

# Colossians 3:20-4:1

## A New Framework for Living

Image Church // Colossians #9

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### Introduction

Well good morning Image family, I hope you're doing well! If you have your bibles go ahead and turn to **Colossians 3**...

Paul's talked a lot about the **new identity** that we have received in Christ, and then he's fleshed out what it looks like to live in light of the new identity that you have received...

**That our identity in Jesus impacts our activity...**

- There are two ways this plays out... There's a **putting off, or putting to death** our old identity... *Who we used to be...*
- And there's **putting on, or walking in** our new identity that Christ has given us in Him!

And really what he does in that is he starts on a personal level and then moves to the implications on a corporate level within the church...

And then he begins to expand from there to the home. We talked about marriage last week and this week he's going to move to kids, parenting, work, and everything else in life...

And what Paul's doing is showing us how our **identity in Christ reshapes our lives wholistically, transforming us from the inside out...**

See, when you become a Christian, you're not just saved from something, sin, you're saved to someone, Jesus...

When you place your trust in the finished work of Jesus, Paul says in **Colossians 3:3** that the old you died, and you're now hidden with Christ in God... Christ is now your life...

And this new identity impacts how you live, **you have a different framework** for life, you're under the Lordship of Christ, and living out what you have experienced in Christ...

This is what Paul's unpacking, and ultimately, **what he's holding up is a new humanity/a new community that operates under the centrality of Jesus, and in turn puts Christ on display** in the midst of a conflicting culture...

- This who the church is called to be... The Church is more than a Sunday thing, it's an everyday thing...

So, let's jump back in...

### Colossians 3:20-4:1

**Paul says: 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.**

*And every parent said AMEN!* ... Alright I want to talk about this a little bit...

**First of all to the children**, meaning you're living under your parents roof and on your parents dime... That call here is clear you need to obey your parents in everything... Unless it's harmful to you or others.

But I think there's more that we need to see here... We need to take this in light of the whole counsel of Scripture... So let me flesh this out...

It pleases the Lord when a child obeys their parents... But it's **why** it pleases the Lord that I believe is so important... I believe that the reason it pleases the Lord for children to obey their parents is because it adheres to, the structure that God's set up for the home between children and parents...

Because it's through this God instituted structure that God shows kids who He is, who they are, and how much they need Him, and what it means to submit to Him!

\*Parents listen to me, this call to the children here starts with you...  
Your kids can't obey if you don't teach them what **obedience** is and isn't...

The foundation of your call as a parent is to teach your kids about **obedience...**

- God has placed you over your children- this is His structure- for the purpose of showing them more of who He is!
- Your kids are born with an understanding of right and wrong **Romans 1**, but your job is to cultivate that and flesh that out helping them understand **who** that's linked to and what it all means...

**Your kids can't understand the gospel if they don't have a foundation for obedience...**

**BTY:** This is why **discipline** is so important!

- Discipline is more than consequences, it involves consequences, but it's not limited to that, it is also **instruction...**

**With God we see discipline as an consequences and instruction: see Heb. 12:3-10... Easy part is the action, the work is the instruction...**

A large part of discipline is showing your children **direction- the right way**, give **correction- where they went wrong**, and when it makes sense with the situation, you address their **protection how it keeps them safe...**<sup>1</sup>

**Note:** How you punish your kids is up to you...And each kid is also different...

The bigger part is making sure that you're using it for the right purpose which is to instruct them...

- The goal is not behavior modification and control, but **a shaping of the heart...**

Here's how that can happen by cultivating an understanding of obedience:

- Your children can learn about authority and submission...
  - This gives a framework for submission to God...
- Your children see that there's consequences for their actions...
- Your children can learn about grace and mercy...
- Your children can learn about love...
- Your children will see the reality of their own heart...
- Ultimately in this, they will see their need for Jesus...

**Example:** Adalyn's framework for the gospel has come through the understanding of obedience...

**This is hard and messy and needs to be grace filled...**

**Elyse Fitzpatrick Give them Grace:** She says what Christian books on parenting are trying to do... give you a formula, and tell you that if you follow it, it will guarantee success in parenting...

- But she points out that God was a perfect father and 1/3 of angels and the two humans he created rebelled...
- She's like, "So, you think you'll be able to out-technique God?"
- She says the really dangerous problem with thinking there is a foolproof way of parenting is it keeps us from the one thing we most need; that is, to cast ourselves down at the feet of Jesus, looking to him for his mercy in our kids' lives. To do what we can't do...

**One last thing here in all this when it comes to parenting:** This points to why it's important that we step up in the church and become spiritual mothers and fathers to kids without parents...

- This is one of the reasons why we care about adoption and foster care...

<sup>1</sup> Clay and Sally Clarckson, *The life giving Parent*.

