

# PILGRIM

## HOME CHURCH

### FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION:

1. What good things can family members do for each other? What are some harmful things?
2. Read the passage as a group. What is your initial reaction to this passage?
3. What questions does the passage raise for you?
4. What are the underlying attitudes in how family members are to treat one another (18-21)?
5. How do Paul's commands to wives and husbands complement each other?
6. "NT Wright: Paul's command to wives has come in for particular criticism. While I think verse 18 is best translated as "treat your husbands with respect," in many translations the key word in verse 18 comes out as submit. This conjures up the image of a down-trodden woman, the victim of her husband's every whim, unable to be herself, to think her own thoughts, to make a grown-up contribution to the relationship.
7. What indications are there in this passage that this "downtrodden" image is not at all what Paul has in mind?"
8. Verses 20-21: What is said about children and fathers? What would happen if each lived up to these, what would the relationships look like?
9. How does 'belonging to Christ as the Master' make a difference in the "slave/master" work and treatment?
10. "In Paul's day, husbands and masters could rule supreme and unquestioned. (In the letter to Philemon, Paul makes a revolutionary suggestion that slaves be freed). How are Paul's relationship "road rules" every bit as revolutionary as what some people might wish he had said?"
11. What principles might apply to employee/employer relationships?
12. Paul intends for them to work out the details for themselves beyond the general rules. What different, but legit and Biblical ways of raising a family or relating to coworkers, can you think of?

**PRAYER:** Pray for Christian families who are under pressure to conform to the world's ideas of freedom...

NOVEMBER 1, 2020

# COLOSSIANS

## THE CULTURAL DANCE | 3:17-4:1

We have come to the end of chapter 3 in our Colossians Series, and this end starts at home. The revelation of God enters into the fallen structures and broken parts of culture to set our feet to a different rhythm. Some changes are fast, others take time. Sometimes the slow way is the fastest! How we treat one another at home, in the family, and in existing social structures is a blessing and denouncing prophetic dance. We learn some new moves from Paul this Sunday.

### *Colossians 3:17-4:1* (CEB)

<sup>17</sup> Whatever you do, whether in speech or action, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus and give thanks to God the Father through him.

<sup>18</sup> Wives, submit to your husbands in a way that is appropriate in the Lord.

<sup>19</sup> Husbands, love your wives and don't be harsh with them. <sup>20</sup> Children, obey your parents in everything, because this pleases the Lord. <sup>21</sup> Parents, don't provoke your children in a way that ends up discouraging them.

<sup>22</sup> Slaves, obey your masters on earth in everything. Don't just obey like people pleasers when they are watching. Instead, obey with the single motivation of fearing the Lord.

<sup>23</sup> Whatever you do, do it from the heart for the Lord and not for people. <sup>24</sup> You know that you will receive an inheritance as a reward. You serve the Lord Christ. <sup>25</sup> But evil-doers will receive their reward for their evil actions. There is no discrimination.

<sup>4:1</sup> Masters, be just and fair to your slaves, knowing that you yourselves have a master in heaven.

### A QUICK REVIEW

- The church is facing false teaching about a mash-up 'philosophy', focusing on angels and mystical experiences as required for true faith, and rule-keeping from Judaism.
- Paul was never at this church, but writing from prison based on reports and exercising relational-apostolic authority.
- Chapters 1-2 focus on theology foundations and "next steps" for them. Roughly doctrine.
- Chapters 3-4 provide more basic instructions, ethics/advice.
- "Paul never spoke other than as a pastor. His theology was a living theology, a practical theology through and through. The application is inherent in the exposition itself... [W]e can hardly avoid noting that all of Paul's letters were motivated by ethical concerns" -James Dunn (Gupta,123).

## OUTLINE: CHAPTER 3 (N. GUPTA, S. MCKNIGHT)

- 1-4 Pursuing True Heavenly Life in Christ
- 5-11 The Negative Destroying and Setting Aside Earthly Way
  - The Exhortation, Colossians 3:5, 8-9a
  - The Theology, Colossians 3:6-7, 9b-11
- 12-17 The Positive,
  - Cardinal Virtues of New Life In Christ: Love, Peace and Thanksgiving
  - Love 3:12-14
  - General Instructions 3:15-17
- 18-4:1 New life In Christ: Household Relationships Reoriented Under the Lordship of Christ
  - Wives and Husbands 3:18-19
  - Children and Fathers 3:20-21
  - Slaves and Masters 3:22-4:1

## INTO THE WORD(S)

### Things to know when approaching this text

- *Haustafeln* - Household codes in the New Testament: Ephesians 5:21-6:9, 1 Peter 2:11-3:12, 1 Timothy 2:8-15, Titus 2:1-10, Philippians 4:2-3.
  
