

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them.

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. 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. Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

Colossians 3:18 – 4:1 ESV

This is a passage which is difficult to many. Our culture does not promote what Paul wrote, for the ideas of submit and obey are repugnant to many. This, however, is an inspired message from God. It is timeless and universal. The first key to accepting these instructions is to understand that God is the One Who gave them. They are instructions for a good life.

We often tend to focus on one or two words while we forget the context. The context includes that we, who are Christians, have been raised with Christ. We have the hope of heaven laid up for us. The same love of God behind our salvation is the love of God teaching us to observe the commands to the left. We should make no excuses but press forward with application in our family.

The family is from God and He knows what is best for all of us. When we submit to Him life is better and hope grows strong. Wives are to submit to their husbands. In a similar passage Paul said a wife is to submit to her husband as to the Lord. She is to be in subjection just as the church is subject to Christ in everything (Ephesians 5:22-24). Husbands are to love their wives. The husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church, giving Himself for her (Ephesians 5:25-27). This is a sacrificial love, looking out for her best interest. These attitudes and actions are for each to do from their heart: the husband's love and the wife's subjection. When God's pattern is followed the home is good. Be careful about the many who want to define these actions more specifically with unique actions placed upon each. Those are opinions of people. Rather, note the Biblical instruction and how the actions are defined in Scripture. Compare these passages on

this subject: 1 Peter 3:1-7; Ephesians 5:22-33).

Paul focused the parent/child relationship on the child's obedience and the father's relationship with the child. Read Ephesians 6:1-4 for additional instruction for fathers and children! Mothers also have unique responsibilities toward their children (Titus 2:3-5; 1 Timothy 5:14).

Another struggle some have with this passage is instruction for slaves and masters. It is profitable to view these instructions as an employee/employer relationship. The Lord instructs us for the best in the workplace, seeking to please Him in all situations. Regardless of our 'position', we have responsibilities in the workplace. Let each of us do them well.

There is no partiality from the Lord. While we may think we are unique and should be allowed many liberties, we must recognize that we are to fulfill these roles to the best of our ability.

The passage quoted above is challenging in our daily lives. When we submit to God and fulfill our roles we please Him and give glory to Him, just as we should.