

New Man & Home

Colossians 3:1-4:1

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**BIG BEND
BIBLE
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Colossians 3:1-11 – Not Carnality but Christ

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. ² Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. ³ For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ⁴ When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

⁵ Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. ⁶ Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience, ⁷ in which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them. ⁸ But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. ⁹ Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, ¹⁰ and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him, ¹¹ where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.

v1 – What does it mean to be raised with Christ?

The idea of being raised with Christ was introduced back in Colossians 2:12, where Paul used baptism to illustrate this spiritual reality. Now, seeing that we are raised with Christ, certain behavior is appropriate to us.

What should those raised with Christ do?

The believer is to ‘seek the things... above.’ The word ‘seek’ marks aspiration, desire, and passion... In order to seek these things the mind must be set on them.

v2 – What does it mean to *set your mind on things above*?

The best Christian living comes from minds that are fixed on heaven. They realize that their lives are now hidden with Christ in God, and since Jesus is enthroned in heaven, their thoughts and hearts are connected to heaven also.

Can you be so heavenly minded that you are no earthly good?

No... the more heavenly minded you are, the godlier you'll be and that results in works that benefit others.

What is the problem with setting your mind on earthly things?

‘Earthly things’ are not all evil, but some of them are. Even things harmless in themselves become harmful if permitted to take the place that should be reserved for the things above.

v3 – Why should we set our mind on things above?

- Because we have died to our old lives without Christ
- Our new lives are hidden with Christ meaning that it is so interconnected with Him that people should see more of Him in us than they see of us.

v4 – What will happen when Christ appears?

We will be resurrected into our eternal, glorified bodies (the rapture of the church).

To whom will Christ appear at the rapture of the church?

To the church only... this is one of the characteristics of the rapture that distinguish it from the second coming of Jesus...

Revelation 1:7 – Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye will see Him

v5 – What should the promise of the blessed hope cause us to do?

Put to death the things that are against God and part of this world... live more holy lives.

Titus 2:11-13 – For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ

What does it mean to “make dead” those things that are against God?

The verb nekrosate, meaning literally ‘to make dead,’ is very strong. It suggests that we are not simply to suppress or control evil acts and attitudes. We are to wipe them out, completely exterminate the old way of life.

- We put to death in the sense of denying these things and considering them dead to us.
- To gratify any sensual appetite is to give it the very food and nourishment by which it lives and is active.

Why do you think Paul mentioned these specific sins?

Perhaps these were sins the Colossians were struggling with but regardless the Holy Spirit put them on his mind for some reason...

- There is no way that Jesus would walk in any of these sins, so if we identify with Him, we won’t walk in them either.

Why are the sexual sins mentioned here so destructive?

Fornication, uncleanness, passion and evil desire: They destroy relationships between people and God is all about relationships.

- It is a sin against others, for to satisfy the desire, others are wronged.
- It is self-destructive, for these wrong conceptions and activities always react upon the soul.

How is covetousness idolatry?

It reduces life to created things possessed, rather than in righteous relationship to the Creator-God.

- Godly people seek their joy in God; the covetous person seeks that in things in which only God can give.

v6 – What is the wrath of God?

Wrath is defined as “the emotional response to perceived wrong and injustice,” often translated as “anger,” “indignation,” “vexation,” or “irritation.” Both humans and God express wrath... God’s wrath is holy and always justified; man’s is never holy and rarely justified.

Why do these sins invite the wrath of God?

Because the world loves this kind of sinful lifestyle, they don’t come in humility to Jesus. As they continue in these sins, it adds to their condemnation.

- One sin is enough to send anyone to hell...
James 2:10 – *For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.*
- But there are greater levels of condemnation...
Matthew 23:14 – *Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows’ houses, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.*

v7 – What do these sins represent?

In which you yourselves once walked when you lived in them: These sins may mark a world in rebellion against God, but they are in the past tense for the Christian.

- The Christian should not live like the sons of disobedience.
- A true Christian cannot be comfortable in habitual sin.

v8 – What are we to put off?

But now you yourselves are to put off all these: The sins Paul next lists (anger, wrath, and so forth) are regarded by many as “little” sins that Christians may overlook with little danger. Paul challenges us to put off the old man in every area of our lives.

Anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie: Each of these sins are primarily committed by what we say. When Paul calls the believer to a deeper obedience, he tells us to bridle our tongue...

James 1:26 – *If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one’s religion is useless.*

Is it possible to lie without using words?

It is easy to distort the truth; an alteration in the tone of voice or a certain look will do it; and there are silences which can be as false and misleading as any words.

v9 – Why shouldn’t we lie to one another?

Since you have put off the old man with his deeds: The more notorious sins of Colossians 3:5 are easily seen as incompatible with the nature of Jesus. But these “lesser” sins are also incompatible, so put off these sins also.

Why is referring to our old sin nature as the old man appropriate?

We are a new creation in Christ no longer subject to the enslavement of our old worldly ways.

2 Corinthians 5:17 – *if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.*

How can we put off the old man with his deeds?

When a tide of passion or a surge of anger is felt, it must be dealt with as the alien intruder it really is, and turned out of the house as having no right to be there, let alone to be giving orders.

v10 – What goes along with putting off the old man?

Put on the new man: The phrase Paul used was commonly used for changing a set of clothes. Removing the old and putting on the new man in Jesus.

What characterizes putting on the new man?

The new man is renewed in knowledge, he is hungry to know what God says in His Word.

What is the *image of Him who created him*?

Paul is clearly alluding to Genesis 1:27, where it is said that God created Adam in His own image. Nevertheless, now that the first Adam is regarded as the old man who should be put off and discarded, because now we are created after the image of the second Adam, Jesus Christ.

v11 – What else characterizes the new man?

Where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free: The new man is part of a family, which favors no race, nationality, class, culture or ethnicity. It only favors Jesus, because in this new family, *Christ is all and in all.*

How does being a new man patterned after Jesus break down barriers between people?

Among new creation people it doesn't matter if one is Greek or Jew or circumcised or uncircumcised or a Scythian or a slave or a free man.

- All of these barriers existed in the ancient Roman world; and the power of God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ broke them all down.
- Especially powerful was the barrier between slave and free, but Christianity changed that.

Colossians 2:12-17 – Character of the New Man

¹² *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;* ¹³ *bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.* ¹⁴ *But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.* ¹⁵ *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.* ¹⁶ *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.* ¹⁷ *And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

v12 – How are new creations in Christ *the elect of God*?

This means that God has chosen the Christian, and chosen him to be something special in His plan. "Elect" is a word that frightens some, but it should be taken both as a comfort and as a destiny to fulfill.

v12-13 – What is the commonality between the characteristics followers of Christ should put on?

Each one of the qualities mentioned in this passage express themselves in relationships. A significant measure of our Christian life is found simply in how we treat people and the quality of our relationships with them.

What are *tender mercies*?

If something is tender, it is sensitive to touch. "The apostle would have them to feel the slightest touch of another's misery; and, as their clothes are put over their body, so their tenderest feeling should be always within reach of the miserable."

What does *kindness* look like?

The ancient writers defined *chrestotes* as the virtue of the man whose neighbor's good is as dear to him as his own... It is used of wine which has grown mellow with age and lost its harshness. It is the word used when Jesus said, '*My yoke is easy*' (Matthew 11:30).

How is *humility* the "parent" of both *meekness* and *longsuffering*?

Humility effects my actions toward others...

- Meekness means I will not dominate, manipulate, or coerce for my own ends, even if I have the power and the ability.
- Longsuffering means I will not become impatient, short, or filled with resentment towards the weaknesses and sins of others.

Why is forgiving one another so important?

We are told to live forgiving one another, after the pattern of Jesus' forgiveness towards us. Understanding the way Jesus forgave us will always make us more generous with forgiveness, and never less generous.

- When we consider the staggering debt Jesus forgave for us, and the comparative smallness of the debts others have toward us, it is base ingratitude for us to not forgive them (see the parable, Matt 18:21-35).
- When one thinks of how Christ forgave you it should make us much more generous with forgiveness.

How is God's forgiveness distinguished from the human view of it?

