

# Colossians 3:18-4:1

## *The Day-to-Day*

Image Church // Changes Week 3

### Introduction

Well, good morning Image Family, and friends that are joining in this morning!

I miss you guys, and I miss gathering together, I want you to know that we're in this together and we're here for you any way that we can be- make sure to check out our website: [imageatl.com](http://imageatl.com) for how you can receive care, for how you can serve and for resources for you and your family during this time...

- **Follow us on social media**- we're posting resources, giving pro-tips, hosting forums and a lot of other things...
  - Like, share, comment, **post a picture/video now...** It's important that we stay connected during this time...
- Now's also a great time, and the easiest time to jump into one of our **Community Groups** they've all gone digital... You can do that through our website... [imageatl.com/community](http://imageatl.com/community)

Alright, well, we're in **week 3** of our series called **Changes...** If you have your Bibles go ahead and turn to the book of **Colossians chapter 3...**

This morning we're going to be looking at changes in the day-to-day... We've talked about change in various ways, but today we want to talk about how we make changes in the day to day life within our home-life and work-life...

So, we're going to be looking at **5 roles** that take place **in 2 different environments...**

And my goal this morning isn't to give you an exhaustive in-depth breakdown of each of these roles, but to give you a **frame work** to think through each of these in everyday life...

I think that's what Paul's goal was when he wrote this section on relationships here in his letter to the church in Colossae...

See, up to this point in his letter, he's talked about who Christ is and what he's done, and now in light of that he's holding up a framework for how this plays out in the day to day...

*Let's jump in...*

### Colossians 3:18 - 4:1

**18** Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. **19** Husbands, love your wives and don't be bitter toward them. **20** Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. **21** Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won't become discouraged. **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.

Alright, so **5 different roles and relationships, within 2 different environments**, inside the home and outside the home... Let's take a look at how Paul instructs us to navigate each of them in light of the gospel...

*The first environment is Paul spends time in is relationships:*

#### **Environment 1: Within the home**

*And within the home he starts with:*

#### **A. Wives and Husbands (v. 18-19)**

Let me start with verse 18 and then work from there... **18** Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Now **verse 18** might be one of the most unpopular verses in the Bible... It's one of the first places people go to ***hate on*** the Bible...

The sad thing is, there have been times when this verse has been misrepresented and taken out of context and used as a means to subjugate women... And that's no ok, and it's not how this passage was intended...

***So, let's look at how this passage is intended...***

- The first thing we need to see is this... who's this verse written to?!? **WIVES... let's say it together, who was this verse written to?!? WIVES...**

So, husbands, this verse isn't for you... and it wasn't written for you to use to hold up over your wife's head... If that were the purpose then **you** would have been addressed in it, **but you're not, so get up out your wife's verse!!! You got your verse coming in a minute...**

Ok, so **wives**, let's talk about ***submission***...

- And let me start with this to make sure we're clear... This passage ***in no way*** teaches the ***universal submission*** of women to men in society, or in the work place... This is ***specifically*** for a marriage relationship...

God designed marriage as a relationship that's different than any other relationship on earth... And within that specific relationship God's set it up in a way where the man and the woman function differently within this specific relationship...

The best way I can describe **submission** is by comparing it to a **dance**:

- **Full disclosure, I was in the beach music Shag Club at UNC...**

And here's the thing, in a dance, you have 2 people facing one another teamed up together with the same goal, but they can't do the exact same movement at the same time... **Then it's no longer a dance, it's hungry hippo with your feet...**

See, for the dance to work, the woman has to be willing to ***submit*** to the ***leadership of the man***... But here's the thing, in a dance- *there's never a point* where the woman is belittled, seen as less than, or demanded to move in a certain way or do a certain thing...

Wives, **submission** for you ***IS NOT***, being silent, it isn't blind, it doesn't mean you're dominated, or that you don't have a voice, or that your expected to give unconditional obedience, or that your husband has leverage over you...

Remember you are not ***inferior*** to him, you're ***not less than him***, you are ***equal*** to him in every way, but you are called within your equality to allow your husband to lead...

