

The New You's New Relationships

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[0 : 00] To set our context, we're going to do a quick review of what we've studied so far in the book of Colossians.

As Nick mentioned in the first week, the overarching theme that runs through the book of Colossians is the sufficiency of Christ in all things. Another way to say this is we are complete in Christ. As believers, we have all things we need to be complete in Christ.

We broke down the book into eight sections. We're going to skip the last portion after the last half of chapter four. We're going to wrap up this week. But those eight sections followed most of the commentaries that I read and reviewed as we were studying.

The first part of chapter one tells us that in Christ, we can grow and bear fruit. The middle part of chapter one paints a beautiful picture of who Christ is and tells us in Christ we can be reconciled to God.

Beginning in verse 15 of chapter one, he is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, both in the heavens and on the earth, visible and invisible.

[1 : 14] Whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things and in him all things hold together. He is also the head of the body, the church, and he is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he himself will come to have first place in everything.

For it was the father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in him and through him to reconcile all things to himself. Having made peace through the blood of his cross, through him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven.

What a description of our Savior in chapter one. Wrapping up chapter one, moving into chapter two, we see that in Christ we can strive and serve, not in our own power but in his alone.

Chapter two, the middle of chapter two begins with, explains how we walk in Christ and how as believers we are rooted in Christ. Chapter two wraps up with our union in Christ, our freedom in him, and our sanctification through Christ.

Chapter three begins with our life hidden in Christ, setting our mind on the things above and not on the things of this earth. Last week, Michael took us through the middle of chapter three where we saw a tale of two yous, the you before Christ and the you in Christ.

[2 : 33] There were many sins we were called to put off and godly character traits we were called to put on like clothes. Now that I've given us a quick review of where we have been, I'm going to wrap up our study this week beginning in Colossians 3.18, studying through 4.1.

Can you please stand to honor the reading of God's word? Colossians chapter three, beginning in verse 18.

Wives, be subject to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

Fathers, do not exasperate your children so that they will not lose heart. Slaves, in all things, obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord whom you serve, for he who does wrong will receive the consequences of this wrong which he has done, and that without partiality.

[3 : 48] Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a master in heaven. May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. You may be seated. All right, so I'm not

great with stories or storytelling, and I struggled with, okay, how do I come up with a good story to talk about wives, submit to your husbands, and husbands, love your wives, and I just gave up.

Because I'm bad at stories, and I'm fairly certain I'm going to offend somebody if I try to do that. So, rather than providing you a great story to grab your attention and gain your interest, I'm going to highlight a few unpopular words in our culture that I just read.

Be subject to, which in some translations is submit. Be obedient. Obey. Serve. Slaves and masters. Consequences. These words in our society today are viewed as outdated, oppressive, and in some cases hate speech.

Our culture teaches that to submit to a higher authority other than yourself is wrong. Why would you obey anyone but yourself? You know what's right. Serving someone else without getting something in return is heresy in the secular culture's belief system.

The words slaves and masters carry with them the idea of oppression. So maybe we should just throw out that whole section of Scripture and not seek application to our lives today.

Consequences.

[5 : 07] Consequences. Why would there be consequences for my behavior when I have enough money or resources to hire a high-powered attorney to escape justice? Then, in verse 4-1, there are a couple words that everyone would like to hear.

Justice and fairness. The problem with that today is how are those words defined? Where are we applying the word justice and fairness in our world? So, hopefully I've got your attention.

Now we're going to dive into the text. The sermon title is The New You's, New Relationships. So I ripped off Michael's title from the Tale of Two You's last week, so you've got a new you, and because you're a new you, you have new relationships.

Our main idea this evening is the new you, in Christ, in new clothes, has new relationships. So the new you, in Christ, in new clothes, has new relationships.

Our sermon outline, and I'll hit this as we go through as well, so you don't have to jot them all down now, there are three relationships and two associated characteristics for each relationship. The first is the husband-wife relationship of love and submission.

[6 : 14] The second is the parent-child or father-child relationship of encouragement and obedience. And the third is the master-servant or employer-employee relationship of integrity and loyalty.

The instructions to the pairs of relationships in these passages are structured as the one under authority, receiving instruction first, and the one in authority, receiving instruction second. So let's look at that first relationship between husbands and wives that is one of love and submission.

Looking at verses 18 and 19 there in Colossians, we see, Wives, be subject to your husbands as is fitting in the Lord, Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them.

