

7. The rules of engagement of godly living -Part 2

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If there is anyone who thinks that the Bible is an ancient book and is not applicable to the modern day living, that person does not have any idea about the Bible. I can even challenge that he or she has never read the Bible from cover to cover.

We can defy against the Word of God with flimsy excuses, but the truth remains and we are responsible for what we don't do after we learned about them.

This portion of the Book of Colossians is so practical to our lives. If we follow these principles that were mentioned in first 8 verses, we wouldn't have any of marital conflicts or divorces, or children and parents problems, or employer and employee problems. Of course, that would dissolve any reason for employee union and greedy employer issues automatically.

The Lord willing, we are going to conclude this grandiose Book to the Christians of Colosse.

A. WHAT WIVES SHOULD DO

Colossians 3:18 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. The ancient Greek word translated 'submit' is essentially a word borrowed from the military. It literally means "to be under in rank." It speaks of the way that an army is organized among levels of rank. You have Generals and Colonels and Majors and Captains and Sergeants and Privates. There are levels of rank, and you are obligated to respect those in higher rank.

A Private can be smarter, more talented and a better person than a General. But he is still under rank to the General. He isn't submitted to the General so much as a person as he is to the General as a General.

In the same way, the wife doesn't submit to her husband because he deserves it. She submits because he is her husband. The idea of submission doesn't have anything to do with someone being smarter or better or more talented. It has to do with a God-appointed order.

Some say that a wife should submit to her husband as if he were God himself. That would be far from the truth. No place in the Scripture it teaches a complete submission except to God and God alone. To violate this is to commit the sin of idolatry.

Here are a few points I'd like to make regarding submitting to her own husband:

- 1) For wives, submission to their husband is a part of their Christian life.
- 2) When a wife doesn't obey this phrase "submit to your own husband as is fitting in the Lord," she doesn't just fall short as a wife. She falls short as a follower of Jesus Christ.
- 3) This submission has nothing to do with your husband's intelligence, or giftedness or capability. It has to do with honoring the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 4) When the husband asks the wife to sin, she must not submit.
- 5) When the husband is violent and physically threatening, the wife may not submit.
- 6) When the husband breaks the marriage bond by adultery, the wife does not need to submit to her husband being in an adulterous relationship.

B. WHAT HUSBANDS SHOULD DO

Colossians 3:19 Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. Paul's words to husbands safeguards his words to wives. Though wives are to submit to their husbands, it never excuses husbands acting as tyrants over their wives. Instead, a husband must love his wife, and the ancient Greek word translated 'love' here is 'agape'.

We all know that this word 'agape' means 'unconditional love'. The word has little to do with emotion. It has everything to do with a complete commitment and self-denial for the sake of another.

The greatest example of this is what our Lord Jesus Christ had done for His bride the church.

Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her

Headship is not dictatorship or lordship. It is loving leadership. In fact, both the husband and the wife must be submitted to the Lord and to each other as it says in Eph 5:21. It is a mutual respect under the lordship of Jesus Christ.

Here are a few points I'd like to make regarding the love for his wife:

- 1) It is a love that loves without changing.
- 2) Agape love gives and loves because it wants to. It does not demand or expect repayment from the love given.

C. WHAT CHILDREN SHOULD DO

Colossians 3:20 Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

Paul has in mind children who are still in their parents' household and under their authority. For these, they must not only honor their father and mother, but they must obey in all things.

The child who does not learn to obey his parents is not likely to grow up obeying any authority. He will defy his teachers, the police, his employers, and anyone else who tries to exercise authority over him. The breakdown in authority in our society reflects the breakdown of authority in the home.

For the most part, children do not create problems. Actually, they reveal them. Parents who cannot discipline themselves cannot discipline their children. If a father and mother are not under authority themselves, they cannot exercise authority over their own.

D. WHAT PARENTS SHOULD DO

Colossians 3:21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

"Do not provoke your children" is a commandment to parents, and how often it is disobeyed! Too often, parents automatically say, "No," when their children ask for something, when the parents should listen carefully and evaluate each request. Parents often change their minds and create problems for their children, sometimes by swinging from extreme permissiveness to extreme legalism.

Fathers and mothers should encourage their children, not discourage them. One of the most important things parents can do is spend time with their children. Discouraged children are open season to Satan and the world. When a child does not get encouragement from his parents at home, he will seek it elsewhere.

Parents also need to listen and be patient as their children talk to them. A listening ear and a loving heart always go together. Life is not easy for children, especially Christian children. It gets even worse when Christian parents compare one child with another sibling and thereby set up unnecessary competition in the home.