- Household management was a big and debated topic in the ancient Greco-Roman world

*"In Galatians 3:28, we observe Paul's "perfect-ethic" - a vision of the way he ultimately wished for churches and Christian households to operate. Colossians 3:18-4:1 is not a contradiction of this but what we might call a "contextual-ethic"--a contextualized teaching on relationships in a particular time and place"*  
(Nijay Gupta, Colossians, 163).

## FOUR REASONS FOR PAUL'S APPROACH IN COLOSSIANS ON HOUSEHOLD CODES:

## 3:18-19 WIVES AND HUSBANDS

"The verb "submit" (hypotasso) does not convey some innate inferiority but is used for a modest, cooperative demeanor that puts others first. It was something expected of all Christians regardless of their rank or gender (Mark 10:41 - 45; 1 Corinthians 16:16; Ephesians 5:21, 24; Philippians 2:3 - 4; 1 Peter 5:5)."

*"...What Paul actually says is not an attempt to put women or slaves or even children in their place, but rather to make sure that they behave like Christians in the social roles they are already playing. There is no evidence of a feminist or slave revolution in play in the church in Colossae that Paul is trying to stifle. Quite the contrary, Paul is trying to Christianize a difficult and possibly abusive situation on his first occasion of addressing the Colossians and so to help the subordinate members of the household not merely survive but have a more Christian environment in which to operate....He is giving strong limiting exhortations to the superordinate person in the family...that is what would stand out to an ancient person hearing Paul's discourse for the first time"*  
(B. Witherington III, 187).

### "fitting in the Lord"

Nympha - house church patroness and leader

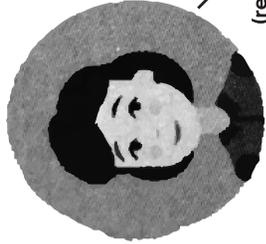
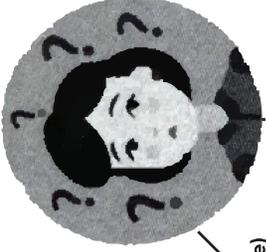
## 3:20-21 CHILDREN AND FATHERS

### 3:22-4:1 SLAVES AND MASTERS

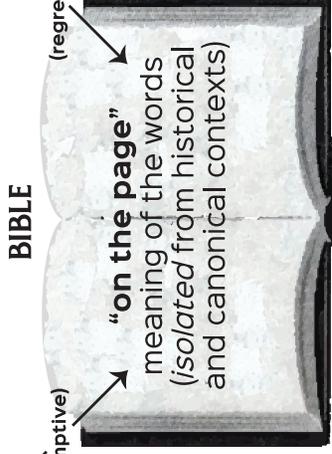
*"Paul does not sanctify slavery with these commands but subtly undermines its very premises while encouraging obedience as an expression of loyalty to the family group"*  
(Garland).

# A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic

## THE X→Y→Z PRINCIPLE



(redemptive) → (regressive)



**X**

somewhat redemptive

**Y**

more redemptive

**Z**

**Original Culture**  
(ancient Near Eastern and/or Greco-Roman culture)

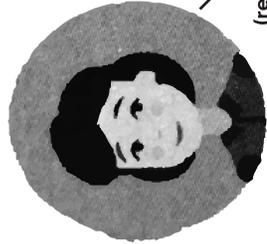
(the concrete words of the text; an ethic "frozen in time")

**Our Culture**  
(where it happens to reflect a better ethic than Y)

**Ultimate Ethic**  
(reflected in the spirit of the biblical text)

# A Redemptive-Movement Hermeneutic

## THE X→Y→Z PRINCIPLE



(redemptive)

(regressive)



**X**

somewhat redemptive

**Y**

more redemptive

**Z**

**Original Culture**  
(ancient Near Eastern and/or Greco-Roman culture)

(the concrete words of the text; an ethic "frozen in time")

**Our Culture**  
(where it happens to reflect a better ethic than Y)

**Ultimate Ethic**  
(reflected in the spirit of the biblical text)