

Colossians ALC Winter 2018-2019

Class Nine February 10, 2019 //From the Lord You Will Receive // Colossians 3:18-25

Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men. (3:23)

I. Review (Colossians 1:1-3:17)

(Colossians 1:1-3:18) **Your faith in Christ** enables you to live a new kind of life. This Jesus whom you've come to know is above all things and in Him is all the wisdom you could ask for. You were made complete in Him, and have been raised with Him. So lay aside your old ways and put on the new ways that reflect the new life, and let it show in your relationships.

- A. Walk worthy of the Lord since He is before all things (Col. 1)
- B. Grow in your knowledge of Christ in whom is all wisdom (2:1-12)
- C. You died to your old self and were raised as a new self (2:13-23)
- D. You are hidden with Christ, seated with Him in heaven (3:1-4)
- E. Therefore, lay aside old immoral attitudes and angry behaviors (3:5-11)
- F. As a new creature set apart, put on a new heart with patient behaviors (3:12-17)

II. Targeted Commands Reflecting a Worthy Walk

- A. **Wives** – *Be subject to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord.* (3:18)

This is an extension of all that went before (*We died, we are seated with Christ, we laid aside the old self, etc.*). We know from Genesis 3:16 that it will not be natural for a wife to submit herself to her husband because the fall induced her to control and induced him to “masal” (harshly rule). It will not be natural to respect his position and speak with him from her heart, but without fear (1 Peter 3:6). But doing so is fitting in the Lord because it requires trusting Him (see Eph. 5:21) and because it is following His commands (e.g., Eph. 5:22-24), and since it emulates His example (Phil. 2:3, ff.). Doing this recognizes the issue we ALL (men and women and children and youth) have with submission and with authority.

- B. **Husbands** – *Husbands, love your wives and be not embittered against them.* (3:19)

Like the one above, this is an extension of all that has gone before. Again, if a wife will have an inborn temptation to control her husband and if he will have an inborn temptation to “masal” her (harsh dominion), and if as a sinner he will be tempted to hold onto his life and be innately blind to his own sin (Jer. 17:9), the husband’s natural bent will not be biblical love. Instead, there will be a natural tendency to resent and conflict, and of course, judge. Such things cause people to come short of God’s grace and become bitter (Heb. 12:14-15). God’s command here for husbands who lay aside old patterns in which they formerly walked (3:7) and who put on a different set of attitudes and behaviors of love will love their wives in a similar manner as Christ loved the church (Ephesians 5:25 and 1 Peter 3:7) and will not hold onto anger and judgment against them, which result in bitterness.

C. **Teacher’s Side Note:** *Interesting that if a wife doesn’t take over but subjects herself to her husband, and if a husband loves his wife and does not get bitter with her, you will knock out about 50-75% of all marriage conflict. And if the husband and wife do everything else that is mentioned in vv. 5-17, the other 25-50% will be knocked out.*

D. Children – *Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.* (Colossians 3:20)

Again, since the nature of sin is to trust in one's self (see Proverbs 3:5-6) and to assert one's way (Proverbs 16:25), it is no surprise that children's first impulse will not be obedience any more than a wife's first impulse will be to subject herself and a husband's first impulse will be to love like Christ or to not become bitter against his wife.

Believing children are taught here that God's pleasure with them is increased as they obey their parents – much like it is when they honor them (Eph. 6:2).

The Lord's desire is that children obey their parents in all things. "All things" does not mean sin, of course. A higher law prevails then. But a child who obeys their parents, even when the child thinks the parent is unwise or unloving, is doing so because they trust the Lord even in those situations that are very disappointing.

(PS – This is "children" – tekna. It refers to dependent children who live under their parents' roof and are provided for by them. As a young person moves out on their own, they are always to honor their parents, but I don't see anything that suggests they should obey their parents beyond the childrearing years.)

E. Fathers – *Do not exasperate your children so that they do not lose heart.* (3:21)

In each of these familial relationships, Paul targets his words in the one area that the broad cross-section of people are most likely to err. That is, through the Holy Spirit's inspiration, he is looking for the area that most in that group are most likely to try to make their own way independent of trust in the Lord and sacrificial love towards others.

