

A Daily Devotional Study Guide



COLOSSIANS

Written by
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WEEK 4

“Parents and Children”

Study: Colossians 3:20-21

Reading: Ephesians 6:1-9, I Peter 2:13-25

Memory: Romans 8:37

One of the great joys as a father came when I heard a few of my older teenage children say that sometimes they wished they could disobey me, but they just couldn't. No, the joy part didn't come by their desire to disobey, but it gave me great satisfaction when they told me that they had a very hard time disobeying me. I found joy in this because it helped affirm in me that I had done an okay job in showing them great love and security. They loved me so much, as a result of my loving them, that they had a hard time going against what I would ask them.

Today, we are going to see how children need to obey their parents, but also be reminded that parents should parent in such a way that will cause their children to want to obey.

What Does the Bible Say?

The importance of the family and the unity found in it was very much on the mind of Paul, though he himself was single. This is why he addressed the relationship between husbands and wives and also the relationship between parents and children. Paul first addressed the children and commanded them to be obedient to their parents in everything. This means that children aren't to pick and choose which commands they are supposed to obey, but are to be fully obedient in all things. When a child obeys his or her parents, that is something that is fully pleasing to the Lord. Basically, this is how God designed the parent/child relationship to function. This may not always be easy for a child, especially when a parent is not fully committed to the Lord. Yet when children choose to obey their parents they are choosing to obey the Lord (vs 20).

Children will find it much easier to obey their parents when their parents are living in a way that pleases God and love their children the way that God loves His children. Fathers need to be careful not to cause

their children to become unnecessarily angry or emotionally unstable. Though this would apply to mothers as well, it is directly given to fathers because of their role as a leader and because they have a natural tendency not to be as loving as mothers. This does not mean that parents should avoid punishing their children. Sometimes children get angry when they are punished, but if discipline is administered out of love, that anger normally dissipates. Many parents make rules that have no basis or foundation in Scripture. They often become very authoritative about those rules, driving their children into rebellion. Many parents also discipline out of anger or are very inconsistent which often causes great confusion in the mind of a child. When writing a similar passage to the Ephesian church Paul added, “but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.” (Ephesians 6:4) When parents instruct, correct, lead and discipline their children, they need to follow the example of Christ and principles that God set forth in His Word. They need to have a good foundation in the Word of God and an understanding of what God desires from them. They need to be consistent themselves in their spiritual walk and have a love and passion for the Lord. True spirituality is better caught than taught and the parents who have a deep love for God will often see that love grow in their children and this love will help avoid the provoking of their children (vs 20-21).

How Does this Apply to Me?

If you are a father, ask yourself if you are leading your children closer to God or driving them further away from God? Do you treat them with fairness and love, or are you pretty inconsistent with your discipline because you often base it on your emotions. The saying, “Rules without reason equals rebellion” is often true and it becomes easy to focus on controlling your children, rather than leading them into righteousness.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for the parents He has given you.
- * Ask God to help you display His love to your children.

Thought for the day

What are children commanded to do (vs 20)?

Why do you think this was given as a command?

Why do you think children have a hard time obeying their parents?

Why is it important to realize that obedience pleases the Lord (vs 20)?

****When children learn at a young age to obey their parents it helps them out the rest of their lives. They find it easier to obey God and easier to obey the earthly authorities that God has placed over them.*

What are fathers not supposed to do (vs 21)?

How do you think fathers can do this?

Why do you think this is addressed to the fathers?

What are ways that mothers can provoke their children to anger?

What can happen when fathers don't follow this command (vs 21)?

What do you think this looks like?

Why is it so important that fathers should be very careful in how they treat their children?

Take time to think about your parents. What are some things you really appreciated about their parenting?

What are some things that you didn't like about how they parented? Why not?

Describe what a healthy parenting relationship looks like when a child is at home.

Describe what a healthy parenting relationship looks like once a child is out of the home.

