

Colossians 3:18-4:1 (Part 1) - David Baumgartner

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 29 April 2018

Preacher: David Baumgartner

[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church, Knowing Jesus, Making Jesus Known. This morning, we continue our study on the New Testament book of Colossians.

Please turn with me to Colossians chapter 3. We're going to be picking it up in verse 18. We're actually in the very guts of Paul's letter to the Colossians.

You like that word? Guts. Paul's been describing the character of the believer. From Scripture, we know that the moment of faith, we become new creations in Christ.

The old passes away. All things become new. Jesus himself in the Gospel of John describes this as being born again. Anybody here born again?

Oh, I hope the room is full of hands this morning. He talks about crossing over from death into life. That's how Jesus describes it.

[1:03] You might want to ask, well, what happens to a person at this point? Well, when the Holy Spirit takes up residence inside the new believer, God begins to change that person.

Think about it. He changes our thinking. He changes our values, our priorities. This process is known as sanctification. It's where God conforms the believer into the very image of Christ himself. And as this happens, these changes become evident. They become outward. They manifest themselves to other people. For example, you may think of family members, neighbors, coworkers. They begin to notice that, boy, this person has changed. Something has happened that now this person is different. I want to ask you, how many times has a child gone off the Bible camp? And then she comes home, and she looks the same, but she is, her parents begin to notice that there's something different about her. Something is different about my daughter.

[2:11] I heard this great story this week about Tom and Nikki Zellman's daughter. You know, Layla, she got invited to this thing from, is that right?

What? Ed and Nikki. Ed and Nikki. I'm sorry. Ed and Nikki, yeah. Ed and Nikki. And Layla, she had this great honor of being invited by a teacher to something really special.

What a great thing that is, to be distinguished from another, from all the other kids, because if there's something about your behavior, something is different about my daughter.

Maybe I don't have to tell her three times to pick up her room. Or maybe she's, no, I'm not saying that about me either. You know, there's other things, though. You know, being respectful.

Or how about when coworkers begin to notice when there's a new believer there, and there's something that's different about this guy. There's something about him.

[3:07] Maybe he's now, he's a committed, hard worker. And you ask him, what's going on in your life? And he says, well, I've been going to a Bible study. And I've been learning things not only about Jesus, but I can say that I know who Jesus is.

In fact, I have crossed over from death into life. The fact is, friends, God changes people. He did, and he still does.

Last week, the focus of the text here was on the believer's inner life. And we saw those wonderful truths that God changes us internally. Well, this morning's text, we're going to continue these thoughts here on how does God change the believer's home life?

In other words, how does our relationship with God affect what goes on in the home? And so the focus this morning would be the dynamics of the Christian home.

I wanted to make just a couple comments here. First of all, this portion of Colossians is very practical. If you look with me in your handout, there's nothing fancy there.

[4:17] No fill in the blanks. Notice there's three sections. And each section has two parts. Verses 18 and 19, you've got wives and husbands. Verses 20 and 21, you have children and fathers.

Or you may say parents there. Verses 22 all the way to chapter 4, verse 1, talks about household servants and masters. Now, a typical household in the city of Colossae would have these. Husbands and wives, children and parents, and then household servants and masters. Now, today, we may not be nor may we have slaves.

But if you're an employer or an employee, I would say these principles still apply to us. Here's the second comment, though. This section is very needful.

The very first instruction that when God founded the earth here, I'm sorry, the first institution when God founded the earth was the home. The home was the first institution.

[5:22] We read that in Genesis chapter 2. There's a saying that as the home goes, so society goes. Have you ever heard that before? Yeah, I've heard that.

Well, I'm going to ask you, how's it going? How is the nation or how's society going? You might want to hold that thought, Kevin. Just hold that thought.

For the past several decades, the family unit has been under attack. Amen. It has. The social engineers in media and in Hollywood, they're constantly trying to redefine just the very definition of what a family is.

And so it's needful for us to see what God's word has to say. I think it's really interesting that our text in Colossians here, it's almost verbatim to what you find in Paul's letter to the church in Ephesus.

So I think that they must have needed to hear these things as well. Let's go ahead and read here chapter 3. I'm going to start in verse 18. Wives, be subject to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord.

[6:38] Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

Fathers, do not exacerbate your children that they may not lose heart. Slaves in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.

