

# The Chief End of Our Relationships

## Colossians 3:18-4:1

Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. **19** Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. **20** Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. **21** Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. **22** 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. **23** Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. **25** 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.

### I. **We must see all our relationships under the Lordship of Christ**

We think of the words of this passage as controversial and counter-cultural to us and think they were better understood and more applicable in biblical times, but they were not! Following Jesus has always been, and will always be, counter-cultural and controversial in any time period and in any part of the world. This passage is not primarily about husbands and wives or children, or slavery. It is not condoning slavery. It is merely speaking into the fact that approximately 50% of the Roman Empire was made up of slaves. The main point of these verses does not have as much to do with our earthly relationships as it has to do with the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. The focus of these verses is not on us, but on Christ. The Lord is mentioned seven times in these verses. The subordination ethic displayed in these verses is at the heart of the Trinity itself. Christ is co-equal in essence and nature but He willingly submits (Phil 2; I Cor. 11:3) Himself to the Father.

### II. **We will experience the freedom and fullness of Christ**

If we live out the Gospel in our relationships we will experience the freedom and fullness of Christ. We are empowered to live out this new life. The answer as to why this new life is difficult can be found in verse two, which that tells us that they were “in Christ” and “at Colossae.” We are in Christ, but we are also living in Memphis. It doesn’t seem that submitting and obedience sounds freeing, but when we see the results of living in the way that seems like freedom to us it results in broken marriages and family and workplace disasters. Freedom is not found in what you want to do; it is the power to do what is right.

### III. **This is all for the glory of Christ**

Relationships should be about Christ, not about us. If we make our relationships about God’s glory instead of about ourselves, we will find freedom and fullness. The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. The chief end of our marriages, children, and work is not our fulfillment. We cannot start with the wrong person or we will end up in the wrong place. Everything is about His Lordship and His glory.

## Discussion Questions

1. How should seeing your relationships as being under the Lordship of Christ change the way you behave in your home and in the workplace?
2. How did Jesus model submission for us?

3. How is this mindset counter-cultural?
  
4. How can you effectively keep this counter-cultural mindset in your life?
  
5. What is the benefit of living “God’s way?”

**Going Deeper**

1. What is the chief end of your work relationships and your home relationships? If it is about anything other than the glory of Christ, how can you change it?
2. How can you live out your redeemed/recreated humanity in your work and home relationships this week?
3. Give an example of how someone has shown you Christ-like submission.