These are very short, straightforward commands, right? Wives submit, husbands love. So why is this so hard for us to do what God has instructed us to do?

For wives, I'm going to take us back to Genesis 3.16, where God is laying down the results of man's sin. And there, God says to the woman, I will greatly multiply your pain in childbirth.

[7 : 23] In pain, you will bring forth children. Yet your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you. So wives are fighting against the last part of that original curse.

As part of the fall and sin that entered the world as a result, wives desire to rule over their husbands. This is not how God designed our marital relationships to be. Paul is providing direct instruction to combat this sinful desire to rule your marriages and to return to the order God created in the beginning.

Turning back to the instruction of to be subject to or to submit, if you were to ask for a secular definition of those terms, it would read something like this, accepting or yielding to a superior force or to the will of another person.

Mark Manel provides a biblical definition that I found helpful as I was studying. And he says, one equal person's voluntary acceptance of the authority of another equal person.

Do you hear the difference there? Submission, in the biblical sense, does carry the idea of authority, but it clarifies that the one submitting is equal in station and submitting willingly, not forcefully.

[8 : 37] In the secular definition, there is forceful submission. The best example of this is Jesus, the Son of God, submitting to God the Father. Jesus and the Father are both God, but Jesus submitted

to God, to the Father's will, to come to earth, take on humanity, live a sinless life, die a horrible death, to pay for our sins, and be raised to life again.

Philippians 2, 5-8 reads, have this attitude in yourselves, which is also in Christ Jesus, who although he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a bondservant and being made in the likeness of man.

Being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. So Christ, equal to God, submitted to God's authority.

It's a beautiful picture of what this should look like. Now that we've given a little context to the what of submission, we need to discuss the how. Paul's brief in Colossians, but there's a parallel passage in Ephesians 5 that he provides more detailed instructions.

And we'll be using this passage in conjunction with the Colossians passage the rest of the evening, so please hold your place in Colossians and turn over to Ephesians chapter 5. This is the other section of Scripture where Paul provides details about family relationships and God's expectations for those relationships.

[10:17] Ephesians 5, 22 through 24 reads, Wives, be subject to your own husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, he himself being the Savior of the body.

But as the church is subject to Christ, so also the wives ought to be subject to their husbands in everything. So Paul adds a couple of things here in Ephesians beyond to just wives be subject to. He adds your own husbands, and then he provides the picture of Christ in the church. This instruction from Paul is not a broad command for women to submit to men. It is an instruction to wives in the context of marriage to display a spirit of submissiveness.

Godly submission is not the wife shrinking into the background and automatically following what the husband says or being fully reliant on him to make every decision in the family from start to finish. Wives should ask questions to ensure understanding and alignment on decisions, partner with their husbands to move the family in a positive direction, make decisions in areas of delegated authority, and confront their husband's sins.

[11:28] Husbands, wives are your most powerful sharpening tool. We all know that. Hopefully. Right? This instruction to submit is not absolute.

The wife should never submit to a husband if he is asking her to sin. This would be contrary to the revealed word of God and not acceptable. However, in areas of disagreement that are not sinful, the husband makes the decision and the wife is expected to support and follow his leadership. We will see momentarily that if the husband is fulfilling his role, that he will never ask his wife to do anything to sin or do anything that will violate her conscience. H.A. Ironside, a pastor from the early 1900s, provided a helpful comment in his lectures on Colossians regarding submission. For the Christian woman, this relationship, once entered into, there is no other position in conformity with the will of God than that of godly submission to the husband whom she herself has chosen. With all that has come to light in the church at large, I can't leave this section without noting that the verses here and others like them have been incorrectly and inaccurately used to encourage women to stay in abusive or repressive relationships.

[12:46] This is not the accurate handling of God's word. If you or someone you know is in a physical, emotional, psychologically abusive relationship, please reach out to one of our pastors, elders, or depending on the situation, the authorities to report it.

These situations must be taken seriously and require help to address. As we are about to see, the command to the husbands is to love, and a husband should never use the scripture to enhance his own selfish agenda or assume more power in the marriage relationship.

Looking at verse 19, we're going to get the husbands, so back over in Colossians. Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. This is one sentence.

This is a one-sentence instruction from Paul to husbands, who is the king of run-on sentences and explaining things into perpetuity. So we've got one sentence here, and I'm going to expound on this a little bit.

