to slaves that also apply to our present-day relationships in the workplace. When and where are slaves directed to obey their masters (vv. 22-24)?

8. Verses 23-24 indicate that it is the Lord whom slaves serve. Workers today also serve the Lord in their jobs. How might remembering this truth improve workers' productivity as well as relationships in the workplace?
9. In verse 4:1 Paul describes the reciprocal instructions for the masters of slaves. How should the knowledge that God is their master influence employers' attitudes toward their employees?

People have to work together. But the heart of the old nature is to seek personal advantage, which causes frustration, resentment, and violence. Paul urges us to resist this temptation, no matter what our calling in life may be. Resistance becomes a reality when we live by faith "in the Son of God, who loved [us] and gave Himself for [us]" (Gal 2:20). In Christ, we know that we will not miss out on anything. • Lord, lead us to spend our lives in loving service for You and others, for You have so dearly loved us. Amen. (TLSB)

### **Some Answers to the above Questions:**

**1. Ephesians 5:22-24 compares the relationship of a wife and husband to the relationship of the church and Jesus Christ. The word "submit" as used in both Ephesians and Colossians passages means a "yielding of one's own rights." This yielding grows out of Christian faith and mutual love. As the church honors and loves Christ, so a wife is to honor and love her husband. Just as the church is blessed as believers willingly acknowledge Christ's leadership, God gives great blessings in those marriages where the wife acknowledges her husband's leadership. To "submit" does not mean to think of oneself as inferior. As Galatians 3:28 says in Christ, there is no difference between male and female. In regard to salvation, all are one in Christ.**

**2. A Christian husband is to love his wife and not treat her harshly. The "love" referred to here is a self-sacrificing love. It is the same kind of love that Christ showed us. This kind of love willingly sacrifices without expecting anything in return. Husbands are to love their wives as a part of themselves, for in the marriage ceremony, husband and wife are united as "one flesh" (Ephesian 5:31). The Christian husband's attitude toward his wife is always gentle and considerate of her feeling. It is never harsh or bitter as when one treats another as inferior. As the head of the household, the husband is to work with his wife, seek her ideas, and understand her feelings concerning all family issues.**

**3. Answers will vary. Other meaningful truths concerning the marriage relationship include Paul's directives to all Christians in Colossians 3:12-17. Matthew 6:33; 1 Corinthians 11:1, 3; and 1 Peter 3:15a remind us to keep Christ and His example as first and foremost in our lives and at the center of our hearts. Any verses that bring out the importance of God's**

**Word as the guide and the true wisdom for our lives would also be appropriate to share (e.g., John 8:31-32).**

**4. “Everything” includes all that is according to God’s will. God does not want children to do things that are sinful, even if their parents order them to do so.**

**5. Parents are to discipline their children in consistent, kind ways that give their children direction and encouragement in the Lord. Paul cautions fathers (and mothers) in verse 21 not to be discouraging to their children or to make it difficult for them to obey. The purpose of discipline is to show the child the right way, and discipline should never be a way a parent shows frustration or takes anger out on a child.**

**6. Ephesians 6:4 says that fathers (parents) should bring their children up in the “training and instruction of the Lord.” It is the parents’ responsibility to bring their child(ren) to know Jesus and His love. In Proverbs 22:6, God gives parents an encouraging promise. God says that the training in the Lord the parents give their children now will stay with them as a guide for the entire lives.**

**7. Slaves are directed to obey their masters in “everything” (v. 22) and at all times, not just when they are being watched. The only exception to this would be, as in the case of children, slaves were asked by their masters to do something that is against God’s will. Verse 24 gives a word of encouragement to slaves who are not rewarded for their hard work here on earth. This verse promises that God sees their faithfulness and will reward them in heaven.**

**8. If workers remembered that their work is a way in which they serve the Lord, work would be done with pride to the best of their ability. Workers would also respect their employers. Laziness and dishonesty would be replaced with hard work and honesty.**

**9. If employers looked to God as their Master (boss). They would always treat their workers with dignity and respect. Many of today’s difficulties between labor and management would disappear because each group would respect the other. In turn, the economy of our country would be based on mutual consideration instead of greed and individual agendas.**