"Workplace Relationships"

Study: Colossians 3:22-4:1

Reading: Philippians 1:12-30, Ephesians 6:18-24

Memory: Romans 8:37

Shortly after I graduated from college, I worked a part time job at a local grocery store. There was an employee at the store who drove me crazy because he was very lazy and it caused more work for me. I went to my boss and complained about him a few times, until my boss finally reprimanded me, reminding me that he was the one in charge. I learned a valuable lesson from that experience. Even though I didn't agree with the boss's decision and didn't like the way the other employee was lazy, I simply needed to do my job to the best of my ability. I couldn't get bothered by this other employee or worry about what he wasn't doing. I had to focus on my work and do the best that I could.

Today, we are going to be reminded of our responsibilities as employees or employers. We will see how important it is to be a representative for God in the workplace.

What Does the Bible Say?

The slaves were given instructions to submit to their masters. The slave/master relationship of the Bible would be similar to the employee/employer relationship of today. This obedience was not just to take place when their masters were looking or to simply impress those that were over them, but was to be done realizing they were continually being watched by Christ. They were to work as if Jesus was their boss and do the best they could do in the situations where God had placed them. Even if their masters were not pleasant to work for, the slaves were still commanded to serve by putting their whole heart into what they were doing. They were to understand that they might not receive earthly rewards and their master's approval, but by serving the Lord with a full heart, they were gaining heavenly rewards and were living in a way that was pleasing to God. Though they as servants might have been treated negatively and unfairly, there is no partiality with God and God sees every act of obedience from the heart. He will not fail to reward those

who live for Him, especially those who suffer for His sake (vs 22-25).

Masters were also responsible for the way that they treated their slaves. They were to treat them fairly and be just with them in all things. They were not to take advantage of them, but give them fair wages for their labor and they were not to be mean to them (vs 1).

How Does this Apply to Me?

If you are a father, ask yourself if you are leading your children closer to God or driving them further away from God? Do you treat them with fairness and love, or are you pretty inconsistent with your discipline because you often base it on your emotions. The saying, "Rules without reason equals rebellion" is often true and it becomes easy to focus on controlling your children, rather than leading them into righteousness.

Employees, do you give your whole heart when you are on the job, or do you find yourself lazy and lax when the boss is not looking? When you feel that you are underappreciated and that you are not recognized for the service that you perform, it is very easy to stop putting your whole heart into what you do. It is good at all times, but especially in situations like this to realize that your boss is not the earthly one that you see, but is Jesus Christ Himself. You need to work with the same earnestness that you would if Jesus was standing next to you watching what you were doing. This may not earn you favor in your work place, though often it will result in that. You need to realize that God sees and knows all things and He will reward your faithful obedience and service.

For Employers, managers and leaders, how are you treating those God has placed under you? Are you treating them the way Christ commands?

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for the job he has given you.*
- * *Ask God to help you be a submissive employee or loving employer.*
- * *Praise God because He will give you the strength to make the right decisions in the workplace.*

Thought for the day

What were servants told to do (vs 22)?

Why do you think Paul instructed this?

Why is it sometimes difficult to be a submissive employee?

How were servants not supposed to serve (vs 22)?

Describe how a person would work “by way of eye-service” (vs 22)?

How were servants supposed to serve (vs 22)?

How are you to do whatever you have been called to do (vs 23)?

Why is the command in this verse often difficult to keep?

What do you think you can do to help you live out this verse?

What can you be assured of when you follow these verses (vs 24)?

Why is it important to understand you are not serving your human boss but you are serving God (vs 24)?

How do you think you can practically put this verse into practice?

What does verse 25 declare?

What do you think verse 25 means?

What does God not show (vs 25)?

Why do you think Paul expressed this?

How should leaders treat those that are under them (vs 1)?

Why do you think this is very important?

