



Lesson 12

3:18-4:1 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. ²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵ Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. ^{4:1} Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Notes:

- “obey” (v. 20, 22) = “keep on following instructions/obey” as told
- “discouraged” (v. 21) = without passion/drive/motivation
- “slaves” (v. 22) = encompasses servants and slaves
- “work at it with all your heart” (v. 23) = “work from soul”
- “no favoritism” (v. 25) = “no respect of person”

3.) How should children treat their parents? Why?

4.) Is Paul’s emphasis on the father’s role in a child’s upbringing and discipline appropriate? How does this compare to our culture?

5.) How might a father’s parenting or discipline style make his child lose motivation?

6.) In ancient Rome slavery was not race-based. Most slaves were prisoners of war or were forced into slavery by indebtedness (although the children of slaves also belonged to their master). Slaves were property and could be treated as such. Why might Paul have used a relationship with such an inequity of power and rights to illustrate God's desired roles and responsibilities in the "workplace"?

7.) What was the gospel motivation for slaves and masters?

8.) Why does Paul have only one verse each for wives, husbands, children, and fathers, but four for slaves and masters?

Colossians 4:9 [Tychicus] is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

Philemon 10-12,15-16 I appeal to you [Philemon] for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. ¹¹ Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. ¹² I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. ... ¹⁵ Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good— ¹⁶ no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a man and as a brother in the Lord.

9.) What is Scripture's position on slavery?

Colossians 4:1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair.

Leviticus 25:39-46 " 'If one of your countrymen becomes poor among you and sells himself to you, do not make him work as a slave. ⁴⁰ He is to be treated as a hired worker or a temporary resident among you; he is to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. ⁴¹ Then he and his children are to be released, and he will go back to his own clan and to the property of his forefathers. ⁴² Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves. ⁴³ Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God. ⁴⁴ 'Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. ⁴⁵ You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. ⁴⁶ You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly."

1 Corinthians 7:20-24 Each one should remain in the situation which he was in when God called him. ²¹ Were you a slave when you were called? Don't let it trouble you—although if you can gain your freedom, do so. ²² For he who was a slave when he was called by the Lord is the Lord's freedman; similarly, he who was a free man when he was called is Christ's slave. ²³ You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men. ²⁴ Brothers, each man, as responsible to God, should remain in the situation God called him to.

Cf. Philemon

4:2-6 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³ And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵ Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶ Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Notes:

- v. 2 - “devote yourselves” = PR A = “keep on sticking to/getting a firm grip on”
- v. 5 - “be wise in the way you act” = lit. ‘with wisdom walk around’
- v. 5 - “make the most of every opportunity” = better “BY making the most of the (favorable) time” – picture of ‘buying up’ or ‘buying out’ = ‘get a corner on’ (*i.e. buying up all the Beanie Babies*)
- v. 6 – “everyone” = lit. ‘each one’

1.) What does it mean to be watchful/awake in prayer? (v. 2)

2.) While our religion is not mysterious, God does reveal great mysteries to us in his Word, which are our privilege to expound before the world. What might we include in such? (cf. Col. 1-2)

3.) Paul instructs the Colossians to pray ...THAT the Lord would open a door for the Word and ...THAT he might reveal it as he should. What does this tell us about our evangelism efforts?

4.) How do we show godly wisdom as we walk about in this world of outsiders?

5.) In what sense should we be ready to “buy up the moment” as we witness?

6.) What does it mean for our conversation to be full of grace and seasoned with salt to answer each one?

John 1:17 ...grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

John 7:32, 45-56 ...Then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him. ...⁴⁵ Finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and Pharisees, who asked them, “Why didn't you bring him in?” ⁴⁶ “No one ever spoke the way this man does,” the guards declared.