

Colossians 3:18-4:1 "Living in relationships"

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We can't turn this section of scripture into a list that we don't admit is a struggle in our lives and even worse that we are able to somehow muster up the ability to perform. We can't just look at each other and say "it's easy, just obey" and that "all the problems of the home are rooted in un-submissive wives and un-loving husbands and if we could just understand our roles and do them that everything would be ok." We are sinners saved by grace and so nothing dealing with relationships is ever going to be easy.

We must do two things when looking at this section in Colossians. First, we must understand the context of what Paul is trying to say here with this instruction on marriage, parenting, and working. Second, we must understand the root of why we struggle with these roles in relationships.

v.18-19, wives and husbands. The command is for wives to submit to your own husbands like you submit to the Lord. You do this because, as Christ is the head of the body and we submit to Him, God has set up the husband as the head of the household and so we must submit to Him in the same way. Submitting to your husband as the head of the family should resemble submitting to Christ as the head of the Church. And so what are the hindrances to submitting to our husbands in marriage?

Husbands are to love your wives in the same way that Christ loves us. That as he has made us "alive" in Him, that we should love our wives based on the reality of whom she is "in Him". Husbands, why do we struggle with this?

"Unresolved sin always causes preoccupation with our own lives. We want so badly to be mature and selfless, but our unresolved sin just keeps triggering self-centeredness. We're consumed by the need to hide the stuff we can't get right. We are driven to blame others in order to maintain our image of worth. We become self-directed, self-attentive, and self-protective. As a result, we are unable to offer love to others." (Thrall/McNicol)

v.20-21, children and parents. Let's start off by looking at v. 12 of Colossians 3. Since we are "in Him" we can take off the old self of anger and abusive speech and (v. 8) put on the new self with compassion, gentleness, and patience. Most exasperating, provoking, or nagging of children is less about their issues and more about ours as parents. That because of unresolved sin, because of feelings of shame, guilt, etc. that we do not know how to deal with, it comes out as anger and abusive speech with our children. And what is the result of this?

v.3:22-4:1, employees and employers. What keeps us from having the right attitude in our work relationship? What does our wrong attitude say about our trust in Christ?

As he states in Colossians 3:11, there is "no distinction between Jew or Greek, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian or Scythian, slave or freeman but Christ in all and in all". That (employer) despite your authority based on position, don't let it become an authority based on status.