Their problems might seem small to us, but they are quite large to them. Christian parents must listen carefully, share the feelings and frustrations of their children, pray with them, and seek to encourage them. Home ought to be the happiest and best place in all the world, not Disneyland.

E. WHAT EMPLOYEES SHOULD DO

Colossians 3:22-25 Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. 23 And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. 25 But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

Employees have a God-assigned role of obedience and submission to their employers or supervisors.

God wants every Christian worker to see that ultimately, they work for Him. Therefore, they should do it whole heartily, as to the Lord and not to men. God promises to reward those who work with that kind of heart.

When a Christian worker does poorly in his job, he should not expect special leniency from his boss, especially if his boss is a Christian. Being a Christian should make us more responsible, not less responsible.

F. WHAT EMPLOYERS SHOULD DO

Colossians 4:1 Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

We all want fair treatment. If you are an employer, you need to be fair, firm and friendly to your employees.

Christian employers or supervisors need to remember that they have a Master in heaven that they must answer to. Would they like God to treat them with the same measure of justice and fairness they have treated their workers with?

G. HOW TO TALK TO GOD

Colossians 4:2-4 Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving; 3 meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, 4 that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

The phrase 'being vigilant' means 'watch'. "Pray and watch" – They are very important. They remind us of the experience of Nehemiah. When the enemy tried to stop him from rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem, he didn't just throw in the towel and cry

out that he couldn't do the job. Nor did he simply say, "Well, we'll make it a matter of prayer," and then go on as he had been.

Nehemiah 4:9 Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night.

Jesus told His disciples to watch and pray at the Garden of Gethsemane. They didn't, they ended up running away from the Lord with fear.

Work without prayer is atheism. But prayer without work is presumption.

H. HOW TO TALK TO OTHERS

Colossians 4:5-6 Walk in wisdom toward those who are outside, redeeming the time. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

What does it mean to "walk in wisdom"? For one thing, it means that we are careful not to say or do anything that would make it difficult to share the Gospel. It also means we must be alert to use the opportunities God gives us for personal witnessing.

"Redeeming the time" means buying up the opportunity. This is a commercial term and pictures the Christian as a faithful steward who knows an opportunity when he sees one. Just as a merchant seizes a bargain when he finds one, so a Christian seizes the opportunity to win a soul to Christ.

As children of God, we should have a conversation that deters evil and inspiring than non-believers of this world. It should withhold evil rather than promote it. Our conversation should bring the light into their hearts, not disappear in their darkness.

I. FINAL GREETINGS

Colossians 4:7-9 Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. 8 I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, 9 with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is one of you. They will make known to you all things which are happening here.

"Tychicus" was the pastor of the church in Ephesus.

"Onesimus" was a slave of Philemon in Colosse. He had run away from his master, had been led to the Lord through the ministry of Paul, and was now being sent back to his master by him. Paul wrote a letter to Philemon when he sent Onesimus back, and he tells Philemon that Onesimus is his "beloved brother." You can see from this that there is a new relationship in Christ. Master and slave are now brothers in Christ Jesus.

Colossians 4:10-15 Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him), 11 and Jesus who is called Justus. These are my only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me. 12 Epaphras, who is one of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. 13 For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis. 14 Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you. 15

Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his house.

"Aristarchus" was a fellow prisoner with Paul, and he was his friend.

"Marcus" is John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas – the son of his sister. He is the writer of the Gospel of Mark. You will remember that Mark left Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey, and because of this Paul didn't want to take him along on the second missionary journey. Paul was wrong in his judgment of John Mark. The young man made good, and Paul acknowledges that here. Paul mentions John Mark again in his second letter to Timothy.

2 Tim 4:11 Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

"Jesus, a.k.a. Justus" would be the name Joshua in the Hebrew language.

"Epaphras" was the pastor in Colosse. Now he is in prison, so he has a new ministry, the ministry of prayer.

"Luke, the beloved physician" has been with apostle Paul from his second missionary journey and all the way to the Roman dungeon.

When Paul first mentioned Demas, he called him a fellow worker. Here he simply says, "and Demas". I think this may indicate that Paul isn't really sure about him at this time. Later on Demas will forsake Paul. How tragic his backsliding was!

J. CLOSING EXHORTATION

Colossians 4:16-18 Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the epistle from Laodicea. 17 And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it." 18 This salutation by my own hand--Paul. Remember my chains. Grace be with you. Amen.

As was the custom in that day, Paul generally dictated his letters, and personally signed a postscript with his own hand.