

## Colossians 3:18-25

Tease: We have all heard politicians claim they are Christians but their faith is private and does not affect how they vote or act politically. Join us this Sunday May 28, 2017 as Pastor Rich explores Colossians 3:18-25 where the Apostle Paul gives some instructions in how we are to live as Christians in every area of our life. 9am Sunday School 10 am Worship.

## Colossians 3:18-25

We pick up this morning in the middle of chapter three of the book of Colossians. Last week we saw the apostle Paul remind the Colossians that because they have been saved by God through Jesus blood they should possess a character that emulates God. What we saw last week was a more higher level and this week Paul talks about a more practical aspect of our character.

I am always amazed at politicians who make a religious profession and then claim that their religion will not inform or control their political decisions. What good is that kind of separation between how we act and the moral compass that sets the standards.

What Paul has been driving at in the book of Colossians is the supremacy of Jesus. He is the creator sustainer of the universe. He sits at the right hand of the Father, the seat of power in the universe. He sacrificed Himself for us by dying on the cross to

provide for us eternal life and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit to aid us in our we are to live.

In our text this week Paul gets down to some really practical examples of how we are to live. Living contrary to the world around us emulating God's character. So let's dig into the text this morning.

*Colossians 3:18 (ESV)*

*18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

This verse is not all alone void of context. Look at the last verse we looked at last week:

*Colossians 3:17 (ESV)*

*17And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*

So Paul reminds us to do everything, what we say and what we do, for the Lord. The first example he gives is here in verse 18.

*Colossians 3:18 (ESV)*

*18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*

This is one of those verses that has been abused and made to say something that it does not say. There are entire church denominations that teach this verse means the husband makes all

the decisions, determines everything and the wife has no choice other than just sit there and take. He can hit her, berate her, and tell her what to say and what to wear. Some even go so far as to say that the wives have to walk behind the man to show their deference to the man.

Let me make this as clear as I can. That is NOT what this verse is saying. Everyone focuses on the first phrase of the verse “wives submit to your husbands”, but forget the second phrase “as is fitting in the Lord”. The wife has no obligation to take being abused by the husband. She has no obligation to anything that is outside of the character of God. Paul does not mention it in this passage but when he taught the Ephesians this same lesson he placed the husband under some specific obligations.

*Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)*

*25Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her,*

The responsibility of the husband is to love their wife just as Jesus loves the church. If you think being dictatorial over your wife is emulating Jesus you do not know Jesus at all.

Wives are to submit to their husbands in all that is fitting of the Lord. Why did Paul have to give this command to the various churches? Well, I think Paul had to address this topic because the application on the church had caused a little difficulty in the church. In the non-Christian society of the day the role of the women was one of being a second class citizen. But then the

teaching in the early church the doctrine of equality in the church between men and women, slaves and free,

*Galatians 3:28 (ESV)*

*28There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

This is a valid doctrine but one that is easily abused. It was not uncommon in the early church to take a doctrine like this and apply it improperly. In this case women took this doctrine and began to take authority over their husbands. Which is contrary to this doctrine. A little grace was taken advantage of and many women were attempting to in effect overthrow their husbands.

So Paul had to remind them that they were to submit to their husbands in emulating the character of God.

*Colossians 3:19 (ESV)*

*19Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.*

Notice the man is told to love the wife but the wife is not told to love their husbands. When we go back to what Paul told the Ephesians the husbands are to love their wives like Jesus loves the church. Jesus died for the church so the threshold for how we are love our wives is pretty high. Let me say it this way. Men you can never do enough for your wife. You can never live up to

what Jesus did for the church. It is a high standard of how we are to live and care for our wives.

*Colossians 3:20 (ESV)*

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

Parents love this verse and throw it in the face of their kids all the time. Notice that this one is structured a little different than the command for wives. Wives are to submit to their husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Kids are to obey their parents in everything. What's the difference? I think the difference is that kids do not yet have the developed capacity to know right and wrong or understand the ramifications of their actions. So they just need to take the direction of their parents. But this does not give the parents the right to abuse or treat improperly their children. The role of the parents is to train up a child in the way they are to go. Kids it's your responsibility to listen and learn from your parents and obey them as they train you in way of the Lord.

*Colossians 3:21 (ESV)*

*21Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

Kids are to obey their parents and fathers are to not provoke their kids. Paul told the Ephesians that parents were to raise their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Dads don't

pick at your kids teach them how to read and study the Bible. Teach them how to make good decisions, teach them respect, teach and show them love. Your job is to train children that love you and love the Lord. Children who become productive members of society and the church. It is thrilling to a dad to see a child grow and remain in the church and be involved in ministry in the church as well.