"Seasoned With Salt"

Study: Colossians 4:2-6

Reading: Matthew 5:1-16

Memory: Romans 8:37

As a pastor who gets up in front of people all the time and speaks, you would think that boldness would come easy when it comes to sharing my faith one on one with other people, but it is often quite difficult for me. The more I am purposed to share Christ, the easier it becomes, but it is never that easy because there is always the fear of rejection in the back of my mind. Often those fears are unfounded, but they hinder me at times none the less.

Today, we are going to see how even the apostle Paul asked for boldness when sharing His faith.

What Does the Bible Say?

Here in chapter 4, Paul closes his letter to the Colossian church by challenging them to be faithful and steadfast in prayer. When we continue in prayer, we are persistent and we do not give up. Paul wanted the people to keep on praying, even if at times they did not see the results that they wanted to. Their prayer was also to be accompanied with thanksgiving, which helps those who are praying realize that it is God who is in control and it is God who will do the work. The giving of thanks is a vital component of prayer that greatly helps the attitude of the prayer as it directs their mind off of themselves and onto God (vs 2).

One of the things that Paul wanted them to pray for was the he would have the opportunity to speak the Gospel to others, and when he got the opportunity to speak, he would speak with boldness. Notice that he did not ask for them to pray that he would be released from jail or that he would be found innocent of the charges, but his mind was on spiritual things. This is a challenge to us because if we were praying for Paul today, most of our prayer would be about his release. It must also be noted that the great apostle Paul asked for boldness, though he had shared Christ hundreds of times by this period in his life. This helps us see that all of us need boldness and that sharing the Gospel is not always easy, but

with the help of God, we can boldly declare the truth. In this request Paul also asked for the Colossians to pray that the message he delivered would be clear. His concern was that those who he talked to would clearly understand what he was declaring about the mystery of Christ (vs 3-4).

Paul encouraged them to walk in wisdom with those who do not know the Lord. By this he was challenging the Colossians to be a good testimony to others around them. He wanted them to know that their actions would help open or close the door for sharing the Gospel. Not only do actions affect the way the Gospel is shared, but what comes out of our mouths is very important. Our speech is not to be harsh and condemning, but was to be filled with grace that would be like salt which would add flavor and keep a person desiring more. This would open the door for people to ask them questions about their faith so they could answer them by sharing what Christ had done. This doesn't mean that we should never speak of judgment and wrath, because that is a major part of the Gospel, but our lives should display the grace of God to others and not His condemnation to them (vs 5-6).

How Does this Apply to Me?

What is your prayer life like? Are you consistent in praying for yourself and for others, or do you get lazy and let time slip away from you? When you pray, are you only consumed with earthly things or do you constantly give thanks because of what God has done and will do for you? Paul wanted prayer for boldness in sharing the Gospel. His focus was on heavenly things, and much of your prayer should be focused on the eternal as well.

When you talk to those around you who don't know Christ, do they sense a love and grace in you that is sincere, or do they feel you are judging them for their sin? Sometimes, it is easy to present a "better than thou" attitude without even realizing it. Ask God to open the door for you to boldly share your faith and ask Him to help you to do so with speech that is gracious.

Suggestions for Prayer

* *Thank God for the grace He has given you.*

* *Ask God to help you be a bold, loving witness for Him.*

How are you to pray (vs 2)?

What do you think it looks like practically to do this?

Why do you think you are commanded to be "watchful" in prayer (vs 2)?

Why is the giving of thanks mentioned over and over in Scripture (vs 2)?

Why do you find it hard to give thanks?

How can you become a more thankful person?

What did Paul want them to pray for (vs 3)?

What does this show you about Paul's desire (vs 3)?

Why do you think he often uses the term "mystery" (vs 3)?

Why did Paul say he was in prison (vs 3)?

What did Paul want to make clear (vs 4)?

Why is this a great thing to pray for?

How should you walk (vs 5)?

Why is this important?

What do you think the end of verse 5 means?

What should your speech be like (vs 6)?

What do you think that means?

Evaluate your speech, things you have said or written recently. How has your speech followed this command?

How will positive speech help open the door for the Gospel (vs 6)?