*Let me summarize it like this: **Submission**, like in a dance, is a trust that you give freely to your husband when it comes to leading the family ***spiritually*** (*Gen. 2, Eph. 5*), which has implications that play out ***directionally*** in major decisions...*

- You're in it together, you talk through things together, you disagree together, but in the end, you ***choose*** to ***give*** your husband the ***reigns*** to lead spiritually and allow him to lead through major decisions based on what is best for the family ***spiritually***...

Let me give you an example of how this can fit together...

- **Tim Keller** explains it personally like this: They were praying about going to NYC and He felt ***yes***; she felt ***no***.
- At then end of the day, they had to make a decision...
- **Tim** conceded: "*OK, if you don't want to go, we won't go.*"
- **Kathy**: *No, you are letting me make the decision. You have to make it. Submission means man has to make the decision in the best interest of the family.*

In times like that, the answer can't just be: "*Work it out*" that's not helpful or practical...<sup>1</sup>

- You can't just keep submitting back and forth- someone has to lead- and God's called the man to ***function*** in that capacity...

<sup>1</sup> I owe insight to JD Greear, Sermon. God's purpose and plan for gender. *First Love*. Ephesians 5:21.

**And let me stop right here for a second**, and say **men**, some of yall need to get it in gear...

- You can't lead your wife spiritually in a direction that you're not going.
- And you can't lead through decisions in a way that's biblically in the best interest of your family if you're not dedicated to spiritual growth...

And **wives**, I need you to hear me on this, this is so important to understand... **Don't confuse God's instruction for how you're to function with your worth...**<sup>2</sup>

- Just because your function may be different from that of your husband, **does not mean** that your **value** or **worth** is different...
- It's not a breach on your equality- **function** and **equality** are not the same... You can be equal in every way but function differently...

Let me show you what I mean with the **best** example there is...

- **Jesus...** Everything it means to be God, Jesus was... Paul makes that clear in **Colossians 1**... And yet, Jesus voluntarily submitted Himself to the Father...
- Did that diminish Him? Did it make Him inferior? Did that dilute His power, or make Him any less God? **Absolutely not!!**

One pastor said: **"If it was not below Jesus to voluntarily submit to another to whom he was equal, it's not below you, either."**<sup>3</sup>

To view **submission** as an attack on your value, worth, or equality, is to disregard the **person** and **work** of Jesus...

What you have to understand wives, is that **your submission**, like Christ, **is a gift**, **Submission isn't a husband's demand, it's freely given by the wife as a response to the gospel.**

<sup>2</sup> Ed Gravely. Lesson 6.

<sup>3</sup> JD Greear. Sermon, *One Simple Question*, Eph. 5:21. First Love. April 14, 2013.

Note: Dance analogy idea is credited to JD Greear, explanation and wording is mine.

Which means there's going to be times when it's undeserved, and sometimes when it's sacrificial- just like what Christ did for you was undeserved and sacrificial...

See, as you **submit**, you have to do it with the cross in view, **not as something that makes you less than your husband, but as something that makes you more like Christ!**

Wives last thing before **I jump on... I mean jump to** the men... **If your husband puts into practice what I am about to walk through for him, then you should be comfortable and confident in submitting to his leadership...**

So husband you have been charged to lead, but it's **how** the you are charged to lead that so important... So, husbands you need to listen up... This may not be what you were expecting...

Here we go **verse 19**... Paul says **Husbands, love your wives** ... Paul doesn't define what that love looks like here, but he does in **Ephesians 5:25**...

- **Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself for her...**

Paul characterizes the leadership of the husband by love, and the model he uses is Jesus... In the same way that Jesus gave up his life for the church, you are to love your wife by giving your life up for her...

So, husbands, **your leadership should be characterized by love for you wife and not positional authority**...

- Leadership and love can't be separated when it comes to your function... **Marriage isn't a dictatorship, it's a gospel centered relationship**...

**So how does love characterize the leadership of the husband?**

Well, first, let me say this, the bible shows us that love isn't a feeling, it's not an emotion... It's an **action**... One that Jesus model perfectly for us...