- God holds back His anger a very long time when we sin against Him.
- God reaches out to bad people to bring forgiveness to them; the habit of man is to not reconcile if the offending person is a person of bad character.
- God makes the first move towards us in forgiveness; the habit of man is to only be reconciled if the offending party makes the first move.

- God forgives often knowing that we will sin again, sometimes in the exact same way. It is the habit of man to forgive only if the offending party solemnly promises to never do the wrong again.
- God's forgiveness is so complete that He grants adoption to those former offenders. In the habit of man, even when forgiveness is offered, he will not lift again the former offender to a place of high status.
- God bore all the penalty for the wrong we did against Him. In the habit of man, when he is wronged, he will not forgive unless the offender agrees to bear all the penalty for the wrong done.
- God keeps reaching out to man for reconciliation even when man refuses Him again and again. In the habit of man, one will not continue to offer reconciliation if it is rejected once.
- God requires no probationary period to receive His forgiveness; in the habit of man, one will not restore an offender without a period of probation.
- Once having forgiven, God puts His trust in us and invites us back to work with Him as co-laborers. In the habit of man, one will not trust someone who has formerly wronged him.

Is it possible to forget someone's sin against you if you forgive them?

Maybe not for mortal humans but that is what God does...

Jeremiah 31:34 – *I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*

v14 – What is the bond of perfection?

Above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection: Love is the summary of all the things described in this passage. Love perfectly fulfills what God requires of us in relationships.

Matthew 22:36-40 – *Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

How is God's love distinguished from the human concept of love?

The love of God is radically different than the human concept of love. The original Greek word used for love here is agape. Unlike the English language, the Greek language has multiple words for different kinds of love. Agape love is the highest form of unconditional godly love that is the sacrificial kind of love Jesus demonstrated when He paid the penalty for our sins by dying on the cross.

- Most people think love is an emotion which can be fleeting, you can fall in and out of love, or it is a

transaction where I will love you only if you love me back. But godly agape love is an unconditional, sacrificial act of the will where you love the other person whether they are worthy of your love or not.

Why is the agape love of God so difficult for people?

Jesus called all His followers to have agape love for one another in John 15:12. He also said that His followers are even to have agape love for their enemies in Matthew 5:44.

- Agape love is not a typical, natural form of love.
- True agape love is only possible with God's help. Galatians 5:22 says that agape love is the fruit of the Spirit that only results from having a right relationship with the Savior Jesus Christ.
- A person can imitate agape love for a time but true agape love becomes apparent when it is applied for the long haul.

v15 – What should rule in our hearts?

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body: The rule of the peace of God means that peace should characterize the community of God's people, and that peace is a standard for discerning God's will.

What does it mean to let the peace of God rule in your hearts?

The Greek word for rule means arbitrate. Whenever there is an issue to be decided and one choice may disturb your peace while another may maintain it, choose the path that makes for peace.

- Let God's peace act as umpire.

v16 – What characterizes the new man?

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs: The new man walks in the word of God and in worship with other believers.

What are psalms and hymns and spiritual songs?

This variety suggests that God delights in creative, spontaneous worship. The emphasis is more on variety than on strict categories.

- We can scarcely say what is the exact difference between these three expressions.
- The word of Christ is to dwell in us so richly that it finds spontaneous expression in Christian assemblies or the home.

v17 – How should we live?

Do all in the name of the Lord Jesus: The new man lives his life for Jesus. He will only seek to do all things in the name of the Lord Jesus, to His glory.

Colossians 3:18-21 – The Christian Home

¹⁸ *Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.* ¹⁹ *Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.* ²⁰ *Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.* ²¹ *Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

v18 – How do wives glorify God?

Wives, submit: The Greek word translated submit is essentially a word borrowed from the military. It literally means “to be under in rank.” There are levels of rank, and one is obligated to respect those in higher rank.

- We know that as a person, a private can be smarter, more talented, and be a better person than a general.
- In the same way, the wife doesn’t submit to her husband because he deserves it. She submits because he is her husband.

The idea of submission doesn’t have anything to do with someone being smarter or better or more talented. It has to do with a God-appointed order.