“A Faithful Servant”

Study: Colossians 4:7-9

Reading: Philemon, II Timothy 4:9-22

Memory: Romans 8:37

As a pastor, I am often amazed about how many people tell me that they put my name down for a reference when applying for a job. I don't have a problem with this, but I have found that many of them do not realize that I will have to be honest in my recommendations. For most people, I am able to give a great reference, but on a few occasions, I have had to describe a person as “unreliable” when I was called for a reference. Thankfully, a bad reference is the exception and not the rule. I find great joy when I am asked to give a reference for a believer who is faithful and I can fully endorse them for a job.

Today, we are going to see how Paul gave a “reference” for a few of the believers he knew and how we should strive to be recognized like these men were recognized.

What Does the Bible Say?

Tychicus is mentioned here and in a few other places in Scripture. He was the one responsible for delivering this letter to the Colossians and also was given the responsibility to deliver a letter to the Ephesians and Philemon. He was respected by the believers and loved by Paul. Here, Paul described him as a “beloved brother” a “faithful minister” and a “fellow servant.” These were tremendous compliments that came from the Apostle Paul and they were given to help the Colossian church know that they were to openly receive the letter and what Tychicus had to say. He had been sent by Paul so that he could give word to the Colossians about the well being of Paul (since he was in prison) and so that their hearts would be encouraged when they heard how God was working through him in the midst of persecution (vs 7-8).

Paul had also sent Onesimus along with Tychicus so that he could be returned to Philemon. Philemon was converted to Christ, probably at Ephesus, but appears to be living in Colossae at this time. Onesimus was his servant who had run away to Rome and, while there, he met Paul and

became a believer. Under Roman law, Onesimus was rightfully Philemon's possession, so Paul sent Onesimus back to be with Philemon and it appears from the description of Onesimus, that he went willingly. Though he was a runaway slave, his conversion to Christ changed his life and now he was considered by Paul to be a “faithful and beloved” brother. Onesimus and Tychicus were going to share many details about Paul's condition and what had happened to him that Paul did not include in his letter (vs 9).

In verse 10, Paul began to send greetings to the church from other believers that were around him at the time. Though these can be easily overlooked, we don't want to do so, but will take a little time tomorrow to look at the importance of the companions of Paul. It is vital to remember that Paul did not do things alone, but was surrounded by many faithful and godly men and women who helped him in the ministry God had called him to do.

How Does this Apply to Me?

How would your pastor or spiritual leaders describe you if you were called to deliver an important letter for them? Would you be described as faithful? Would you be described as loving and one who is greatly loved? Are you a fellow servant with those who God has called to lead your church? They needed each other in those days, just like you need others in your spiritual life today. You need to look to others for help, encouragement and comfort. You also need to choose to be the type of person and spiritual leader who can come along side and help others. Your goal should not be to be recognized by men, but it would be a noble desire and a tangible goal for you to be recognized by your spiritual leaders like Onesimus and Tychicus were. (As long as you are doing it for God and not just to be noticed of men.) Take time to think about how you would be described and let God show you any areas of your life that need to be changed. Be reminded that you don't have to be the lead guy like the Apostle Paul was, but you are just as important.

Thought for the day

Who was Paul sending with the letter (vs 7)?

Who was this man? - See Acts 20:4, 2 Timothy 4:12 and Titus 3:12

What was he going to do for the Colossians (vs 7)?

What are the three ways that Paul described him (vs 7)?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How can those descriptions fit your life today?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

What two reasons did Paul send Tychicus for (vs 8)?

- 1.
- 2.

Why do you think Paul wanted the Colossians to know these things?

Who else was Paul sending (vs 9)?

How is this man described (vs 9)?

Why do you think Paul said that Onesimus was one of them (vs 9)?

What were Tychicus and Onesimus going to do (vs 9)?

Why did Paul feel it was important for the Colossians to know these things?

What can you learn from this?