I wanted to outline the words that the Greeks use for love. Pastor Mike did this this morning. I had no idea he was going to do it. I had this typed up days ago, so he stole my stuff, but that's all right. Eros is romantic love.

[13:56] Love. This Greek word is not used in the New Testament, but it would have been one of the words that came to mind when the Greeks at the time were talking about love. So when they heard the word love, this word eros would have come to mind.

Phileo is love towards close friends, brotherly love. Think the city of Philadelphia, right? The city of brotherly love. That's what that stands for. Phileo. Agape is unconditional love that wants to do the best for others.

So that's what we focused on this morning. What Pastor Mike focused on this morning in his sermon is the agape love. And storge is love towards parents, siblings, other children, family members.

It's a more familial type love. As Americans in the 21st century, we have one word for love. The Greeks used at least four different words to make their communication of love more precise. It's interesting to consider that our current culture says words have no meaning. Looking back, we see the Greeks were trying to be more precise in their language. Well, today, we are getting more and more sloppy with it all the time.

[14:59] As Christians, we need to seek to be precise in our language and our speech. In the original Greek, the word agape is being used in the instruction to husbands here.

This is the present tense of the verb, which means to keep on loving your wives. It's a continuous action. Husbands, love of your wife is not a feeling that comes and goes.

It's a state of being that results in wanting the best for her. To get a little bit more clarification on how love works, we're going to go back to Ephesians 5 again, following where we were.

Beginning in verse 25, Husbands, love your wives just as Christ has also loved the church and gave himself up for her so that he might sanctify for her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she would be holy and blameless.

So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself, for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church.

[16:13] Because we are members of his body, for this reason, a man shall leave his father and mother and should be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great, but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

Nevertheless, each individual among you also is to love his own wife even as himself, and the wife must see to it that she respects her husband. Here in Ephesians, we get some clarification on what the love of wives should entail.

Paul aligns the love of husbands with the love that Christ has for the church. We've already talked about how Christ submitted to God's authority. He was also bruised, broken, and rejected by men to pay the penalty for our sins.

He took on the curse for us. As Ephesians says, that he might present to himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing.

Husbands, do you view your love of your wife in this manner? Are you bearing her burdens with her? Helping her grow in the Lord? If husbands love as God has commanded, the instructions to wives to be subject to their husbands becomes easier.

[17:27] A husband is God's authorized agent to provide for the needs of his wife. God is the ultimate provider, but he uses the husband in the marriage relationship to provide for his wife's practical needs.

In order to do this, you have to know what your wife needs. It requires spending time with her, listening to her. This is a high calling, men, that we cannot achieve without time in scripture and prayer.

The last half of verse 19 back in Colossians says, do not be embittered against them. The word for embittered could also be translated as stop being bitter or do not have a habit of being bitter.

The word used here is only used two other places in the New Testament in the book revelation and refers to something tasting bitter. Husband must not display harshness or resentment to their wives or irritate or exasperate them.

Rather, he should be a loving leader in the home. It's unfortunate, but many of us have likely been around an older couple who's been married for many years, but they can't seem to stand to be in one another's company.

[18:32] I guarantee those attitudes toward one another didn't change overnight. It was their day-to-day lives and not cultivating a heart of love, but cultivating bitterness. This can happen easily if we're not on our guards because of the sin nature in us that wants to be selfish and not love unconditionally.

It wants to be served and not to serve. John MacArthur summed this section up well. In one sentence, he said, the woman most pleases the man with loving submission while he pleases her with loving authority.

So we see the submission and authority in this relationship. Our next relationship is that of the parents and the children and the fathers and children where we see encouragement and obedience.

The instructions to children come first in verse 20 back in Colossians. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.

We've got a few kids here tonight. This seems pretty straightforward, but anyone who was a kid, has kids, or is a kid, will tell you that obeying isn't as easy as it sounds.

[19:53] And that fits all of us, by the way. You were all a kid at one point. I know kids, it's hard to believe your parents were kids. We all want to obey or we all want our own way and that includes children. At a very early age, you can see the indwelling sin revealed in their lives.

No one has to teach a child how to ignore simple instructions or lie, deny, and deflect. If you've ever dealt with a sibling squabble where the retaliator got caught in response to the instigator, you know how this conversation goes.

