

Reflecting on Colossians 3:22-4:1

August 20, 2023

Note: *Much of the following content comes from the MacArthur Bible Studies book, "Colossians & Philemon: Completion and Reconciliation in Christ" (Thomas Nelson, 2007). Please let Pastor Jeremy know if you would like to purchase a copy of this book.*

INTRO

In addition to the relationships between spouses and between parents and children, ancient households across the Roman Empire also featured relationships between masters and slaves.

It should be noted upfront that the Word of God opposes slavery (e.g., Exodus 21:16). With that in mind, New Testament literature, including our passage for this week, acknowledges slavery as a social reality and seeks to instruct those within that system to behave in a godly manner.

In **Colossians 3:22-4:1**, Paul instructs his brothers and sisters in Christ to live out the Good News even in evil social systems. As modern-day believers, we can apply this teaching to a variety of contexts, including the workplace. Several of our discussion questions are applied in this way.

DISCUSS

- 1) **Read Colossians 3:22.** What *actions* and *attitudes* does Paul command of bondservants in this verse?

- 2) **Read Colossians 3:23-24 and Ephesians 6:5-8.** In addition to being completely countercultural, Paul's instructions seem ignorant at best and blatantly harmful at worst. What *motivations* does Paul provide for the lifestyle he calls for in Colossians 3:22? Do these motivations seem worthwhile incentives for such behavior? Why or why not?

- 3) **Read Genesis 2:15.** Since work was a reality in our world even *before* the Fall, why do you think work has such a negative connotation in our culture today?

- 4) **Read Colossians 3:23.** What practical differences would mark the efforts of a believing worker who truly lived by this verse?

PRAY

Bottom Line: Paul wants us to live in full submission to the superiority of Christ. Close your Life Group today by having two people pray that our church would exemplify this lifestyle. (Note: You may want to reference the last Discussion Question in your prayers.)

LIVE

- This week, let's pursue demonstrating submission to Christ in tangible ways. Plan a small outreach or service project with your Life Group to take place over the next 4-6 weeks. (Facilitators, please let the Leadership Team know what you plan so that we can pray with you for God's blessing.)
- Pick a partner from your Life Group and discuss how you can improve your gospel witness in your workplace. Commit to praying for one another and checking in throughout the week.