- Anyone who has served in the armed forces knows that ‘rank’ has to do with order and authority, not with value or ability.

Does the command to submit conflict with Gal 3:28?

Galatians 3:28 – *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.*

The command to submit has nothing to do with equality, instead it just addresses the identity of role or function.

Does this command mean that husbands should not submit to their wives?

No, submission goes both ways...

Ephesians 5:18-21 – *be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, submitting to one another in the fear of God.*

Should the husband demand submission from his wife?

The form of the verb (hypotassesthe, middle voice) shows that the submission is to be voluntary. The wife’s submission is never to be forced by a demanding husband; it is the deference that a loving wife, conscious that her home (just as any other institution) must have a head.

Should women in general be submissive to men?

Wives, submit to your own husbands: This defines the sphere of a wife’s submission — to her own husband. The Bible never commands nor recommends a general

submission of women unto men. It is commanded only in the spheres of the home and in the church.

- God does not command that men have exclusive authority in the areas of politics, business, education...

Does *as is fitting in the Lord* mean that a wife should submit to her husband as if he were God himself?

In no place does the Scripture say that a person should submit to another as they would to God.

- There are limits to the submission your employer can expect of you.
- There are limits to the submission the government can expect of you.
- There are limits to the submission parents can expect of children.

In no place does the Scripture teach an unqualified, without exception, submission — except to God and God alone. To violate this is to commit the sin of idolatry.

Does *as is fitting in the Lord* mean a wife should submit as long as her husband does what the Lord wants?

This thinks that *as is fitting in the Lord* defines the limit of submission. This is also wrong. It is true that there are limits to a wife’s submission, but when the wife approaches *as is fitting in the Lord* in this way, then it degenerates into a case of “I’ll submit to my husband when I agree with him.”

- That is not submission at all. Except for those who are just plain cantankerous and argumentative, everyone submits to others when they are in agreement.
- It is only when there is a disagreement that submission is tested.

So, what does *as is fitting in the Lord* refer to?

It defines the motive of a wife’s submission. It means, “Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands because it is a part of your duty to the Lord, because it is an expression of your submission to the Lord.”

- They submit simply because it is fitting in the Lord to do it. It honors God’s Word and His order of authority.

What exceptions are there to wives submitting to husbands?

As is the case in every human relationship, the command to submit is not absolute. There are exceptions...

- When the husband asks the wife to sin, she must not submit.
- When the husband is medically incapacitated, insane, or under the influence of mind altering substances, the wife may not submit.
- When the husband is violent and physically threatening, the wife may not submit.

- When the husband breaks the marriage bond by adultery, the wife does not need to submit to her husband being in an adulterous relationship.

v19 – What responsibility do husbands have?

Husbands, love your wives: Paul’s words to husbands safeguards his words to wives. Though wives are to submit to their husbands, it never excuses husbands acting as tyrants over their wives. Instead, a husband must love his wife, and the Greek word translated love here is agape.

What is significant about husbands agape loving their wives?

Agapao does not denote affection or romantic attachment; it rather denotes caring love, a deliberate attitude of mind that concerns itself with the well-being of the one loved.

- The word has little to do with emotion; it has much to do with self-denial for the sake of another.
- It is a love that loves without changing.
- It is a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting re-payment.
- It is love so great that it can be given to the unlovable or unappealing.
- It is love that loves even when it is rejected.
- What agape love means is, “Husband, continually practice self-denial for the sake of your wife.”

Why are husbands admonished not to be bitter?

Even if the wife has given the husband some reason to be bitter, the husband is never justified in a harsh or unloving attitude towards his wife.

- Agape loves even when the receiver is unworthy.

v20 – Who should obey their parents in all things?

Paul has in mind children who are still in their parents’ household. For these, they must not only honor their father and mother (as in Ephesians 6:2), but they must also obey them in all things.

Does this apply adult children out on their own?

When a child is grown and out of his parents’ household, he is no longer under the same obligation of obedience, but the obligation to honor your father and mother remains.

Why should children be obedient to their parents?

For this is well pleasing to the Lord: This is one of the important reasons for a child’s obedience. When a child respects his parent’s authority, he is respecting God’s order of authority in other areas of life.

