

Colossians 3:18-4:1
Relationships of the New Man

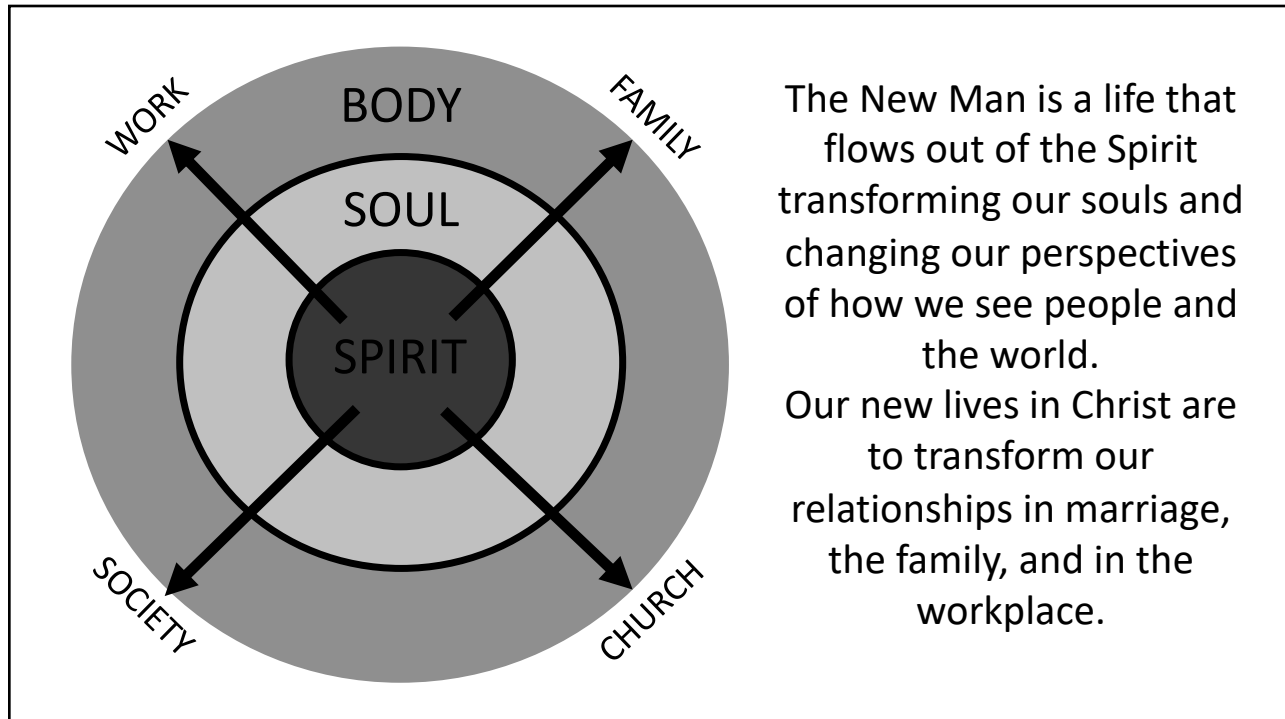
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Introduction

The “Old Man” is cut off from God and others. His life centers on himself, often at the expense of others. This old man overflows into the relationships of the home and society which create division and discord.

When saved the Spirit transforms us so we can transform the relationships and world around us!

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Colossians 3:18-4:1

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

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

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

²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²² 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. ¹ Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair,

knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

4

A Word to Families

We have looked at the roles within the family.
 How wives are to treat and respect her husband.
 How husbands are to love and nurture their wives.
 How children are to respect and obey their parents.
 How parents are to teach and train their children.
 Paul now looks outside the family to work relationships

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A Word to Servants

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.

Today in our age of racial division, many attack the Bible claiming that it supports slavery. Slavery was a common element of ancient culture and is also prevalent today. Exodus 21:16 states, "He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death." Deuteronomy 23:15 goes on to state, "You shall not give back to his master the slave who has escaped from his master to you."

It is clear that the Bible does not support slavery!

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Slavery was a common practice in Roman society. Scholars believe that 10 to 20 percent of the Roman empire were slaves. Though the Bible does not condone slavery, it does recognize it as a part of culture. Paul gives advice to believers who were living as slaves as well as to Christian masters.

Ephesians 6:5-9 gives a parallel text to our Colossian passage.

Though the passages was written regarding literal slaves, in our day and culture the passage can be applied to the employer / employee relationship.

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Rather than commanding slaves to rebel and overthrow slavery, Paul says, **obey in all things your masters according to the flesh**. As in the relationships between husbands and wives and parents and children, the principle of authority and submission is central to Paul's thought. **In all things** is a comprehensive phrase referring to both enjoyable and distasteful duties.

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The obedience required of servants is not just with **eyeservice** or just external service in what can be seen. Nor is it doing a duty with a reluctant attitude, as those who merely **please men**. Rather, Christian servants are to please **God** by working with **sincerity of heart, fearing God**. Holding God and His will in high regard is the right motive. Servants are to **work heartily** (putting their whole inner man into the effort), **as for the Lord rather than for men**, serving their master as they would the Lord Himself.

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A good example of these things would be **Joseph**. He was sold into slavery by his brothers. Yet he did not lose his faith or become bitter. Rather he did everything to the best of his ability and lived his life before God. As a result, he was promoted and given more responsibility.

Matthew 25:21

To them, he declared, "Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things.

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Paul declared the core reason to Timothy

1 Timothy 6:1

Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed.

Our flesh wants to make this life all about ourselves. This is far from the truth. We are God's ambassador here on earth to spread the message of the Gospel. How we live, whether servant or master, employee or employer, reflects back to Christ. How we live gives evidence of our faith or becomes a stumbling block for people to come to know Him. This life is short. Our eyes must be on heaven.

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Paul gives two reasons for servants (or employees) to obey their masters. Positively, the Lord will repay them for their faithfulness. They can endure inequity now, **knowing that from the Lord** they **will receive the reward of the inheritance**. The earthly master or boss may not give the servant what he deserves, but the Lord will. He is the One who will assure the eternal compensation is what it should be (cf. Rev. 20:12–13). Christian slaves (servants) are also heirs of eternal reward. As an employee on the job, or a servant in the home, it is the Lord whom believers serve. He will pay them back with grace and generosity.

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Paul then gives a negative reason for obedience. The one **he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.** The warning is that the Lord will discipline without partiality in cases of disobedience (cf. Gal. 6:7). Paul acknowledged that the Christian slave Onesimus was responsible to repay Philemon (Philem. 18). The Christian servant is not to presume on his Christianity to justify disobedience. Even if we are God's children, we will reap what we sow, because God is impartial (cf. Acts 10:34).

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A Word to Masters

Colossians 4:1

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

On the other side of the relationship, masters are to treat their slaves (employees) with the **justice and fairness** they expect to receive from their **Master in heaven.** God will judge masters who mistreat their servants, as He will servants who fail to serve their masters. As noted in 3:11, slaves and masters are spiritually equal in Christ. Masters must accordingly treat their Christian servants as brothers in Christ, showing them all the virtues required for holy fellowship. They should treat their employees like they desire the Lord Jesus to treat them.

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So What ...

If all Christians displayed the characteristics of relationships as embodied in the principles of this text, the results would be dramatic. Believers would indeed become lights shining in the darkness.

Whatever we do as believers whether it be as husbands or wives, parents or child, employer or employee, we must do all things for the glory of God.