

Wednesday Night BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday, August 26, 2026 – First Baptist Church Buda
Midweek Prayer Meeting & Bible Study



COLOSSIANS: ROOTED IN CHRIST – PART 16

“Christ at Home and Work”

Colossians 3:18-25

“¹⁸Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them. ²⁰Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord. ²¹Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²²Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God. ²³And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.” -Colossians 3:18-25 (NKJV)

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND FOR COLOSSIANS

The following is some of the general background information for the book of Colossians. Let's quickly review what we have previously said about the book of Colossians just to give us a bit of context...

Some General Background Information on Colossians:

(1) **The author of Colossians = The Apostle Paul** - The Apostle Paul identifies himself as the author (1:1; 4:18)

- (2) **An important character in Colossians = Epaphras** - Epaphras likely planted the church by bringing the gospel he heard under Paul in Ephesus (Acts 19:10) back to his home city of Colossae (1:7; 4:12)
- (3) **Date, place and type of writing = A.D. 60-62, A prison epistle/letter written from Rome** - Paul writes this letter from a Roman prison around 60-62 AD (4:16)
- (4) **Important information about Colossae = Small but diverse city** - Colossae was a small but diverse city in Rome's Asia province, modern day Turkey
- (5) **2 key words to understand Colossae = Pluralism and syncretism** - They were immersed in an environment of pluralism and syncretism where most people simply borrowed from the religious and philosophical ideas of the day
- (6) **Identified false teaching/doctrine in Colossians = "The Colossian Heresy"** - Throughout the book Paul hints at a "Colossian heresy." However, he focuses on Christ-centered, correct teaching rather than the contents of the false teaching
- (7) **What we know about this false teaching/doctrine = It is "not according to Christ"** - Whatever this false teaching is, it is "not according to Christ" (2:8) and it undermines the sole supremacy and sufficiency of Jesus
- (8) **John Calvin's summary of Colossians = "This Epistle...to express it in one word, distinguishes the true Christ from a fictitious one."**
- (9) **Layout of the book = Half doctrinal, half practical** - Like other Pauline letters, the first half builds a rich theology that the second half exhorts us to then live out
- (10) **Relation to other N.T. books = Ephesians and Colossians are companion books** - These two books/letters were written around the same time, and they overlap greatly and can help explain one another

Our theme verse for this study is Colossians 2:6-7. This passage not only serves as a premise for this particular study, it also identifies a primary purpose for Paul's letter...

"⁶ As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, ⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." -Colossians 2:6-7 (NKJV)

Group Activity: "Household Codes in Real Life"

Step 1 — Break into 3 groups

Assign each group one of the relationship categories in the passage:

- **Group A: Wives & Husbands (vv. 18–19)**
- **Group B: Children & Parents (vv. 20–21)**
- **Group C: Workers & Masters (vv. 22–25)**

Step 2 — Each group answers 3 questions

Give them these prompts:

1. What is the core command in your section? (e.g., submit, love, obey, do not provoke, work sincerely)
2. Why does Paul say this matters “in the Lord”? (Look for motivations like worship, witness, integrity.)
3. What is one modern scenario where this command is difficult—and one practical way to live it out?

Step 3 — Share & Discuss

Have each group present their insights. Encourage the rest of the group to respond with:

- “What resonated with you?”
- “What would be hard about that?”
- “What would be beautiful about that if lived out consistently?”

Step 4 — Whole-Group Reflection

Close with one unifying question:

If every believer lived out Colossians 3:18–25 in their home and workplace, how would the witness of the church change?

Optional Add-On: Personal Application Card

Give each person a small card (or ask them to write in their notes):

“One relationship where I can honor Christ this week by...”

- *Putting off*: (a harmful habit or attitude)
- *Putting on*: (a Christlike virtue—kindness, patience, forgiveness, sincerity)

Opening Discussion Questions

1. Relationship & Household Icebreakers

- *What is one family tradition or household routine that shaped who you are today?*
- *Growing up, what was one “house rule” you remember clearly? Did you think it was fair at the time?*

2. Authority & Submission (Gentle On-Ramp)

- *When you hear the word “authority,” what emotions or experiences come to mind? Positive or negative? Why?*
- *What makes it hard for people today to accept any kind of authority—whether in the home, workplace, or society?*

3. First Impressions of the Passage

- *As you read Colossians 3:18–25, which instruction feels most countercultural today? Why?*
- *Which part of the passage challenges you personally? Which part encourages you?*

4. Marriage & Family Dynamics

(These reflect themes found in inductive studies on this passage.)