Why is this idea of submission to an order of authority so important to God?

It is part of His very being. The First Person of the Holy Trinity is called the Father; the Second Person of the Holy Trinity is called the Son. Inherent in those titles is a relationship of authority and submission to authority. Our failure to exercise Biblical authority and to submit to Biblical authority, sins against the very nature of God.

1 Samuel 15:23 – *rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft*

v21 – What responsibility do parents have to their children?

Fathers, do not provoke your children: Parents — here, put into one as fathers — have a responsibility to not be too harsh, too demanding, too controlling, unforgiving, or just plain angry.

- Irritate by exacting commands and perpetual faultfinding and interference for interference’ sake.
- In modern times you can add too permissive, uncaring, and uninvolved.

Why is the word ‘fathers’ used here instead of ‘parents’? It may have an eye to the importance of the father’s role within God’s created order in the upbringing of children which is often neglected.

How do parents discourage their children?

Parents who provoke their children discourage them. Not feeling the love and support from their parents will cause them to believe the whole world is against them. We should be as gracious, gentle, forgiving, and longsuffering with our children as God is with us.

How is the break down in parent child relationships a sign of the times?

Matthew 24:12 – *Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold*

As much as parents try to mitigate it, there is no avoiding the fact that divorce is child abuse. While such abuse is not physical, it is mental and the mental forms of abuse are often worse making a longer lasting impact. Children often think that they are to blame for the split-up of their parents despite their parents’ claims to the contrary.

- There is increasing mental abuse even when parents stick together. Abuse often takes the form of just ignoring the child with TV babysitters, letting them obsess on video games, and not disciplining them.
- Since love is growing cold in this Age, there is an increasing incidence of the more obvious forms of physical abuse as well.

Malachi 4:5-6 – *I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers*

God told us that families would be deteriorating in the time-frame of the Messiah coming. Among the bitter fruit of the selfishness that causes divorce is that children return this lack of love in kind.

- Children see through this lack of loving respect and return this learned behavior by not respecting their parents' authority.
- There is little doubt that Elijah is one of the two "witnesses" of Revelation 11:3-12 who God sends to preach in Jerusalem during the Tribulation.

2 Timothy 3:1-2 – *But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents*

A child not respecting their parents by obeying them is commonplace today. Part of this is due to parents adopting a flawed philosophy of permissiveness, but it is also a response to parents not loving their children. Children need structure and discipline; "*He who spares his rod hates his son, but he who loves him disciplines him promptly*" (Proverbs 13:24). It is certainly not politically correct to discipline children today but moving away from biblical principles has consequences within the family and in society as a whole.

Colossians 3:22-4:1 – Masters & Bondservants

²² *Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.* ²³ *And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men,* ²⁴ *knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ.* ²⁵ *But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.* ^{4:1} *Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.*

v22 – What is a bondservant?

A slave. In Roman times, the term bondservant or slave could refer to someone who voluntarily served others. But it usually referred to one who was held in a permanent position of servitude.

- Under Roman law, a bondservant was considered the owner's personal property. Slaves had no rights and could even be killed with impunity by their owners.

The Mosaic Law allowed an indentured servant to become a bondservant voluntarily:

Exodus 21:5-6 – *If the servant declares, 'I love my master and my wife and children and do not want to go free,' then his master must take him before the judges. He shall take him to the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear with an awl. Then he will be his servant for life*

During the time of Jesus and the first-century church, as much as one third of the Roman population were slaves, and another third had been slaves earlier in life.

- Historical records reveal that it was not unusual for Jews to own slaves during the New Testament period.
- Throughout the New Testament, the word bondservant, slave, or servant is applied metaphorically to someone absolutely devoted to Jesus.

What is the modern equivalent of a bondservant?

It is an employee. In Paul's day many bondservants were voluntary. The principle governing the relationship between master and bondservant applies to supervisor and employee today.

So, what does it mean to obey in all things your masters according to the flesh?

As Christians put on the new man, they will show a properly submissive attitude towards their supervisors.

