

Study 10

COLOSSIANS 3:18-24

BUILD A DIFFERENT HOME

When the epistle to the Colossians was written, people generally lived in *households* (John 4:53; Acts 18:8; 1Cor. 16:15) This frequently included a family (parents with their children) living with members of their *extended* family (aunts, uncles, grand-parents) and live-in servants as well. Roman households were built upon a hierarchy. But Christianity revolutionised the way families and households interacted with each other.

1. In what way does Colossians 3:18 sound as if the apostle Paul is reinforcing this basis of Roman culture?

2. But why might Colossians 3:19 have sounded so shocking to Paul's original audience? (And does it effect the way we understand Colossians 3:18?)

Colossians 3:19 removes any justification for a husband to hit, harm, or maliciously hurt his wife. Christianity radically transformed how husbands and wives are to relate to each other, but most particularly how husbands are to treat their wives. Based on Ephesians 5:25, 28 husbands are to love their wives in the same way that Christ loves His Church! While this goal might seem unattainable for most husbands, perhaps a great place to start for a husband is to go for a regular walk with his wife and gives her his undivided attention for the duration of their walk.

3. Why should children obey their parents according to Colossians 3:20? (How then should a child respond to a parental command which violates God's Law?)
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Because the New Testament teaches that fathers are to represent God _____, they are to treat their children in a way that reflects God's heart and character.

4. Based on Colossians 3:21, list three examples of what fathers should *not* do to their children -
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I have never met a perfect father. I have never met a father who hasn't got angry at their children at times and done and said things in the heat of that anger that they later regretted. But I have met *humble* dads who have shared with me how they have, at times, had to go to their child/ren and apologise for their angry outburst and ask for forgiveness from their child/ren.

5. The Roman Empire was dependent upon slaves. We know that many of these slaves turned to Christ at the preaching of the apostles (the Epistle of Philemon gives an example of this). Because the Gospel meant that a slave was equal to their master, how might Paul's instruction in Colossians 3:22 seemed out of step with this revelation, and was it? (Refer to Ephesians 6:5-8)
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6. Although Paul is addressing the relationships within the households of that day, what principles are there for us from Colossians 3:23-24 for us today? How might the original recipients of this directive have applied it?
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May God help each of us to be agents of His peace, love, and forgiveness toward the members of our families and our workplaces.

Amen.