- *Why do you think Paul ties household relationships to our relationship with the Lord?*

- ***What does “fitting in the Lord” or “pleasing the Lord” tell us about the motivation behind these commands?***

5. Work & Integrity

- *Paul tells servants (and by extension, workers) to work “with sincerity of heart.” What does that look like in modern workplaces?*
- *How does remembering that “you serve the Lord Christ” reshape your view of your daily responsibilities?*

KEY THOUGHT: *Because believers belong to Christ, the gospel transforms how we live in our closest relationships and daily responsibilities*

KEY VERSE: *“²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.” — Colossians 3:23 (NKJV)*

CORE TRUTH: *The Christian life is not merely about what we believe at church. Because we have been raised with Christ, our relationship with Him should shape our marriages, families, work, authority, submission, and everyday conduct.*

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Letter to the Colossians

The Apostle Paul wrote Colossians to believers who were facing false teaching and needed to understand the sufficiency and supremacy of Jesus Christ. One of the great themes of the letter is that **Christ is enough** or the **Sufficiency of Christ**. Colossians 1 presents Christ as Creator, Sustainer, Head of the church, and Redeemer. Colossians 2 warns believers against teachings that diminish Christ or add human requirements to the gospel.

Then, beginning in chapter 3, Paul moves from **doctrine to daily living**.

The pattern is important...

COLOSSIANS PATTERN: Who we are in Christ → how we live for Christ

This is important... *“Paul does not tell Christians to change their behavior so that they can become accepted by God. Rather, because they have been united with Christ, their lives should increasingly reflect their new identity.”*

- What do you think of this statement? React to the statement.
- What is the equivalent of “changing our behavior” so that we can be “accepted by God”?
- Why is the statement “because we have been united with Christ, our lives should increasingly reflect their new identity” so important? What does it mean?
- How do we do this?

READ: Colossians 3:1–17

Before studying verses 18–25, notice several commands:

8 Important Interpretative Commands in Colossians 3:1-17: (to help us better understand Colossians 3:18-25)

- (1) “Seek those things which are above” = Colossians 3:1
- (2) “Mortify therefore your members” = Colossians 3:5
- (3) “Put off” sinful attitudes and behaviors = Colossians 3:8
- (4) “Put on” Christlike characteristics = Colossians 3:12
- (5) “Above all these things put on charity” = Colossians 3:14
- (6) “Let the peace of God rule” = Colossians 3:15
- (7) “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” = Colossians 3:16
- (8) “Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus”
=Colossians 3:17

Verse 17 provides an excellent bridge into verses 18–25. Paul is essentially saying:
If Christ is Lord over your life, He must also be Lord over your relationships.

AN IMPORANT TRUTH: *Christian discipleship is not limited to Sunday worship. The gospel transforms our relationships, our responsibilities, our attitudes, and our work because ultimately we serve the Lord Jesus Christ.*

“What areas of our lives are easiest to separate from our faith?”

- *Marriage and family*
- *Work*
- *Finances*
- *How we speak to others*
- *Private habits*
- *How we respond when treated unfairly*

Paul teaches that there is no compartment of the Christian life that falls outside the lordship of Jesus Christ. Colossians 3:18–25 follows Paul's instruction in verses 1–17 concerning the believer's new life in Christ. Paul has already told believers to put off the old nature and put on the new nature. Now he shows what that new life looks like in the home and workplace.

4 Places the Lordship of Christ Must Extend:

- (1) The Lordship of Christ in the Christian home
- (2) The Lordship of Christ and children
- (3) The Lordship of Christ and fathers
- (4) The Lordship of Christ and the workplace

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST IN THE CHRISTIAN HOME

“¹⁸Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.” – Colossians 3:18

This verse has sometimes been misunderstood or misused. Therefore, it needs to be studied alongside the rest of Scripture.