It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a master in heaven. Let's go to the Lord in prayer.

[7:43] Heavenly Father, we are so grateful that we can come here today on the beautiful day that you have given us. Lord, all the things that you give us are wonderful. You give us yourself, Lord, in the person of Jesus, who, through our faith in him, we cross over from being dead and become the life.

And we thank you for that, Lord. We thank you, Lord, for these words that encourage us as believers that we can live lives that are a blessing, that you give us homes and a family life.

Lord, we thank you so much. May these words instruct our hearts. May we see wonderful things in your word this morning. Things that we don't know. Things that you may teach us, Lord.

We ask for this in Jesus' name. Amen. You may have heard of this man. His name is William Waldo Beach. He's a Christian author and a professor at Duke University.

He died in 2001 at the age of 84. Well, Mr. Beach wrote some eight books on Christian ethics. Ethics is the study of morality.

[8:58] They look at what's good and what's bad for society. And this is what he said. He said about, this is about modern man. Modern man can be characterized or summarized by these three words.

And I'm just going to paraphrase because he uses a lot of medical terms here. But the first one is this. Immorality. Modern man can be described as being immoral.

That is, living without any rules, having no moral compass upon which to live. Secondly, modern man can be described as this word, with this word, emptiness.

You agree with that? Emptiness. Emptiness. Having no sense of purpose or meaning from which to live. The third description.

Loneliness. Everyone lives for himself. Or everyone lives for herself. Of course, these are just generalities, my friends. But I think that he's right on when he talks about this.

[10:04] These three descriptions, they pretty much sum up everything that you and I see and hear about. And things are not getting any better.

They're not. But here's the key, friends. And this is the thing to remember. It doesn't have to be this way. No. There is a God in heaven.

And through the life-changing power of God's Holy Spirit, we can be different. We can have a standard. We can have that moral compass from which we can live.

We can have an identity. We can be a person that has a real purpose in life. And thirdly, you and I can be part of a family. God's family.

A family that will live forever and ever. Let's look here at what Paul says about the dynamics of a Christian home. And we start here in verse 18 with wives and husbands.

[11:05] Notice here, verse 18. Wives, be subject to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. I just want to stop right there. It's good to be reminded that under the Jewish laws, that women had very few rights.

That's true. Most women were viewed more or less as possessions. According to the Pharisees, a man could divorce his wife for virtually any reason.

You know, maybe he didn't like her cooking. So he's going to get a divorce. They tried to trick Jesus with that. But with what Moses said, and Moses didn't say, get a divorce.

He gave a permission for it. But the situation under the Jews was not good for women. But secondly, it's not good under the Greek and Roman laws either. It's not.

It wasn't any better for women. Their laws, the Romans and the Greeks, demanded complete servitude and chastity from a wife.

[12:08] But a husband could go out and party all he wanted and with whom he wanted to. In the eyes of the Lord, friends, all women have great dignity and equality.

Not in what we do, but who we are. And that's a really important thing. Notice here in verse 18, Paul appeals to women to submit to their husbands.

And that's because God designed it that way. Husbands have this God-given leadership role in the family. Now, since the 60s, I remember that time, submission has been a bad word.

But there's something that you see here in the scripture. Every place where we see that Paul talks about the women's role, he always defends it by grounding it in God's creation order.

Now, I'm not going to say, well, what is that? What are these concepts? Just a quick review here. First is the concept of headship. And headship was in place before the fall.

[13:19] In Paul's first letter to the Corinthians, he says this. Christ is the head of the man. The man is the head of the woman. God is the head of Christ.

And then in his first letter to Timothy, he says, I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. Here's why. For it was Adam who was created first, and then Eve. Did you see that creation order there? How God did that? Notice, it was Adam who was formed first, and then Eve. Eve was created to be a helpmate for Adam, to complete him.

So that's the concept of headship. Here's another concept. Responsibility. Adam named Eve. In Genesis chapter 2, you can follow along with me on your handout here.

The man said, this is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman, because she was taken out of the man. And then it's Genesis 3.

[14:23] Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all living things. After Adam and Eve sinned, God comes to Adam for an account of what happened.

Not Eve. And how did Adam react? He blamed it all on Eve. Yeah, he did. And then he blames it on God. He said, the woman you gave me.