In the area of fathering in particular, the area we are most likely to err is that of exasperating our kids. Exasperate is to frustrate – it is the opposite of encouraging them. It comes about in a variety of ways.

- Expecting of them things not appropriate for their age;
- Expecting of them a perfection that doesn't reflect their own responses to God;
- Getting angry quickly with them instead of patient and long-suffering;
- Correcting them harshly and resentfully;
- Not extending grace to them;
- Mocking them and saying it is just a joke;
- Saying one thing and doing another;
- Many others.

God's point here is that he wants dads to put on the things Paul already said in vv. 12-16, which include compassion, patience, kindness, humility and long-suffering, sacrificial love, forgiveness. A dad who does not put those things on, or a dad who does not take off the immorality and impurity and anger and malice and deceit of verses 6-9, will exasperate his kids.

All we see here is God reminding dads to do all he has said in chapter 3, but to apply it to his role as a father, and to use this one thing as a test – *Do not exasperate.*

F. Slaves – *Slaves, in all things, obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.* (3:22)

First, we have here an instruction that specifically was directed at *slaves* – most often in these years as indentured servants and not the kind of slaves we were familiar with 160 years ago in the United States. But a direct application of the passage for us is the workplace. The message is to do what we do not for appearances sake, but with the idea of the Lord watching.

Second, Paul enjoins slaves (and the rest of us who serve in the places where we work), to obey their masters in all things. Obviously, slaves in the Roman Empire (and those who have read these instructions for 2000 years), were not in a place where they were treated well. So to call them to obey in everything (obviously not sin) should encourage us that it is unlikely that unless a thing is sin (which we know already we are not to do) in no way are we being asked to do things for which this does not apply.

The third thing we see is that slaves were to see their service as to God, not to their masters. As a result, they saw what they did as responding to their “fear of the Lord.” They were to use their time as they would want it to be accounted before God. They were to speak about their employers in a way that God would be pleased with their speech. Their efforts were not to be efforts that “made them look good temporarily” in the sight of their bosses. Rather, they were serving the Lord Jesus, and wanted their service to honor Him.

Diane’s mother is in a nursing home. In that nursing home, Diane says you can tell so much about a person by the way they render service. They are not doing the work for the money or for the fame or attention by men. She said some of the folks who care for her mother obviously care, treat her like a person, call her by name, ask about her, take time when doing something to help it be more comfortable and safe and to make sure she understands. But Diane said there is one lady who “steps up her pace” when she thinks she is being observed, but when not being observed, drags herself around, is slow, inattentive, and not too responsible. When she is being watched, she knows how to do it properly. When not under the eye, she just marks time. Funny, Diane’s mother’s roommate is 99 years old and calls that lady out on it!

When I worked at a refinery in the summers of my college years doing vacation fill-in work for the regular employees, it was really interesting to watch different people’s work habits.

One man in the 90-100 degree barrel house where we moved 455 pound barrels of oil into trucks to be shipped out, was in his upper 50s, about 5’7 and 145 pounds, and could outwork every one of us summer college guys.

When I would work the 100 pound jack hammer on construction crew, I would work hard, and when the foreman would drive around on his truck to check on us, I would drop the jackhammer and go talk with him. Lots of guys would slack off while no one was there and chastise me for working fast, and then work feverishly when the foreman would come around.

Here Paul is saying, if you are a new creature seated in the heavens with Christ, and you have died to an old life, and now live a new life which is lived to walk worthy of Christ, let all your work be done before an audience of One – Jesus. Fear Him, not man. Let your work show that you are doing whatever you do as unto Him. That shows your faith in action.

III. Reaping What You Sow

(Colossians 3:23-25)

A. *Whatever you do, do heartily as for the Lord, rather than men, knowing from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.*

(3:23-24)

1. Whatever work you, do for the Lord – ***an audience of One***, not for men.
2. What you do for Him will result in the *reward of an inheritance*. This is not understood by 90% of the Body of Christ, yet is a principle throughout the Bible.
3. What we usually refer to as ***Salvation*** – which more aptly is called the gift of justification, from the penalty, power and one day, presence of sin, and is a gift given to all who have put their trust in Christ alone (John 5:24; Romans 4:4-5). That includes complete forgiveness (Col. 2:14), a home in heaven (John 14:1-6) and a relationship with God as His children (John 1:11-13), among many other things (See the Moody Press booklet, *33 Things That Happened at the Moment of Salvation*).