- **Philippians 2:7-8** says: [Jesus] he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, **8** he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death—even to death on a cross.

Jesus emptied Himself, took on the form of a servant- serving you by being perfectly obedient in your place, that would lead to His death in your place...

So, **love-driven leadership** husbands, happens by **actively applying** the work of Jesus to your wife, loving here in the same way Christ loved you, and allowing that love of Christ to Characterize your leadership...

**Which means that the way that you lead her is by laying your life down for her...**

- Which means that you're always leading in view of the cross and not out of position, or dominance... But instead grace and mercy.

**C.S. Lewis:** *God gives man a crown to wear in marriage, but it is primarily made of paper (it's just a role), and [it's a crown of] thorns [which means it's a call to sacrifice].*

Husbands, you don't sit *on some throne* and just make decision, **you respond to the One who's on the throne...**

Which means the first and best way you lead, is through **sacrifice** and **service**... *like Jesus*...

- **Leadership means you go first**, you choose serve first, you sacrifice first, you choose to give up your preference first, you lead the way in choosing to prioritize Jesus first even at the expense of other things...

**Listen husbands**, some of you need to start caring for the spiritual state and direction of your family. You need and you need to be

intentional with the people God has put right in front of you as your first opportunity to make disciples...

**Spiritual headship isn't a license to do what you want to do, it's an opportunity to display the gospel.**

**Let me try and make this practical by giving you several questions to consider when it comes to love-driven leadership as the husband:**

**1. How am I leading my wife spiritually?**

**2. How can I lead like Jesus in the way that I serve my wife?**

**3. What can I sacrifice in order to model the gospel to my wife?**

**4. In the decisions that we come across as a family, how can I lead through them in a way that brings God most glory?**

**And here's one of the things that I would challenge you to do...**

And this is something that **Ashley and I** have done, and continue to do... And that's sitting down and actually talking through these things together...

- Not just as it relates to these questions for the husband, but when it comes to what submission looks like for the wife as well...

One of the things that we prioritize in our marriage is communication...

- Communication is huge to being able to live these things out... It doesn't mean that we live this out perfectly but we communicate our way through them...

**Example:** So many times, when we counsel couples the biggest disconnect is a lack of communication...

*Here's the thing, at the end of the day this is what you have to understand, and let me **summarize the application like this...***

- Marriage is a ‘**gospel re-enactment.**’ And outside of the cross itself, is the greatest picture of the gospel that has been given to us...

\*\*It’s a relationship where the **wife** is always looking for ways to apply submission to her husband in response to the gospel, and the **husband** is always looking for ways that he can lay his life down for wife in response to the gospel... \*\*

See, both roles in a marriage take sacrifice, and it’s through the sacrifice of both the husband and the wife that the gospel is put on display...

For some of you here’s what’s going to be the biggest challenge... You want to see a change in your marriage, you’re going to have to **stop approaching your marriage based on what you can get out of it and start looking for what you can give toward it...**

*Ok, let’s look at the other relationships within the home that Paul address:*

### **B. Children (v.20)**

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

Children, if you are under the care and protection of your parents you are also under the authority of you parents and you are to do what they say... **So long as it doesn’t break the law or involve any kind of abuse.**

You honor the Lord by obeying your parents even when it is hard or may seem unfair- because that’s life, and leaning to submit to their authority now will be helpful in the future when you have another authority to submit to.

*Now, parents, you have a big responsibility as well, Paul shifts to you...*

### **C. Parents (v. 21)**

**21 Fathers, [this word can mean parents] do not exasperate your children, so that they won’t become discouraged.**

**Exasperate** or **provoke** means: to **irritate** or **frustrate**, to stir up by challenging in a negative way, one that leads to resentment you... And in the end, it makes your kids loose heart and become discouraged...

You want to know one of the biggest ways this happens? ***When our kids become our idols... 2 big ways this plays out:***

**1. You kid becomes and accessory-** meaning your kid is an accessory that fuels your identity... The better and more accomplished your kid is the more it fuels your self-worth... The opposite is also true, when your kid miss-behaves, fails, or is behind, you feel less-than and defeated- your rise and fall is dependent on your kids...