Oh, that wasn't a good move there, Adam. But we still see the concept of headship, the concept of responsibility. And then third, here's a concept of representation.

All of mankind is represented through Adam, not Eve. In Genesis, here's a verse that we don't read very much. Genesis 5, verse 2. Read this with me on your handout.

He created them male and female, and he blessed them and named them man in the day when they were created. Now some of the paraphrases have the word mankind.

[15:28] But the word there is actually, he named them man. Even though Eve sinned first, it was counted against who?

It was counted against Adam. Paul says again in his first letter to the Corinthians in chapter 15, For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.

Submission does not mean inferiority.

No. It does not mean that one person is better than the other. Jesus was not inferior to God, but we see in the scriptures that he submitted to the Father.

Submission here in this letter in Colossians refers to the wife's divine calling to honor and affirm her husband's leadership role and to help him carry it out.

[16:31] It's a disposition. It's the disposition to yield to her husband's guidance. Not because he's always right. It's because it's out of reverence for Christ.

I want you to notice just how personal Paul is in this section here. When he appeals to wives, he's saying, Ladies, this is your man.

Your own husband. And I think that it just, it emphasizes just the intimate, vital relationship that exists between a husband and wife.

Well, what does it say about the husbands here? Well, in verse 19, we come to the husbands.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

I think there's two commands here. First of all, husbands, keep on loving your wives. Loving your wife. That's an agape type of love, sacrificial love.

[17:29] And secondly, don't call her honey and then treat her like vinegar. No, men, if you're married, see your wife as the most important human being in the world.

Husbands, she's a lifelong partner. She's a gift from God. Amen. Yeah. It took me years to figure that out.

But it's true. She is a gift from God. And never ask your wife to do something that would violate her own conscience. And I believe that most women will have no trouble yielding to a man like that.

Amen? Yeah. Happy marriages don't occur automatically. I want to ask you, men, when's the last time that you prayed with your wife?

You know, we've gotten to a bad habit of praying at night only when we go to sleep. I'll tell you what. It's a blessing to pray with your wife. To discuss spiritual matters with your wife.

[18:36] Different things, questions. Take her out. Have fun. Date your wife. Yeah, I'm speaking a lot to you young guys here. You know, that's coming up here.

The Christian home ought to be a place of cooperation and peace. You know, just, and when it does that, it stands out.

People see that. People see that there's something different about this home. There's something about it that makes me want to come here. There's something about it that I want my kids to come here and be with this family.

Because all, everyone, is in submission to Jesus Christ. So examine your own family. Does that describe you?

Second grouping here is about parents and children. Now this is something important here. Not every marriage has children. But it is one of the normal products of marriage.

[19:36] In fact, we see in Genesis chapter 1, verse 18, that God commanded our first parents to what? Be fruitful and multiply. And when there's children in a family, they become a big part of it.

I can say that from experience here. Verse 20, look with me. He says, Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

You realize this is one of the few places in the New Testament where young children are spoken to directly. There's a couple other places.

Ephesians chapter 6, verse 1. Galatians chapter 4, verse 19. In John's epistles, he frequently refers to little children.

But mostly there, that's a term of endearment. They're not literally children in many cases, as they are here to whom Paul is speaking. I think that if you can imagine, if we could hear Paul speak verse 20 on like an audio book or something, I think that his tone would be very soft, be very encouraging because he's speaking to the children, those who are dependent upon their families.

[21:00] Children have rights. They have rights to be born. Children have a right to be treated as human beings and not sold into slavery.

But children, and that's the point here, also have responsibilities. And their chief responsibility is to obey their parents. He says, it's well-pleasing to the Lord.

A child who does not learn to obey his parents is not likely to grow up obeying any authority. He'll defy his teachers.

He will defy the police. He will defy his employers. He will defy virtually anyone who tries to exercise authority over him. And that's because it wasn't learned in the home.

And ultimately, he will defy God himself. In his letter to the Ephesians, Paul writes in chapter 6, he says, children, obey your parents and the Lord, for this is right.

[22:05] Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with a promise. What is that promise? That it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.

Like today, it isn't easy for children. I don't think it is. Children must be handled with care. Why is that? Well, we'll go to the next section there.

It's because they can lose heart. He says in verse 21, fathers, do not exasperate your children that they may not lose heart. Now that word for fathers there, it could be translated as parents, as it is in other places.