4. But what Paul addresses here in Colossians 3:24 is the “*reward of the inheritance.*” Notice this is a reward, literally a *recompense* (payback; “reward given for effort”). A conditional payment, if you will. See the idea throughout the New Testament:
 - a. Matthew 6:4
 - b. 1 Corinthians 3:10-15
 - c. 2 Corinthians 5:10-11
 - d. Hebrews 11:26
 - e. Revelation 22:12
 5. Have you ever seen *Undercover Boss* on TV? That is what we are talking about.
 6. So many people get confused on the issue of rewards and inheritance, and unfortunately, they get confused in at least two opposite directions.
 - a. Some people think that eternal life requires obedience to something other than faith in Christ. They rightly communicate that God wants obedience out of his children. They wrongly suggest that it is part of securing a relationship with God. This is normally seen when people say, “*I know he has communicated a clear faith in Christ, but in view of the way I’ve seen him treat others, I would say he probably never has believed because a believer would never act that way.*”
 - b. Others think that since eternal life is a gift received by faith, that any idea of an inheritance or reward based on work is ‘anathema’ (cursed) in the sight of God because it suggests that men can please or disappoint God, and because they haven’t read carefully, they do not realize that you can. This is often seen when people say, “*Because Christ has satisfied the Father, nothing you can do can please Him more or less.*” That is not taught in the Bible, and the opposite is.
- B. It is ultimately Christ whom you serve and you will also receive just recompense for what you do wrong (3:24-25)
1. This continues the idea from 3:23-24, where we saw the “heads side” of a proposition by God. Namely, all we do, we ultimately do not for man, but for Christ (see 3:17 once again). There we also saw that we will receive a payback, a recompense, from Christ, for whatever we did for the Lord. Every time we obeyed verse 6 or 7 or 8 or 9 or 10 or 12 or 13 or 14 or 15 or 16, etc. Here we see the “tails side” of that same proposition.
 2. The “tails side” is here in verse 25. *He who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.*
 3. This is the danger of teaching what men think about something God has said, rather than teaching straight through what God says. Some people would take a couple verses out of context in this passage and teach all kinds of things. But as we just listen to what the Holy Spirit inspired the apostle to write, we learn not only about the remarkable idea of being “recompensed” for what we have done for the Lord (*a wife who subjects herself to her husband even when he does not deserve it, a man who loves his wife like Christ even when she doesn’t deserve it, a person who bears patiently with someone, a person who lays aside their immorality that no longer befits the person they have become, a person who puts on kindness and humility*).
 4. What we now have is the flip side of the good news. You receive an inheritance of reward for faithfulness, but also receive “**consequences of the wrong you have done.**” This is not punishment in hell for sin. Hell is out for the believer (Jn. 5:24). The context here is OBVIOUSLY talking about believers. (Raised with Christ, v 1, hidden with Christ, v 3, you laid aside the old self and put on the new, 9-10).

IV. Discussion and Homework

A. Discuss

1. Why do you think the “worthy walk” (introduced in 1:10 and described in 3:5-17) applied uniquely to Wives, Husbands, Children, Dads, Workers (in 3:18-22)?
2. What significance is there to the fact that the Holy Spirit mentions in 3:17, 23 and 24 that whatever we do, we do not for men, but for the Lord?
3. What reason can there be for summing up his commands here with promises of “rewards of the inheritance” for faithfulness and “consequences” for wrong done?

B. Homework

1. Memorize Colossians 3:23
2. Discuss around dinner or lunch the questions we didn't do in class
3. Write for yourself one or two paragraphs of what you think the Lord is teaching you specifically in chapter 3.

GraceNotes - no. 9 by Dr. Charlie Bing

Why Teach About Rewards?