You approach little Johnny who you just saw hit his sister and the first thing out of his mouth is Sally was playing with my toy. He doesn't respond with the whole truth saying, well, Sally was playing with my toy and I wanted it so I hit her to get my way.

He immediately begins blaming his sister for the sin he displayed. How often do we do that even as adults? Deflect, right? Let's begin looking at the text by defining what is meant by children here.

The Greek word is *techno*. It is the general term for children and is not limited to a specific age group. It applies to any child who is still living in the home under parental guidance.

[21:05] This could be a very young child or an older child who has not left the home yet. The Greek word for obedience means do what you hear and it's in the present tense so it carries the idea of continuous obedience.

This isn't a one-time thing. You don't wake up in the morning get instructions from your parents and say, I obeyed, I'm good for the day. It's continuous obedience, kids. Much of popular psychology and culture today would encourage you to allow your child to develop uninhibited by any rules. It would tell you that your children are generally good and that they are only corrupted because of the society around them. As we have noted, this is not biblical or even observationally accurate. Children left to their own devices will make sinful choices. Parents must communicate appropriate rules, principles and boundaries for children to ensure that they will grow up in the training and admonition of the Lord.

Children are commanded here to obey those rules. Why? Because it is well-pleasing to the Lord. The partner passage for this command in Ephesians is found in chapter 6 starting in verse 1.

[22:15] It says, Children, obey your parents and the Lord for this is right. Honor your father and mother which is the first commandment with a promise so that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.

By pulling the Ephesians verses in, children now have multiple reasons to obey. It is well-pleasing to the Lord. It is right so that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth. These are a bunch of very good reasons to obey your parents. I'm sure you can come up with reasons to disobey them but I'm fairly confident that they're not going to be as good as the reasons to obey them. This week in my Bible study I hit 1 Samuel 17.

This is the famous David and Goliath story in the Old Testament. What caught my attention this week was different. It's what happened leading up to the event. Starting in verse 17 we read, Then Jesse said to his son David, Now take for your brothers an ephah of this roasted grain and these ten loaves and run to the camp of your brothers.

Bring also these ten slices of cheese to the commander of their thousands and look into the well-being of your brothers and bring back confirmation from them. For Saul and they and all the men of Israel are in the valley of Elah fighting the Philistines.

[23 : 39] So David got up early in the morning and left the flock with the keeper and took the supplies and went as Jesse had commanded. And he came to the entrenched entrenchment encircling the camp while the army was going out into battle formation shouting the war cry.

So I'll highlight verse 20 there. David did exactly what his father asked. He had responsibilities of taking care of the herd but his father had given him different directions for that day.

And what did he do? He got up and went. We have a phrase that we've used in our house from time to time to help clarify obedience and that is you obey straight away all the way and with a happy heart.

We see David do this and it leads to one of the most popular events in human history. We hear about the David and Goliath stories all the time. An underdog overcoming overwhelming odds. None of that would have happened if David didn't obey his dad and go do what he was to do. Similar to the command to wives to submit. This obedience of children is not absolute.

[24 : 46] Just like we talked about children being sinners parents are sinners too. If you have a parent who instructs you to do something that is sinful you are not required to follow their command.

From a practical standpoint and before you go about making this claim all the time to justify your disobedience I recommend you be prepared to have a discussion with your parents and provide biblical evidence for why you shouldn't have to do what they are asking you to do.

As an example if your dad has a business and asks you to ensure that certain payments are received in cash and not recorded to avoid taxes this would be a command you couldn't follow.

Jesus instructs us to render to Caesar what is Caesar's which means paying our taxes. That's a simple example but you gotta pull from the scripture. It has to be biblical guys.

We're gonna turn to the father's responsibility shortly but I wanna provide a personal illustration that I found helpful this week as I was seeking to apply this verse to myself. Each year before Father's Day Laura asks our kids individually a series of questions about me so she separates them off by themselves and asks them individually these questions because she doesn't want them saying the same thing.

[26 : 01] How old is daddy? What does daddy do at work? What does daddy love to eat? Daddy always tells me dot dot dot dot my favorite thing to do with daddy is my favorite game is my daddy's favorite game is my favorite memory with daddy is what makes daddy happy?

What makes daddy the best? Now I have these going back to 2014 when Andrew who is now 13 was only four. So as you can imagine over that period there's some very cute and interesting answers in some of those questions from our children.

