

In Colossians 3:1-17, Paul wrote of the *“True Spirituality”* that comes from being in the fullness of Christ. This contrasts with the deceptive and hollow spirituality being taught by the false teachers. Our *“True Spirituality”* is evinced through our putting off and putting on. Now in true Pauline style he instructs about the practice and the application of this in our relationships. The way we behave in these relationships should reflect all the *“putting off”* and *“putting on”* we have learnt in our earlier studies. In Colossians 3:17 we saw how our life in Christ means everything we do is done in the name of Christ.

The teaching in Col. 3:18-4:1 is cast in the form of a *“household”* code. In the ancient world, codes of household rules were relatively common, in which responsibilities or duties of different members of the house (or of society generally) were outlined. The whole concept of the marriage relationship is not the control and authority of the husband but the mutual love of both for each other. It is to be in the Lord, it is a threesome with Christ as the third member, in love as its motivating factor.

Disobedience to parents by children is a definite act of rebellion against them and against God (v.20). From the time your children are born they must be taught to obey. Fathers should always encourage and never be discouraging, spend time with your children, be a good role model (v.21). In our workplaces work with dignity as unto the Lord (v.23). Be assured, reward will come, from the Lord and all wrong will be righted. The same advice is given to those in authority; justice and fairness are to be the guidelines of those in power and both should be exercised with the thought of God as the Lord (4:1). Dishonesty and unfairness should be shunned in all circumstances, we are a witness for Christ in our households and in our workplaces.

When we read this passage, we will find new ways of pleasing Him. In these verses we may find some struggle of values- we do not need to find loopholes- we need to deal with this conflict and do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus. In today’s world, we must work and live heartily as unto Him.

Freedom of choice is one of the idols of our times. People want to do things *“my way”*, postmodernism is rampant with the self-image thinking that *“it’s my body, my choice!”*. In the Christian *“household”*, we still need very brief rules of the road for household relationships. Indeed, the suggestion of regulating or curtailing is unthinkable for many people. But short-term freedom can lead to long-term captivity. Supposed free choice severely limits all subsequent freedoms. The freedom of drivers to drive all over the road without looking just will not work over the long haul. We still need some traffic rules or regulations, boundaries that limit a chaotic disorder. One short free ride down the road of life, on the wrong side of the road, could stop you ever being free to drive anywhere again, with dire consequences. Paul the apostle provides instructions for the true believers’ household relationships in the Lord. Pauls rules and code for household relationships, is remarkable and every bit as revolutionary. And it can only be done and fulfilled under the residency of God’s Spirit within us.

1) Have you been able to “put on” anything new because of this study?

2) What are some good things family members can do for each other? What are some harmful things?

3) Read Colossians 3:18-4:1; list the commands given to wives and husbands?

Children & Parents/Fathers

Slaves/Masters

4) Now list some phrases in the passage which contain the words Lord and Master?

5) What is your initial overall reaction to this passage?

What questions does this passage raise for you?

**6) “Paul’s (1st Century) commands to 21st century Christians have limited relevance to us”
Do you agree? Why? Why not?**

7) In Colossians 3:18-19 is the emphasis on submission only written for the wife? How does this work out in practice?

8) Many Christian women have non-Christian husbands. Does this alter the standards expected?

9) How will a right relationship with the Lord be an influence for good in a marriage?

10) Colossians 3:20-21; What responsibilities do children and Fathers have?

If each lived up to these, what would the resulting relationship look like?

Suggest ways we can help our children to be disciplined and obedient?

Put verse 21 into your own words?

11) Colossians 3:22-4:1; what sort of workman is a Christian to be?

Where does our reward come from? To whom ultimately are both employer and employee answerable?

What is the basic teaching of this study?