Like if you look in Hebrews 11, verse 23, so parents, do not exasperate your children. Here's a couple questions though that it brings up. What does it mean to exasperate a child?

When I looked it up here, it has several definitions. It could mean irritate. It can mean cause anger or bitterness, provoke, or here's another word, embitter.

[23:13] It might, it could embitter your children. Now how can parents embitter children? I was thinking about this. Some of it is speaking through experience, sadly, but some of it is also just what I observe in this world.

The first, how do you embitter a child? The first one, parents, is see your children as a chronic source of irritation. Anybody ever do that?

I know it's kind of funny here, but you know, I have seen parents deeply wound their children by the tone of their voice.

I have. It's because, and particularly men, because men tend to have a short fuse. Discouraged children are easy targets for Satan.

And men especially, we must learn to distinguish between normal, childish behavior from willful defiance.

[24:16] Because in my view, it's totally different. It calls for a different response. Children need discipline, but they need a discipline administered in love.

But I tell you, it takes time. It takes time to discipline a child correctly. And that's why I believe that so many parents today don't.

Because it takes time. Here's a verse in Hebrews 12. God deals with you as with sons. Well, how does God deal with sons?

Well, what son is there from whom his father does not discipline? But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children, and you are not sons.

So God's intention was for us as parents to discipline our children and not to see them as constant sources of irritation.

[25:17] Here's another way. Another way. If you want to embitter your child, have no time for them. Yeah. Doesn't it seem like the world is just spinning faster and faster?

Anybody relate to that? Am I the only one? Parents, we must take time to listen to our children. Listen carefully to them.

Share your life with them. Your values. Your beliefs. You know, the values and beliefs are not taught. They're caught. And that's how it works.

I think it's also a matter of being transparent to your children. Let your children see your own struggles. I'm talking age appropriate here, but let them see you struggle with things.

And let them see, especially when you need forgiveness. What a great thing to teach your child. Parents who are believers will share Christ with their children.

[26:21] They will. It's an important thing. There's a saying that God has no grandchildren. Have you ever heard that before? It's true. A child, here's the truth.

A child does not automatically have a relationship with God just because his parents do. That's a truth. At the right age, all people must come to faith themselves.

And as a child sees his parents deal with life and sees his parents' relationship with God, they will begin to ask questions.

But friends, it takes time. We all have the same amount of time, don't we? The question is, how do we spend it? Here's an interesting thing about time for children.

many of you know our son, Matt. He's been over in Japan for about eight years now. He tells us that for about a generation now that the young married couples in Japan, they've been so busy with their careers and their jobs that they are foregoing having children.

[27:35] And nobody really thought about that. It's just something that happened. But now, this has become a national crisis in Japan. You know why? It's because they're not replacing their older generations.

The older generations, they're dying off right now. But there's no time for children. What a sad thing. What will Japan be like in 50 years?

It's a good question here. So first, don't see your children as a constant source of irritation.

Secondly, don't take any time for your children. Thirdly, parents who involve their children in their conflicts.

Boy, there are occasions where I have seen one parent become emotionally attached to one of their children. And instead of being a parent, that person, that parent tries to be that child's best friend.

I'll tell you what, friends, that does not work. It does not. Every father, mother, parent, relationship should live in a way that shows that we too have a father.

[28:49] And who is that? God himself. God himself to whom all of us are in subjection. So, we must live our lives upright before God.

let your children see your victories. Let them see your struggles. Let them see you walk by faith and then they too will want that. And don't build up their confidence in themselves.

Let their confidence be in God. Now, this last section here, masters and servants. Just a couple comments here. first, it's been estimated that at one time about a third of the inhabitants of the Roman Empire belonged to this class of people.

That would be about, in Paul's day, that would be about 60 million people. Some of them were well educated and some of them had great responsibilities in the home.

But most of them were treated poorly. And here's why. A person became a slave through one, a prisoner of war, two, as convicts, or three, through debt that was owed, or fourthly, through kidnapping and then being repurchased, or maybe lastly, your parents themselves were slaves.

