

Colossians 3:18-4:1

Discuss: What is your response when you come across parts of the Bible that surprise or shock you?

Recap: Re-read 1:1-14 and 3:1-4. Where does this section fit in the main thrust of the letter? How does that help us understand this section?

Hear from God: Read Colossians 3:18-21

1. Why does it make sense for Paul to focus on family life in his encouragement to live considering the resurrection?
2. Considering 3:1-17, what *can't* submission mean?
3. God is, in his essence, other person-centred love, because he is one God in three persons. If we note the relationship within the Trinity (see John 5:19 and following), we note that there is **equality** within the Triune God i.e. the Father, Son and Spirit, are God – one God. We also note there is **diversity** that does not compromise this unity (The three persons of God are Father, Son and Spirit, not three fathers etc). As we consider this relationship, and the fact we are made equal and diverse in his image, how does that help us understand this section? For example, the Son is not in menial bondage to the Father and is in no way *less* than God.
4. Look at v19. Is the husband to lord it over his wife? What is his role, and why might that be just as hard as v18?
5. What would vv18-21 look like in practice? How would this family life adorn the gospel of Christ?

Hear from God: Read Colossians 3:22-4:1

6. Far from condoning slavery, Paul moves here to the attitude of the Christian at work. How hard or easy do you find to be a Christian in your work? Whether that is employed or voluntary?
7. How is a Christian to live out their faith at work?
8. What might that look like in practice?
9. How is a Christian employer to act? If you have a role such as this, what practical things can you put in place to live out 4:1?

Apply these things to your life

1. Like last time, we see here the inseparability between our mundane private life, and our faith. In particular we have noted the Christian at home, and the Christian at work. Have any particular aspects of the passage struck you? If so, how?
2. Passages like this often invoke strong passions among us. How can we discuss these things in a way that commends 3:1-4?

Prayers

- For our relationships: that there would be mutual submission and humility.
- For our workplaces: that there would be servant heartedness and fairness