**2. You view your kid as the truer and better you-** You expect your kid to accomplish everything that you didn’t – and you use their successes to fuel the idol of approval that you have...

***Here’s the result when you idolize your kids:*** you put unfair, unrealistic expectations over them, you become too hard on them, they never feel good enough because they can’t live up to your expectations, or keep up with your demands...

And your kids become **exasperated**- they become **discouraged**...

Only Christ can give you the identity that you long for and need, he’s the only one who can sustain you...

Your role is to reflect your identity that found in Christ to your kids in the way that you love and lead them... Showing and pointing them to the gospel...

Your kids are not a means to an end, they're not an accessory **to fuel your identity**, they're not the truer and better you to **fuel your need for approval**...

- 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!

We want to partner with you in that which is why we have so many resources on our website and why we work so hard in Image Kids to partner with you in *raising up the next generation for Christ!*

Ok let's wrap up with the 2<sup>nd</sup> environment and the last 2 relationships:

### **Environment 2: Outside of the home**

Real quickly, on this section, Paul uses the wording **slaves** and **masters**...

**I want to make clear: Paul's not condoning slavery here...** To do that would be to go against everything that Paul teaches in the rest of the NT...

- In fact, **Paul's teaching of the freedom in Christ and the equality of all peoples are ultimately what un-does all the bonds of slavery.**<sup>4</sup>

There were different forms of slavery then as a part of their social system- indentured servants, criminals, etc...

- Paul's actually telling the masters here to treat the **slaves** with **justice** and **fairness**, which is often translated as **equality**...

So, we're going to hold up these two relationships under the title: **employee** and **employer**...

### **A. Employee**

**Paul says in verse 22: 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.

**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 your tools, to look beyond your paycheck your boss, to the fact that everything you do is for the glory of God...*

- **You don't like your boss-** you don't ultimately work for him or her
  - o You get a chance to show them the gospel...
  - o You get the chance to become more like Christ
- **You don't like your co-worker-** they are not who you're working for...
  - o You get a chance to show them the gospel...
- **Work isn't going well -** your job doesn't define you, Jesus does- He's where your ultimate inheritance comes from Jesus- not your 401k...

Let the gospel dictate how you view and navigate your job...

### **B. Employer**

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

I know it may be easy to forget this but **you're not the ultimate master**, Jesus is, you are not the ruler, Jesus is, so that means that the way you lead in the work world is submitted under Jesus...

Listen, **if leadership is defined as influence, and influence is gained through trust**, then you have to gain the **trust** of your employees by showing that you care for them and you are for them.

<sup>4</sup> JD Greear. Reborn Identity. *Discovering your new life part 3, a new mission.* Message #6

- This will naturally happen when you lead out of the overflow of the gospel... (doesn't mean you're soft or weak)

And when you do that, you will gain the influence that you need to be view as the leader and people will want to follow you not because they have to but because they want to...

- And get this, when that happens, you will find yourself in an incredible place to be able to have spiritual conversations!

## Conclusion

Change in the way you view or navigate these everyday 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.*

Appeal to:

- **Christian**
- **non-Christian...**

## Pray

5

### Outtakes:

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...

Listen, have structure in your home, discipline you kids, hold them to high standards, make them strive for excellence, **but do not make them your idol or your identity...**

My dad has always told me: ***Love without discipline isn't love... and discipline without love is anger...***

Listen, growing up my parents were hard on me, and they disciplined me but I always knew what I did and why I was getting disciplined... But let me tell you this, the first time I really began to understand grace and mercy was through discipline... **explain**

And let me just say something real fast to the dad's, some of yall need to step up:

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<sup>5</sup> Regarding footnotes in this sermon, there may have been insights from JD that were referenced that were influenced by Tim Keller but fleshed out in JD's own words with proper credit given.

**Dr. Tony Evans** says: *As goes the man, so goes the family. As goes the family; so goes the church. As goes the church; so goes the community. As goes the community; so goes the nation. So if you want to change the nation; change the community; if you want to change the community change the church; if you want to change the church; change the family; if you want to change the family, change the man.*