<http://www.gracelife.org/resources/gracenotes/?id=9&lang=>

The word *reward* (*misthos*) comes from the Greek word for pay or wages. While salvation is absolutely free, rewards are clearly earned. Reward passages are found throughout the Old and New Testaments. Could something so prominent be illegitimate? Here are ten reasons why Christians should be taught about rewards:

To emphasize our eternal significance. As God's children, we enjoy a relationship with Him now and in eternity. The quality of that relationship can be enhanced forever as a reward for our present and temporary lives. Rewards remind us that who we are outlasts this life. [Rom. 8:17](#); [Heb. 11:26](#)

To teach our responsibility in this life. That God rewards us for present choices makes us accountable for those choices. Worthy actions, thoughts, and words will bear the fruit of reward in eternity. Conversely, that which is unworthy will cause the loss of reward and shame. [Rom. 14:10-12](#); [1 John 2:28](#)

To enhance our present life. Rewards are not only eternal; some begin in this life. They can greatly increase the enjoyment of our present experience. [Matt. 16:25](#); [Mark 10:29-31](#)

To appreciate God's pleasure in giving rewards. God initiates rewards because He is pleased to do so. And who are we to deny God pleasure? He delights to bless His children with good things. It is a common and commendable human urge to express appreciation for or reward good behavior in our own children. Would we expect less from our heavenly Father? [Matt. 6:6, 18](#); [25:21](#)

To give the proper framework for interpreting the Bible. Many rewards passages are incorrectly interpreted as salvation passages. This hopelessly confuses God's free grace in salvation with God's earned rewards in the Christian's life. The result is a theology that undermines faith alone in Christ alone and the Christian's assurance. For example, [1 Corinthians 9:24-27](#) is a rewards passage that some wrongly interpret as a salvation passage. That would mean the apostle Paul lacked assurance, since he based it on his performance. [Matt. 10:32-33](#); [Rev. 2-3](#)

To motivate us to do the good works which God purposes for us. [Ephesians 2:10](#) says God created us in Jesus Christ to do good works. While not the only motivation, rewards are one way God encourages us to do what He wants. [1 Tim. 6:17-19](#); [2 John 2:8](#)

To balance our concept of God's justice. God punishes unbelievers according to the degree of their evil deeds. It makes sense that He would also reward believers according to the goodness of their deeds. If proportionate retribution curbs wickedness, then proportionate rewards cultivate righteousness. [2 Cor. 5:10](#); [Rev. 20:12](#); [22:12](#)

To prepare us for eternal service. Since some rewards imply an increased capacity to serve God and others, and if that capacity is carried into eternity, then they will help us better serve Him there. The Bible promises that we will reign with Jesus Christ. The extent of our rule is rewarded according to our faithfulness in this life. Stewardship is constantly connected with rewards for the faithful discharge of responsibilities. [Matt. 24:45-51](#); [25:14-30](#); [Luke 19:11-27](#); [2 Tim. 2:12](#)

To legitimately motivate us to godly living. When rewards passages are wrongly interpreted as salvation passages, the unavoidable motivation for good works is to validate one's salvation and escape hell. Fear can easily become the motive for good works. But fear of hell can never motivate the believer, who is eternally secure. It should only motivate the unbeliever. The believer can only fear loss of rewards. But even that fear is only one of many motives for godly living. Deeds done from unworthy motives will be revealed for what they are and will not be rewarded. [1 Cor. 3:12-15](#); [13:1-3](#)

To bring greater glory to God. If rewards increase our participation in God's glory, or give us a greater capacity to experience God's glory, then our rewards also enable us to give Him more glory. In [Revelation 4:10](#) the 24 elders cast their crowns before Christ's throne. Whoever these elders represent, the crowns that they wear certainly symbolize reward, honor, and glory given them for some reason. They are then able to use that honor to glorify God by offering Him their crowns. In other words, they honor God more by having crowns than if they didn't. The rewards we receive will better enable us to bring Him more glory. [Eph. 1:11-12](#); [1 Pet. 5:4](#)

Conclusion

Initial salvation by the absolutely free grace of God does not conflict with the subsequent merit of rewards in the Christian life. Rewards are not the only, or necessarily the best, motivation for godly living. Love, gratitude, and duty are some of the highest motivations for serving God in this life. But there is nothing wrong with the encouragement and consolation that rewards bring. Since rewards are decreed and designed by God, they shouldn't be considered inferior or scorned in contempt. Every Christian should be taught about rewards.

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