



Week of February 25, 2019: Colossians 3:18 – 4:1

“Wives, submit yourselves 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 embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism. Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.”

Discussion Questions Set #1

“God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them”. (Genesis 1:27)

In sermon, we discussed the differences between our “gender-charged” world and the world of first century Christianity. Our modern sensitivities to issues of gender, parenting, and slavery were completely (in general terms) absent from the world in which the letter to the Colossians was written. In very broad brushstrokes, in the first century world, women were barely seen as human, children were viewed as humans in waiting, and slaves were seen as non-human and treated like animals.

1. The Old Testament is full of examples of God using individuals from marginalized people groups (think Joseph, a slave, or Samuel, a child, or Ruth, a female slave) through whom to accomplish great things. How ought this fact – that God can work through even the most marginalized people – affect our treatment of others and our bias based on such distinctions?
2. Do you believe that the church understands that humanity, regardless of gender, race, or socioeconomic realities born into, though distinct in form and function, is equal in standing and worth? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think we still tend to operate through such bias? What perpetuates the “de-humanizing” or devaluing of certain people groups?

Discussion Questions Set #2

“Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all” (Colossians 3:11).

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:28).

“Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.” (Mark 9:35)

In sermon, we introduced the idea that Paul presents to the Colossian Christians a Christian version of a Roman household code - a set of guidelines meant to govern the affairs of the home. In the Roman world, the household codes followed the teaching of Aristotle, who instructed men to rule over their wives and children, particularly noting that the inequality of the sexes is permanent. The man ought to be the *pater familias*, governing the home with absolute, unwavering dominance. The Roman world was preoccupied with the place of power in society and relationships were entirely one-sided in favour of the one possessing power. The Christian approach was to be very different.

1. Considering the verses above, how ought the Christian view power in society? In the household? In the church?
2. Rather than focusing on power in relationships (a key preoccupation in patriarchy and modern feminism), where ought the focus be placed within Christian relationships?
3. How ought we as followers of Jesus engage in discussions around these concepts in our world? How does our faith inform such discussions?



Discussion Questions Set #3

Paul presents the following relationships in pairs with the dual instructions forming one inseparable thought. We ought to be careful to pay close attention to each reality communicated and understand that they are mutually dependent upon each other.

1. Discuss your thoughts on the following pairings:

Relational Pairings

1. Husband – Wife
2. Parent – Child
3. Master – Slave

Key Action Word

1. Love – Submit
 2. Do not embitter – Obey
 3. Provide what is fair – Obey and work hard
-
2. How might making Christ of central importance in one's life assist them in forming relationships that fit well into the forming community of Jesus? How does putting Jesus in His proper place of centrality help us in forming our other relationships?