Why is this verse sometimes misused?:

1. **Misreading “submit” as unconditional submission** - The English word “submit” can imply inferiority, but the Greek *hypotassō* means “to place oneself under” in a respectful, voluntary way, often in the context of order and mutual respect. Many have taken the verse as a command to women to accept any husband’s authority without question, ignoring the immediate instruction to husbands to *love* and *not be harsh* (v.19). This has led to the verse being used to justify control, emotional suppression, or even abuse.
2. **Using it to reinforce patriarchy** - In a culture where Greco-Roman law often treated women as property, Paul’s instruction was radical because it tied authority to love and Christ’s example. However, some have misapplied it to uphold traditional gender roles, seeing it as a permanent, unchallengeable rule rather than part of a broader ethic of humility and mutual care.
3. **Ignoring the “in the Lord” qualifier** - Paul’s phrase “as is fitting in the Lord” limits the application to a Christ-centered relationship, not a vacuum of moral rules. Misusers have removed this qualifier, allowing the verse to be applied in ways that contradict the next command about husbands’ love and gentleness.
4. **Contradicting other biblical principles** - Galatians 3:28 teaches that in Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free — all are equal in dignity. Some have used Colossians 3:18 to undermine this, but the verse is part of a household code emphasizing order, respect, and love, not domination.
5. **Cultural and modern resistance** - Because the verse conflicts with contemporary ideals of equality, some reject it outright, while others accept it uncritically. Both extremes risk misuse — the former by dismissing it, the latter by applying it rigidly without context.

How is this verse often misused in practice?:

1. **It has sometimes been misused as a justification for husbands to dominate or mistreat wives**
2. **It has sometimes been misused as a rigid rule to suppress women’s voices or agency**
3. **It has sometimes been used as a cultural relic to be preserved without reform, ignoring the love-based trade-off Paul demands** – In other words, present day culture often misreads Paul’s words without the context and teaching regarding the idea of mutual submission and only as an “in the Lord” kind of submission willingly offered in the right context. It is not a wholehearted subjugation to the abuse of women... as some more secular and antagonistic critic would like to imply.

Some reminder here of what Paul is actually teaching are important to remember...

3 Things to Remember in Paul's Teaching on Submission in Colossians 3:18:

- (1) **Biblical submission is not inferiority** - Paul does not say that women are spiritually inferior to men. Scripture teaches that both men and women are created in God's image (Genesis 1:27). In Christ, men and women share the same salvation and spiritual standing before God. Galatians 3:28 emphasizes the equality of believers in Christ. Therefore, biblical submission should not be understood as saying:

What Paul is Not Saying:

1. Women are less valuable
2. Women are less intelligent
3. Women cannot have meaningful ministries
4. Husbands are always right
5. Wives have no voice in the marriage

Instead, submission concerns God-ordained order and responsibility within marriage.

- (2) **Notice the qualifying phrase “to your own husbands”** - Paul is addressing the marriage relationship specifically. This is not a command for women generally to submit to every man. The command concerns the wife's relationship to **her own husband**.
- (3) **Notice the qualifying phrase “as is fitting in the Lord”** - This phrase establishes an important limitation. Christian submission is ultimately submission to Christ. A husband does not become the wife's ultimate authority simply because he is her husband. **Christ remains Lord**. Therefore, a wife should never be expected to participate in sin simply because her husband commands it.

Discussion Questions

1. What does biblical submission mean?
2. What does biblical submission *not* mean?
3. Why is the phrase “in the Lord” important?
4. How can a wife demonstrate respect without surrendering biblical convictions?
5. How can husbands make it easier for their wives to respect and follow their leadership?

