

Main Points

1. **Christ-Centered Relationships Reflect God's Design**

Each role within the family—wives, husbands, children, and bondservants—is designed to reflect submission and love modeled after Christ and his relationship to the church.

2. **Authority and Submission Are Bound by Obedience to God**

Earthly authority is never absolute. Wives, children, and bondservants are called to obey and submit, but only in accordance with the amount of authority those in leadership positions have. No man's authority can ever supersede God's.

3. **Love and Obedience Flow from Reverence for Christ**

Whether leading or serving, every believer's posture should be one of humility and sincerity—doing all things “in the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Colossians 3:17)

Discussion Questions

1. Go back to 3:17 and ask how does this verse shape the way we view the commands for wives, husbands, children, and bondservants in 3:18–4:1?
2. What does it practically look like for a husband to love his wife as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25)?
3. In verse 20 why do you think Paul connects obedience to parents with pleasing God? How might this apply to our broader obedience to God-given authority?
4. In verse 22 what does “sincerity of heart” mean in this context? How can we apply this attitude in school, work, or ministry?
5. How do verses 23 and 24 change your perspective on everyday responsibilities or relationships?
6. How should Christians use authority? How can this principle apply to leadership today?

The following might also be helpful for some of the class discussion

Biblical leadership working definition

A biblical leader is a person who loves Christ (Matt 10:37–39), has surrendered to His lordship (Phil 2:9-11), and seeks to reproduce that same devotion in the lives of others (Matt 28:16-20). This person has an active relationship with God through Scripture (Col 3:16), prayer (Eph 6:18), and active participation in the Church universal (Rom 12:4-5). Through these means, they seek to discern and carry out God’s will as they serve and influence those around them.

Assessment Questions

The following is a list of questions designed to help assess whether someone is striving to be a biblical leader and are not exhaustive. Answering “yes” to all of them does not necessarily determine the quality of one’s leadership, but it does indicate that the person is making a consistent and intentional effort to grow into a godly, biblical leader.

- Is this person actively pursuing spiritual growth through daily Scripture reading and prayer?
- Do they seek God’s guidance in major life decisions and choose what will most glorify Him, even when it’s difficult?
- Are they eager to serve others—quick to notice needs and faithful to follow through in meeting them?
- Do they avoid seeking human recognition, serving quietly so that their good works are often discovered only after the fact?
- Have they stood firm in their faith when it has come into conflict with the world’s values or pressures?
- Is their public life consistent with their private life, both reflecting the character of Christ?
- Do they place their love and devotion to Christ above all else, even when it may cost them in personal or romantic relationships?