**Then Paul says this in verse 21:**

**21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won't become discouraged.**

**Note:** Almost always the parenting instruction in the bible is given to the men... Ironically, men are typically most absent from this space...

- Men, part of your role as the spiritual leader of your home is being present and leading the charge in parenting!

Paul says don't **exasperate** your children... Don't provoke or embitter, don't aggravate, irritate or frustrate them... Don't make them resentful...

Now, even though this is addressed to the fathers it's appropriate here to apply this to mothers as well given the nature of the content...

**3 ways this can play out:**

**1. Putting your kids in a no win situation...**

- Example: getting frustrated with your kid about their room and getting on to them about something in the kitchen...
  - When you do this esp. Perpetually you're putting them in a no-win situation causing them to get irritated...

**2. When you make them your idol or your identity...**

- Happens through either using your kids as a platform to make you look better...
  - You hold them in a place that they were not made for...
  - You make perfection the standard for your appearance...
  - The better and more accomplished your kid is the more it fuels your self-worth...
- Another way you make them your idol/ identity is when you try to "**re-live**" your youth through them...

When you do either of these two things you put unfair, unrealistic expectations over them... or manipulate them...

Those are things that will push your kids away because they will never feel good enough or they feel like that

**3. Treating your kids as Christians when they're not...**

Don't be surprised when your kid doesn't act like a christian when they're not a christian...

A lot of Christian moms and dads get so frustrated when their kids don't naturally want to do certain *Christian things* and so it leads to frustration that comes out in the wrong ways that actually discourages your children rather than encourages them...

- Too hard on them, force conformity, hold up tradition...
- If your kid doesn't want to pray, don't force them to- you pray over them and you can teach them to respect that time but not force them into something like that...

Last part of this, Don't be harsh or short tempered with your kids...

**Do discipline them** but make sure that you don't do it in anger or aggression...

**Love without discipline isn't love... and discipline without love isn't true discipline...**

**At the end of the day** Your kids are not a means to an end, they're not an accessory... They're a gift that's been given to you to train up, to teach the gospel to and then one day send them out!

**Paul continues in Verse 22...**

**22 Slaves, obey your human masters in everything.**

Ok, let's talk about this... Part of teaching through the bible is that we deal with things like this, not overlook them... And part of being a multi-ethnic church is that things like this hit different...

Verses like this have been misused and manipulated for promoting slavery in the past... Today verses like this are held up to saying that

Paul was sanctioning the **transatlantic slave trade**, therefore Christianity is bust...

Others wrestle with verses like this and say that the bible doesn't address slavery or it promotes it... So we need to deal with this..

What I'm about to share is from my brother **Pastor Jerome Gay**<sup>2</sup> so I want to give credit to him as he helps speak to what's going on here...

It's important that we understand that there's a difference in **biblical slavery** and **cultural slavery** as we know it today in light of the horrific oppression that took place in our country and all over the world through the **transatlantic slave trade**...

It's also important to understand that the bible speaks **against** oppression and slavery, it doesn't promote the kidnapping of people based on a specific race which is what the transatlantic slave trade was built on...

Was there abusive slavery during this time, yes, but this is **not** what Paul was supporting or referring to... I'll let the bible commentate on itself...

**Ex. 21:16** Whoever kidnaps a person must be put to death, whether he sells him or the person is found in his possession.

- **Lev. 25:10:** You are to consecrate the fiftieth year and proclaim freedom in the land for all its inhabitants. It will be your Jubilee, when each of you is to return to his property and each of you to his clan.
  - Israeli slaves freed after 6 years... All slaves freed during the year of jubilee...
- **1 Tim. 1:9-10** We know that the law is not meant for a righteous person, but for the lawless and rebellious, for the ungodly and sinful, for the unholy and irreverent, for those who kill their fathers and mothers, for murderers, **10** for the sexually immoral and males who have sex with males, for slave

traders, liars, perjurers, and for whatever else is contrary to the sound teaching

In addition to that, Paul would write the book of **Philemon- who by the way lives in Colossae** where he petitions for the freedom of a slave named **Onesimus and to welcome him as a brother...** Who **BTW** comes with Tychicus to deliver this letter...

So to say that bible condones, supports, or doesn't speak against abusive slavery is **ignorant** and **heretical**...

The context here is this: Paul is writing this in a **1st century context**... This is long before the transatlantic slave trade...

Paul was not writing to a society with race based slavery... **This was not about ethnicity but about economics**...

- People would sign up for this...
- Indentured servitude...
- It was an opportunity for some folks...

This word slave in the Greek is translated as servant or slave...

- It's a word that describes position, not value...
- Paul's dealing with authority here, not value...