What is The Husband's Responsibility? What is the husband role or responsibility in all of this. **Colossians 3:19** says, **“¹⁹Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.”** Notice something significant. Paul does not merely tell the wife to submit. He gives the husband a command that is equally demanding: **“Love your wives.”** Paul develops this command much further in **Ephesians 5:25**, **“Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.”**

3 Things About the Husband Responsibility:

- (1) **The husband's authority must be Christlike** - Biblical headship is not dictatorship. A husband cannot use Scripture as an excuse to control, intimidate, manipulate, or abuse his wife. Christlike leadership is sacrificial leadership. Jesus demonstrated authority by serving. A Christian husband should therefore ask: "How can I use my God-given responsibility to bless and protect my wife rather than to benefit myself?"
- (2) **The husband's authority is qualified by the phrase "Do not be bitter toward them"** - The word carries the idea of becoming harsh, embittered, or resentful. A husband can technically remain in the home while emotionally destroying the marriage through: 1. constant criticism; 2. sarcasm; 3. anger; 4. neglect; 5. selfishness; 6. unforgiveness; 7. harsh words; 8. manipulation. God cares about how a husband treats his wife.
- (3) **The husband should remember that love is more than emotion** - Biblical love is demonstrated through action. A husband should love his wife by: being faithful; listening; providing; protecting; serving; forgiving; praying with her; encouraging her spiritual growth; treating her with dignity; accepting responsibility for his own sins.

Discussion Questions

1. What is the difference between biblical leadership and worldly domination?
2. What does sacrificial love look like in a marriage?
3. How can bitterness develop in a marriage?
4. What are some practical ways a husband can demonstrate Christlike love?
5. Why is spiritual leadership impossible without humility?

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST AND CHILDREN

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

3 Things Paul is Telling us About The Lordship of Christ and Children:

- (1) **Obedience is part of Christian discipleship** - The Bible does not treat obedience to parents as merely a social convention. Paul says obedience is "**well pleasing unto the Lord.**" A child who obeys his or her parents is ultimately learning to respect God's authority.
- (2) **Obedience is the broad responsibility of children** – Paul says children are to obey their parents "**...in all things**" This emphasizes the broad responsibility of children to obey their parents. Parents, however, have a responsibility to exercise their authority consistently with God's Word. Parents should not require children to sin or violate clear biblical commands.
- (3) **Obedience develops character** - Parents sometimes focus only on outward behavior: "Did you do what I told you?" But biblical parenting should aim deeper. The goal is not

merely to produce children who behave properly when watched. The goal is to teach children:

What we are to teach children?

1. **Reverence** for God
2. **Respect** for **authority**
3. **Self-control**
4. **Honesty**
5. **Responsibility**
6. **Humility**
7. **Repentance**
8. **Love** for Christ

Discussion Questions

1. Why does obedience to parents matter spiritually?
2. How should parents distinguish obedience from mere outward conformity?
3. How can parents teach obedience without provoking resentment?
4. What should a Christian parent do when a child disobeys?
5. How can parents connect everyday obedience to the gospel?

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST AND FATHERS

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

Paul now balances the command to children with a command to fathers. The authority of parents comes with accountability.

3 Important Things to Remember in Parental Accountability to Children:

- (1) Children are not machines** - Parents have tremendous influence over their children. A father can either strengthen his child's heart or crush it. Parents may provoke children through:
- **unreasonable expectations;**
 - **constant criticism;**
 - **favoritism;**
 - **inconsistency;**
 - **excessive discipline;**
 - **hypocrisy;**
 - **humiliation;**
 - **anger;**
 - **broken promises;**
 - **refusing to listen;**
 - **demanding perfection.**

- (2) **It's possible to kill a child's self-esteem and image-bearing character** - "Lest they be discouraged" - The issue is not merely anger. A child can become deeply discouraged and eventually conclude: "Nothing I do will ever be good enough." That is spiritually dangerous. Christian parenting should communicate both: Truth and grace. Children need boundaries, correction, and discipline. They also need to know: "You are loved even when you fail."
- (3) **The gospel should shape parenting** - Christian parents must remember that their children are sinners—but so are they. Parents should not present themselves as morally perfect authorities. Instead, they should model repentance. A powerful statement for a parent to make is: "I was wrong. Please forgive me." That teaches children that Christianity is not pretending to be perfect. It is turning to Christ when we sin.