[30:13] Look what Paul says here. Verse 22. Slaves in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service as those who are merely pleasing men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Isn't it interesting here? That Paul does not condemn nor condone slavery. Instead, he takes it as a social structure as he finds it and he tries to change it into becoming the very opposite of what it is.

here's the key here. Christ transcends all divisions of people. Amen? That's a truth here. Paul says in his letter to the Galatian churches, there's neither Jew nor Greek, there's neither slave nor free man, there's neither male nor female, for all of you are, you're all one in Christ Jesus.

And so, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul addresses women, he addresses children, he addresses slaves as equal members of the Christian household.

So, if you are a slave back then, or maybe you're an employee today, Paul would tell us, work hard, not with eye service, not with sweeping the dust underneath the carpet, which I think is a good example of eye service, but work as though Jesus Christ is the one who is supervising you.

[31:54] And you know what? He is, isn't he? We cannot escape the Lord's eyes. He is there. And then similarly, he says in chapter 4, verse 1, masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness.

Boy, that had to be news to many people there. Knowing that you too have a master in heaven. What he's saying here is treat others the way you want to be treated.

And when you do, you will be truly rewarded. I tell you what, this has to be the hardest passage that I've had probably in 10 years.

I'm not kidding. There is so much here, and I don't speak as someone who is a great example of any of these. But I don't consider myself a failure either.

I just am what I am. And I know that there's grace from the Lord Jesus. Because even when I fail as a husband, as a father, as once an employer, and then certainly as an employee, God's grace is there.

[33:08] And I can look to him and I can say, thank you, Lord, that you're not done with me, and that I have a chance to be with fellow travelers on this earth.

There's so much in this passage. There's so much that Kevin, next week, is going to cover it some more. And he's going to be talking about that rewards of the inheritance.

What does that look like? Kevin, what does that look like? I tell you, this passage is just full of so much, so many things. What a wonderful passage it is.

As the musicians come forward here, we're going to transition into the remembrance part of the meeting. How do you deal with all of these commands from scripture?

Maybe you're like me. Maybe you're saying, boy, when I look at this, I haven't been a great husband. I haven't been a great father.

[34:11] I haven't been a great wife or mother. Maybe my parents haven't been great examples to me. Maybe I've been a bad worker.

Maybe I've been a good worker and I've taken all the credit myself. You see all of these things here. There's a lot to consider here. If you are a believer, one day you will be in heaven, right?

Isn't that what we believe? Yeah. You'll be radiant. You'll be spotless without stain or wrinkle or blemish.

But we're not there yet, right? Right now, all of us walk this path in life. And in a way, it's like walking up this mountain trail and we're heading for the summit.

God. And as believers, we undergo this transformation process where we are being transformed into the very image of Christ himself.

[35:14] And that affects everything about us. It affects our personalities. It affects how we think, what we believe, and then how it's lived out in our home life.

And friends, I have to tell you, sometimes that transformation process, it gets really hard. And it's as though a dense fog rolls in to that path.

And it obscures our view of that summit in heaven. I think there are times in this life when we get glimpses of heaven.

Do you know what I mean? If you're a parent, maybe you see something godly, in your children. Maybe somebody whom you have brought to Christ, you've seen them change over the years.

And you get a glimpse of heaven. A thousand years from now, when you and I are in God's presence, we'll be in a state of glory at that time, maybe we can look back and we can remember remember how we got to participate in others' lives.

[36:34] Whether you're a wife, a husband, a child, a parent, a grandparent, a worker, a boss, so many things.

We can thank God that he never leaves us alone and he's committed to himself. He has committed himself to us.

And what a great God he is. Heavenly Father, thank you so much for these words that Paul wrote.

And he can write just a simple sentence and it's just full of truth.

And Lord, when you look down upon us, we are thankful for your grace and your mercy. We're thankful, Lord, that as believers, you're not done with any of us yet.

But that through the power of your Holy Spirit, we can be transformed into that perfect image of Christ. And Lord, that we can have an impact on others.

[37:44] Lord, I just think of each family that's here. There is a Christian home. And people are looking at that home. And maybe they're asking themselves, what's different about that home?

What's different about those people? What's different about their children? I want that. May you use each person, each family, each employee and employer, all of us, Lord, for your glory.

And let us cooperate with you. Because you're a good God and you have our future in your hands. In Jesus' name.

■■■ lost woman's song, attentional and love by her.

Let's share his name ahí and feed and feed the wife.