And keep in mind Paul's also going to address **masters** as well telling them to treat their slaves with **justice and fairness [equally]**... The point is that Jesus is the ultimate authority that shapes relationships...

**Pastor Jerome says that Paul is doing 4 things here:**

1. He's telling people how to navigate a culture that approves slavery as a means of employment or restitution, he's not condoning abusive slavery in the roman sense or general sense.
2. He's reminding people of their freedom in Christ while not ignoring their natural circumstances.

<sup>2</sup> This section is from Pastor Jerome Gay, *Same Job, New Master*.

3. He's challenging slave owners and masters to live differently, and to treat their slaves as image bearers.
4. He's destroying abusive slavery by emphasizing the life changing nature of the gospel.

Ok, now we can read and apply this: The way that we need to see this, in light of the context then, and our context now is employee and employer... So let's look at it through that lens...

**22** Slaves, obey your human masters in everything. Don't work only while being watched, as people-pleasers, but work wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord.

**23** Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people, **24** knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ. **25** For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong he has done, and there is no favoritism.

**4:1** Masters, deal with your slaves justly and fairly, since you know that you too have a Master in heaven.

There's a story of a man who sees 3 workers hewing stone.

- He asks the first one, 'What are you doing?' He replies, 'I'm hewing stone...'
- He then asks the second man, 'What are you doing?' The second, 'I'm making \$100/week.'
- To the third man he asks, 'What are you doing?' The third replies, 'I'm building a cathedral.'

You have to look beyond what you're doing to who you're doing it for!

Here's what I want you to see, *your occupation is part of your sanctification.*<sup>3</sup>

**1. You work for an audience of one** (v.23 b)

**Work is an act of worship...** (includes school here students!)

<sup>3</sup> Quote from Pastor Jerome Gay, *Same Job, New Master*.

We miss this far too often...

***When you value the approval of your boss or coworkers over God's then you are worshiping them and not God...***

- If they are able to control your emotions or rob your joy then you are working for them and not God...

This audience of one should be freeing for us...

- We're not working for the approval of others...
- Stay at home moms you're not working for the approval of moms that work...
- Moms that work you're not working for the approval of moms that stay at home...
- You're not working for the approval of your boss or coworkers...

***You don't work for acceptance, you work from acceptance!***

This also means that your job doesn't define you!

- When you fail on the job it doesn't define you!

Walking in the identity that Christ has given you changes your perspective...

**2. Your reward isn't found in your job it's found in Christ** (v. 24)

**Don't idolize your job...**

Stop thinking that it's your everything... Stop being slave to it...

Your job will come and go... **Hold onto eternal security and not job security...**

***Make an appeal for Matthew 6-*** God is the one who will meet your needs... Do you really trust that??

**3. Your job is a tool to use for God's glory** (v. 24 b)

**Verse 24:** You serve the Lord Christ.

**How does this look?**

**a. Your character should speak louder than your competency**

- We are called to be holy- means set apart- means Christian work differently...

***What matters more is not how fast you climb the corporate ladder but how well you represent Jesus!***

When we are out for ourselves, we value competency above all when we are out for Jesus, we value our character...

When you value character questions will come...

- Unpack why you value character... Point to your confidence and your identity...

**b. Work is not simply a means to get nice things, it's a means to serve others**

**Here is a real sweet spot, when we begin to see this is changes so much about how we view work...**

Income to give and bless others...

Leverage your job to create space for those who do not have access...

**c. Work is your mission field**

One of the ways that you serve the Lord **2 Cor. 5:20**... You are an ambassador of Christ!

Big missional push here...

- Stay at home moms
- College students
- Professional

**Summary: 23** Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people

This is Paul's heart... This is marriage, this is children obeying their parents, this is parenting, this is work, this is school highschool and college students, this is sports, this is Taking care of kids/housework...

***This is anything that you do...***

Appeal... This is a transformational thing that the gospel does in us, but it works through us in an onlooking world...

Do people look at the way you go about life and see something different?

- Christians we have a different drive... it's something that enables us to make it through failures and set backs... It's something that we hope in beyond this life...

**Conclusion [VAMP]**

Change in the way you view or navigate everyday life and relationships is **ultimately rooted in your application of the gospel...**

And your ability to ***maintain*** when these relationships are bad is by ***believing the gospel...***

In this section of Colossians that we looked at today **reference** is made to **"the Lord" 7 times in 9 verses...**

**CS Lewis says:** *When you keep first things first everything else follows, but when you make second things first you lose everything that follows.*

**This has to be the essence of our lives so that we can together thrive as a new community that operates under the centrality of Jesus, and in turn puts Christ on display** in the midst of a conflicting culture...

- This who the church is called to be... The Church is more than a Sunday thing, it's an everyday thing...