Discussion Questions

1. What kinds of parenting can discourage children?
2. Why is consistency important in discipline?
3. How can a parent correct sin without communicating rejection?
4. What does healthy biblical discipline look like?
5. How can parents model repentance?

THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST AND THE WORKPLACE

"²²Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God." -Colossians 3:22

This verse addresses the servant/master relationship of the first-century world. We should be careful not to equate Paul's discussion automatically with every modern employment relationship or use this passage to justify slavery. The ancient Roman system was historically complex and included various forms of servitude. The principle Paul emphasizes is that Christians should conduct themselves faithfully even when nobody is watching.

Important Principle: Christians should conduct themselves faithfully even when nobody is watching

Legendary college basketball coach and former UCLA head coach, **John Wooden** is credited with saying, "Character is what you are when no one is watching." And the great **D.L. Moody** said, "Character is what you are in the dark."

2 Important Directive for Christian Character in Relation to OtherS:

- (1) **Conduct yourself "Not with eyeservice"** - This means doing your work well only when the boss is watching Modern examples include:
- working hard when the supervisor is present;
 - wasting time when nobody is watching;
 - pretending to be productive;

- taking credit for someone else's work;
- doing the minimum while appearing dedicated.

Paul calls Christians to something better.

(2) **Conduct yourself “Fearing God”** - The Christian's ultimate supervisor is God. Even if your employer never notices your work, God does. This changes our motivation. We don't work merely to impress people. We work as people who belong to Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. What does “eyeservice” look like in modern workplaces?
2. Why is integrity important when nobody is watching?
3. How does the fear of God change our work ethic?
4. Can ordinary work be an act of worship?
5. How should Christians respond to unfair treatment at work?

SERVING CHRIST, NOT PEOPLE

“²³And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.” -Colossians 3:23-25

These verses contain one of the great principles of Christian vocation and service

4 Directives for Christian Service and Work:

(1) **“Whatever you do”** - Paul gives the command remarkable breadth. Christianity is not restricted to:

- Sunday worship;
- Bible study;
- prayer;
- evangelism;
- church ministry.

Everything belongs under Christ's lordship. Cooking dinner can be done for the Lord. Changing a baby's diaper can be done for the Lord. Studying can be done for the Lord. Doing an honest day's work can be done for the Lord. Cleaning the house can be done for the Lord. Caring for an elderly parent can be done for the Lord.

(2) **“Do it heartily”** - The idea is to work from the heart. Christian service should not merely be external. God cares about our motivation. Two people may perform exactly the same task, but one does it resentfully while the other does it as an expression of love for Christ.

(3) **“As to the Lord”** - This is the heart of the passage. The Christian's ultimate audience is God. That means: **We don't need human applause to make our work meaningful.** If people notice, praise God. If people don't notice, serve God anyway.

- (4) “You serve the Lord Christ”** - This may be the most important phrase in the section. The Christian employee is ultimately serving Christ. The Christian parent is ultimately serving Christ. The Christian spouse is ultimately serving Christ. The Christian church member is ultimately serving Christ. Our entire lives become an offering of service to Him.

CONCLUSION / PRACTICAL APPLICATION

4 Concluding Application Questions:

- (1) In Marriage = Am I treating my spouse in a way that reflects Christ? -**

For husbands:

- Am I sacrificial?
- Am I gentle?
- Do I listen?
- Am I leading spiritually?
- Am I quick to repent?

For wives:

- Am I demonstrating respect?
- Do I encourage godly leadership?
- Do I communicate honestly?
- Am I honoring Christ in my marriage?

- (2) In Parenting = Am I disciplining my children or merely controlling them?**

- Do my children see Christ in my behavior?
- Do I discipline consistently?
- Do I apologize when I am wrong?
- Do I pray with and for my children?
- Am I more concerned with appearances than their hearts?

- (3) In Work = Would my workplace behavior change if I truly remembered that Jesus is my ultimate boss?**

- Am I honest?
- Am I dependable?
- Do I work diligently?
- Do I complain constantly?
- Do I gossip?
- Do I waste time?
- Do I treat coworkers with dignity?

- (4) In My Private life = Who am I when nobody is watching?**

Colossians 3 teaches us that the answer matters because God is always watching.