Romans 13:1 – *Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.*

v22-23 – What does a proper submissive attitude toward those authorities over us look like?

Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God: We are always tempted to work just as hard as we have to, thinking we only have to please man. But God wants every worker to see that ultimately, they work for Him. Therefore, they should do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men.

v24 – How do we know God wants us to work for our earthly authorities as we would for Him?

God promises to reward those who work for our worldly authorities with a proper attitude of submission.

What is the reward of the inheritance?

One should properly read 'the inheritance'; the reference is clearly to the life of the age to come. This is ironic, since in earthly terms slaves could not inherit property.

v25 – What is the flip-side to not having a proper biblical attitude toward our earthly authorities?

But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done: When a Christian worker does poorly in his job, he should not expect special leniency from his boss, especially if his boss is a Christian. Being a Christian should make us more responsible, not less responsible.

- I met with a senior supervisor at Texas Instruments who was a Christian about being a sponsor of the Houston Christian Initiative and he mentioned this as one of his issues with Christian employees... taking advantage of him being a Christian supervisor.

It is possible for an unfaithful servant to defraud his master in a variety of ways without being detected; but God sees this and will punish him for his breach of honesty and trust.

What are we reminded here that *there is no partiality with God*?

For ancient Christian slaves and for modern Christian workers, there is no guarantee on earth of fairness of treatment from those whom they work for.

- Sometimes partiality means that bad workers are unfairly rewarded and good employees are penalized or left unrewarded.
- Paul assures both our ancient brethren and us that there is a final rewarding and punishment, and with this there is no partiality.

v4:1 – What is the responsibility of Christian masters?

Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair: As Christians put on the new man, they will be just and fair to those who work for them. It is a terrible thing for a boss to cheat or mistreat his workers, but far worse for a Christian to do that.

Why is being *just and fair* a more powerful command for masters than to be kind or pleasant to slaves?

One can be kind or pleasant to animals or pets; but we are only just and fair to fellow human beings. Paul asked masters to make a recognition that would undermine the very foundations of slavery.

Does the Bible justify the practice of slavery?

There have been some who used these passages where Paul speaks to slaves and their masters to claim that the Bible does justify or even promote the practice of slavery.

- Slavery was a universal practice that pre-dated both Christianity and the Jewish nation.
- The abolition of slavery came from Christian people and impulses, and not from any other major religion and certainly not from secularism.

Why does the Bible seem to support the practice of slavery?

What many fail to understand is that slavery in biblical times was different from the slavery that was practiced in the past few centuries in many parts of the world.

- The slavery in the Bible was not based on race.
- In Bible times, slavery was based more on economics; it was a matter of social status. People sold themselves as slaves when they could not pay their debts or provide for their families.
- In New Testament times, sometimes doctors, lawyers, and even politicians were slaves of someone else.
- Some people actually chose to be slaves so as to have all their needs provided for by their masters.

How does the Bible condemn race-based slavery?

The Bible teaches that all men are created by God and made in His image (Genesis 1:27).

- The Old Testament did allow for economic-based slavery and regulated it.

The Bible makes it clear that God does not approve of slavery...

Exodus 21:16 – He who kidnaps a man and sells him, or if he is found in his hand, shall surely be put to death.

Similarly, 1 Timothy 1:8–10 lists slave-traders (kidnappers) among those who are “ungodly and sinful” in the same category as murderers, adulterers and perverts, and liars.

- The purpose of the Bible is to point the way to salvation, not to reform society.

A person who has experienced God’s gift of salvation and freedom from the slavery of sin will realize that enslaving another human being is wrong.

- He will see, with Paul, that a slave can be “a brother in the Lord” (Philemon 1:16).

What applications come to mind from our discussion?

- Christians with an eternal perspective will be helpful to other people.
- Looking forward to the rapture of the church motivates us for living godly.
- Christians are new creations; we should be more like Jesus.
- God’s forgiveness is far more thorough than man’s; we should strive to be more like God when we forgive.
- God’s love is far superior to man’s; we should strive to be more like God in loving others.
- Husbands and wives glorify God when they embrace the roles he has established for us.
- Masters and servants glorify God when they embrace the roles he has established for us.