

**Lesson Fourteen**  
**Colossians 3:20-4:1**  
***Relationships God's Way***

One of the major social problems facing us today is the inability of people to get along with one another. We see it in sibling rivalry, contention in marriages, workplace violence, and even in international conflicts. The Bible teaches that with the fall of Adam and Eve, all of mankind became alienated from God. In Genesis 4 we see that this separation directly affected their descendants' interactions with others. Mankind, apart from God, struggles to make sense of the complex relationships that are a part of daily life. Christians, on the other hand, can experience peace and harmony as they submit to God by following His commands.

There is a close association between doctrine and duty, character and conduct. What better place than the home and the workplace for true Christianity to be revealed and lived out. Paul will address this in his usual forthright way so we can understand there is to be proof of our faith in practical terms; the working out of our Christianity in the everyday relationships of life and living.

**Day One – The Christian Family**  
**Read Colossians 3:20-21**

1. Children are only in the home for a brief span of time making application of biblical instruction regarding the family of utmost importance. It is easy for us to exhibit Christian behavior at church or with friends, but it is within the close everyday contact with our family that we can truly see the depth of our walk with the Lord. How does Colossians 3:20-21 instruct children and parents to interact with one another?

2. The first instruction is to children. What additional insight into this passage is proved by Ephesians 6:1-3?

3. These passages in Ephesians 6:1-3 speak of obeying as well as honoring your parents. The command to honor your father and mother in verse 2 is also found in several Old Testament passages beginning with the ten commandments. Look up each word below in the dictionary and write the definition.

Honor:

Obey:

a. What are the differences and/or similarities that you believe exist between honoring and obeying?

b. What are the natural results of children honoring and obeying their parents?

4. A child who honors their parents shows them consideration and respect. What does this mean for adult children?

## **Day Two – Christian Parenting**

### **Read Colossians 3:20-21**

1. What command is given to fathers in Colossians 3:21?

Note: Since the word used for fathers in this verse can also be translated parents, it applies to both mothers and fathers equally.

a. What does Ephesians 6:4 add to this instruction?

2. Use a dictionary to define the words discourage and provoke.

Discourage:

Provoke:

a. If left unchecked, what effect would these actions have on a child?

3. When a home truly reflects Jesus, the discipline of children is balanced with encouragement. Sometimes though, children become discouraged because adults tend to forget that it isn't always easy to be a kid. Thoughtfully read the following questions and use them to stir up thoughts regarding ways that you would like to improve your parenting skills or to encourage the children within your sphere of influence.

Do you tend to focus predominately on the things that need improvement in your or any other child's life?

Do you have your finger on the emotional pulse in your home?

Do you regularly make time to just have fun with your kids or a child in your life?

Are you prayerfully looking for ways to build up and encourage them?

Have you set exceptionally high goals because you want to help them succeed in life, even in areas that they are not interested or gifted in because it is important to you?

Do you regularly communicate through hugs and facial expressions that you genuinely care?

Are you readily available or are you so busy that your family feels like they do not have your time and attention?

a. In what specific ways could you improve in these relationships?

4. Responsibilities of a parent are multifaceted. Fortunately, the Bible gives us illustrations of good and bad parenting from which we can glean. What do you learn from the verses below?

Good Parents	Bad Parents
Deuteronomy 6:4-9	Genesis 25:28; 37:3-4
Proverbs 31:15-17, 26-28	1 Samuel 3:13
2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14-15	1 Kings 22:51-5

a. Summarize what you learned from the examples in the chart above.

5. Psalm 127:1 provides us with truth that should be the foundation for every home. As you read and meditate on this verse, write a prayer asking the Lord to show you how to apply it to what you learned thus far in this lesson.

*“The Christian home is the Master’s workshop where the process of character molding is silently, lovingly, faithfully, and successfully carried on.”*  
Richard Milnes

### **Day Three – The Christian Servant**

#### **Read Colossians 3:22-25**

1. At the time that Colossians was written, many households were affected by master/slave relationships. Our ideas of slavery today are vastly different than the reality of the Colossian believers’ lives under this system. Regardless of the time in which we live, the truths given regarding this relationship still greatly apply to our conduct. Since we do not have masters and slaves in our society, what type of relationship could you liken this to today?

2. If you are an employee and a Christian, you have a responsibility to behave in a certain manner in the workplace. How do the following verses exhort you to serve and work?

Ephesians 6:5-8

1 Timothy 6:1-2

Titus 2:9-10

1 Peter 2:18-19

a. In light of the above verses, what should your service, your work ethic, look like to those who are around you?

3. The opposite of God-honoring service is found in Colossians 3:22. Explain what a man-pleaser who merely gives eye-service acts like.

a. In what ways could this also happen in Christian service?

b. What does Galatians 1:10 say about acting like this?

4. Our great need is to set Jesus Christ before us in everything that we do. What is the key to doing this according to Colossians 3:23?

5. The Greek word translated heartily in verse 23 is defined as *out of the soul*. Take a moment to reflect on what this means to you personally. How will obeying this command impact your service both at work and in ministry?

6. Employees are rewarded with paychecks and benefits for their labors. In Colossians 3:24 we find, that as Christians, we too will be rewarded. What do you learn about these rewards according to the following verses?

Matthew 16:27

1 Corinthians 3:8-15

2 Corinthians 5:9-10

2 Timothy 4:7-8

a. How should knowing this change your attitude and actions?

#### **Day Four – The Christian Master**

#### **Read Colossians 4:1**

1. Just as the employee must do everything as unto the Lord, so too must the employer. Why is this true according to Ephesians 6:9 and Colossians 4:1?

a. How should knowing that God does not show partiality affect the actions of an employer?

2. What is wrong with showing partiality according to James 2:1-10?

3. Romans 12:9-10 gives a sharp contrast to the world's way of thinking and even the church's practice of showing partiality toward certain people. What should govern our relationships with others?

4. We've all heard stories of harsh employers or we ourselves have been treated unfairly. Perhaps the best biblical example of serving or working under unfair conditions is the story of Joseph. Summarize what you learn about Joseph's troubles in Genesis 39.

a. Two years have passed since Joseph was imprisoned. Read Genesis 41:38-45. What was the outcome in Joseph's life?

b. What do you learn from his example that you will apply to your own life?

5. Jesus was both the perfect Servant and the perfect Master. How will following His example in John 13:1-17 help you to be a better employee, servant in ministry or employer of others?

6. Throughout lesson 13 and 14, there has been an underlying theme in each of the relationships that we have studied. Reread Colossians 3:18, 20, 22, 23, 24 and meditate on the principle that should rule our lives as believers. As you ponder the implications of these verses, write a prayer asking the Lord to help you make them a reality in your life.

*"Teach me, my God and King, in all things Thee to see; and what I do in anything to do it as to Thee."* from Morning and Evening by Charles H. Spurgeon



