

This passage seems to give 'husbands,' 'fathers' and 'masters' the upper hand in their various relationships. Do you think that is Paul's intention? What is the motivation behind all the instructions Paul is giving?

## DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION

We do not tend to think in terms of slavery today, but what Paul says about bondservants and masters may equally apply to employees and employers. How do you think this passage would apply in the the modern workplace?

Paul tells the Colossians to continue 'steadfastly' in prayer. How steadfast are you in your prayer life? How could you improve your prayer life?

Paul's concern is not for his own comfort, but for the work God has given him to do. While it is fine to pray that God will meet our practical needs, how often do you pray that God will "open the door for the word" so that you can declare the truth about Jesus to your family, friends and neighbours? What could you do about that?

*This is a challenging passage! Paul calls us to live out our relationships in the light of Jesus' love for us and the new life God has given us. Take some time to pray that God would show you how that should be worked out in your own life.*

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# A Short Study of COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:6

*In this study from the third and fourth chapter of Colossians we hear how Paul puts the implication of new life in Christ into practical and relational terms.*

## COLOSSIANS 3:18-4:6

- 18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*
- 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.*
- 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*
- 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*
- 22 Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.*
- 23 Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,*
- 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*
- 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.*
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- 1 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.*
- 2 Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.*
- 3 At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison—*
- 4 that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak.*
- 5 Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time.*
- 6 Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

## OBSERVATION

Mark references to people. e.g. 'wives.'

- What pairs of people does Paul address in the first part of this passage?
- In each pair, what does Paul tell each person to do?

Paul says most about bondservants (slaves). Mark the word 'obey.'

- What should the obedience of the bondservant look like?
- How does Paul motivate the bondservants to act this way?

Mark the words 'masters' and 'master.'

- What does Paul remind the masters of that should cause them to act with kindness to their bondservants?

In verse 2 of chapter 4, Paul is almost certainly no longer just talking to masters, but to all the Colossians.

- What does Paul tell them to do?
- In what manner should they do it?
- What is Paul's concern for himself?

Mark the words 'walk' and 'let.'

- What else does Paul tell the Colossians to do?

## CROSS REFERENCE AND INTERPRETATION

The statement that many people will struggle with in this passage is the call for wives to 'submit' to their husbands. Look up Ephesians 5:22-33. What does Paul expect the husband to do for the wife? How should the relationship of husband and wife reflect that between Jesus and the Church?