*Colossians 3:22 (ESV)*

*22Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.*

So far Paul's practical living tips have been focused in the home. Now he moves out of the home and into the busy world.

You should all know what I am going to say about how this verse in the ESV begins. Bondservants is a bad translation of the first word of this verse. The word is δοῦλοι (douloi) the plural form of slave. At no time at no place in scripture or in ancient Greek does δοῦλοι (douloi) mean anything other than slave. I understand why in some places it is translated as servant or bondservant but in this verse it is very clear from the context that it is slave.

Slaves obey in everything your earthly masters. They do not have a choice in this, it is the law of the land. I think Paul brings this up to several churches because just like we discussed earlier

with the equality in the church being taught, rightfully I might add, slaves were starting to lay down on the job, especially for Christian masters. The idea of why do I need to do what the master says when he is just the same as me? But that is not in keeping with the character of God. For example, Jesus a co-equal member of the trinity submitted to the authority of the Father, submitting even to His own death. God's character is what dictates how we are to live. We are to emulate His character which means submitting to authority. Slaves obey your masters, children obey your parents.

But notice that Paul goes further in his description for slaves on how they are to obey. Not just making it look like you are obeying but with sincerity. Have you ever worked with someone who does very little unless the boss is looking? When the boss walks in they become very busy, even attempting to make everyone else look bad. Yeah that is not the way the Christian should be working.

Notice the last phrase, fearing the Lord. Don't think of this as Paul saying being afraid of the Lord. This is the old English use of fear meaning reverence of the Lord. Our service as slaves, or since we are not slaves to our employers the principle is as employees to our employers are to obey them and do everything as a form of reverence and worship of the Lord. Don't miss this. It does not matter if you are cutting deli meat, selling pet supplies, keeping the books, welding a frame or anything else you do in the course of your employment, it is worship before

God. You worship God by how you live your work life. The boss should love to have Christians working for them, because they should be doing everything to the very best of their ability all the time. I am afraid it is not always that way. To our shame.

*Colossians 3:23–24 (ESV)*

*23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,*

*24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*

Some approach these verse that they are connected only to 22 speaking about slaves. But I think these verses are in effect a summary to the entire paragraph. It does not matter if you are a wife, husband, father, child, slave and by extension whatever else you are, everything you do work at it heartily, for the Lord and not for men. Do not try to please men but please the Lord. He is the supreme boss and ultimately everything we do should be done to please Him.

Why? Because, ultimately it is from the Lord that we will get our inheritance. Sure, I get a pension from my work at the Sheriff's office and I worked hard to advance through the ranks to obtain an honorable discharge and pension that supports my family. But that would not mean anything if I did not please the Lord in doing that. Because the day is coming when the pension will mean nothing and I will be in eternity when my rewards for

serving God in everything will be important. When I can back up the dumb truck of rewards and lay them at Jesus' feet. When I can worship the creator/sustainer of the universe.

Paul reminds us that everything we do is serving the Lord. As Joshua said at the end of his long life, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

Beside the alternative is not that attractive.

*Colossians 3:25 (ESV)*

*25For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.*

If you don't do it right. Wives if you do not submit to your husbands, husbands if you do not love your wife, children if you do not obey your parents, fathers if you provoke your children, slaves if you do not obey your masters, expect to be dealt with by God. Expect to be recompensed by God.

Don't think that because God loves you He won't punish you. Look at the last line. There is no partiality. God will not show favoritism. He expects you to toe the line as much as He expects anyone else to toe the line.

## Conclusion

I want you to think for a moment about these instructions we have seen this morning. God is expecting us, all of us, to live differently than the society we are in. God wants us to have

relationship in the home and in the work place that honor Him and reflect His character. We learn His character by being involved in the study of His word, all of it. We look at the text written to people 3,000 years ago in a completely different culture in a different economy and in a different society and try to figure out what is being said about God in the text. We then try to live in harmony with what we learn about God.

The Hebrew Scriptures, the Old Testament is full of references to the separation of clean and unclean, so we know that God wants us to be different from the sinful world. He wants us to do everything, even in our mundane work life to please Him, as a form of worship to Him. Being a follower of Jesus is not always easy and sometimes not even fun. But we are told to do it in reverence to Him.

Let's Pray!