“Fellow Laborers”

Study: Colossians 4:10-18

Reading: II Timothy 4:1-22, I Corinthians 12:1-31

Memory: Romans 8:37

What Does the Bible Say?

From the closing of this letter (and others written by Paul) it is very clear that Paul did not minister alone. He wasn't a superstar apostle who did everything on his own, but surrounded himself with many people who worked together with him for the cause of Christ. He developed deep and intimate relationships with many believers in many places as they shared the common bond of Jesus Christ. He continued his list of these helpers in verse 10 when he gave greetings to the Colossian church from Aristarchus, who was in prison with Paul. It is not clear why he was in the Roman prison with Paul, though we do know that he was with Paul in Jerusalem when Paul was arrested and he also traveled with Paul to Rome (Acts 27). He was a close companion and fellow laborer with Paul.

The next name mentioned is very significant because it was John Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. He is the one that left Paul and Barnabas on their missionary journey because it became too difficult. He is the one that helped cause the split of Paul and Barnabas because Barnabas wanted to give Mark a second chance, but Paul was fearful he would abandon them again. In 2 Timothy 4:11, we see that Paul eventually changed his mind about Mark and found that Mark was very helpful to him in the ministry. Here, the Colossians are encouraged to receive Mark with open arms (vs 10).

Aristarchus, John Mark and Justus (Justus was also named Jesus which were both common names in those days) were all Jews who had been a help and comfort to Paul. He gave a special recognition to them because they were Jews who ministered to the Gentiles with him. Paul described them as men who were a great comfort to him (vs 11).

A special greeting was also given from Epaphras who was from Colossae and spent a great deal of time in prayer for the Colossian church. It is significant to note that Epaphras prayed diligently for the

spiritual well being of the church, just as Paul did. Epaphras was not casual in his burden for the people, but prayed earnestly for them (vs 12).

Greetings were also given from Luke who helped attend to Paul's physical needs with his doctoral care. Demas also greeted the church though Demas was later on described as a man who turned from following Paul because of the attraction of the things of the world.

Once the Colossians finished reading the letter publicly, they were to give it to the church in Laodicea to be read there. The letter to Laodicea was then to be read in Colosse. These two cities, along with Hierapolis, were very close to each other (a few miles apart) and the believers in the cities would have had a somewhat close relationship. The mention of Nympha and the church that was in her house reveals the possibility of a few things. It appears that the churches in these cities could have been comprised of several small house churches who all met together at set times. This is not establishing how church should be or had to be done, but it does reveal that the church isn't to be confined to one central meeting place (vs 13-16).

In verse 17, Paul did throw a little challenge out to Archippus challenging him to fulfill the ministry that he had been called to do. We are not sure, but from this comment, it appears that Archippus had been wavering and Paul wanted the church to challenge him to fulfill the great task that God had called him to.

As Paul closed the letter, he asked the church to remember his chains and the fact that he was in bondage. This seems to be a reminder of what he said earlier and in other prison epistles as he called upon other believers to pray for him to have boldness and opportunity to share Christ with others (vs 18).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Do you work together well with other believers? Do you have close companions that you are co-laborers with as you strive to live for God and fulfill His calling in your life. Though some of the people mentioned were "full time" ministers, many were just common, ordinary people who chose to commit themselves to the cause of Christ. The idea of working together is presented clearly in many of Paul's writings and should be a vital part of your life today as you strive to live holy and as you strive to tell others about Jesus. Don't allow yourself to become closed to others, but open yourself up to deep, intimate relationships that are centered in

Christ. When you do, you will find great help and power among fellow laborers. Choose to be thankful for all those God has placed in your path, whether they are in your local church or a person who is serving God elsewhere and fervently pray for each other.

List the seven people that Paul mentioned in this passage. Give a brief description of who they were, why they were mentioned and how you can be like them as co-workers for the Gospel.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

Romans 8

21 that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. 22 For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. 23 And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. 24 For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? 25 Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another. 26 Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. 27 And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. 28 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. 31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? 33 Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. 34 Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? 36 As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." 37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.