As I pulled them out recently and looked back over them a couple of things struck me. The first one they've gotten more accurate as the kids have aged matured and spent more time with me. Early on I was 10 years old went fishing at work and liked to eat nuts.

Guarantee you I never went fishing at work. More recently I was 37 worked as an accountant and liked to eat steak. Those are all 100% on right? This served as a stark reminder for me that in order for me to know my heavenly father better I need to be spending more time with him.

They wouldn't have known any of those answers had they not spent some time with me. The second thing that stuck out was when they were asked the questions about daddy always tells me or what makes daddy happy there was a consistent theme.

[27 : 21] Early on daddy always tells me to obey. And as they got older they responded to what makes daddy happy is when I obey. And even more interesting is they were almost four for four in the most recent survey about what makes daddy happy and it's when I obey.

So this still brings a smile to my face but it reminds me that that's what makes my heavenly father happy too is when I obey. Do we acknowledge that and live out that truth about our relationship with our heavenly father?

If you were asked what makes him happy is this how you would respond? Would you say when I obey makes God happy? 1 Samuel 15 22 In response to Saul sacrificing to the Lord before Samuel's arrival, Samuel said, Does the Lord have as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord?

Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice and to pay attention is better than the fat of rams. Psalm 51, 16, and 17 for you do not delight in sacrifice otherwise I would give it.

You do not take pleasure in burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart God you do not despise. Just like we expect our earthly children to obey, as children

of God we are called to obey his commands.

[28 : 42] The instruction to fathers continues, Fathers, do not exasperate your children so that they will not lose heart. This is a specific calling to fathers.

That doesn't mean it can't be applied to mothers as well, but we know that Paul was addressing fathers because he uses a different Greek word here than he did in the prior verse where he was talking to parents.

Fathers are called not to exasperate their children. The partner passage for this is found in Ephesians 6, verse 4. Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

This was countercultural at the time. The Roman Empire operated under the principle of patria potestis, which is Latin for power of the father.

This idea carried out in practice meant the father had absolute power over his prodigy. He could sell them into slavery, pronounce capital punishment up to and including death.

[29 : 48] Kids were viewed as an intrusion and misfortune, and the culture was unbelievably cruel to the weak and deformed children. A father would have bristled at this command not to exasperate his children, but this was Paul's instruction inspired by the Holy Spirit.

Transitioning to today, how can we irritate our children? children. I'm sure if we got together as parents, we'd come up with all kinds of good ways to irritate our children. But I'm going to focus on two broad areas that are the opposite ends of the spectrum and were consistent in most of the commentaries I read and sermons I listened to on this topic.

The two broad areas are too many rules and no rules. Too many rules. This is the bucket where I land. I've never met a situation where I couldn't create a rule to make everyone's lives better.

The problem is there are multiple ways to accomplish the same outcome and sometimes the rules can be overbearing. One pastor I listened to confessed that I could relate to well, confessed that he was a recovering rule maker.

I don't know if I'm recovering, I'm trying, I'm doing my best, right? Kids may tell you differently. But if you're in this boat expecting your children to remember all your rules and follow them all the time, it's going to irritate them and discourage them.

[31 : 02] So just remember that grace is important if you're a rule maker. This also carries the idea of never adjusting the rules to fit the age of the child. All children are different, no two are the same, and they will require different parenting and different rules to ensure they grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

If you want to exasperate them, develop all your rules before they're old enough to talk and then treat them the exact same their whole lives. Don't ever adjust.

That's going to drive them crazy. And they're going to get frustrated. They're going to throw their hands in the air and shout at you and do all kinds of things, right? Yes, we love our children unconditionally.

That is consistent across all of them. But that doesn't mean a 10-year-old is going to have the same rule set as a three-year-old. They have different understanding, they have different capabilities, they have different personalities. Requires different work.

And I just said the word work there. Parents, it's work. We can't be lazy in this. Constant criticism for not following the rules also falls under this umbrella. If you want to discourage a child, be constant in your criticism of them.

[32 : 10] This is a hard one, parents. We should seek to be consistent in our discipline and instruction to help them understand the importance of behaving properly, but also allow for grace when they don't make the right choice every single time.

you wouldn't want God to do that to you. For those rulemaking parents out there, we should have a reasonable set of rules that is broadly applicable and seek to teach our children godly principles from which they can develop guardrails for their lives.

The other broad bucket is no rules. I have to confess to you guys that as a rulemaker, I don't fully understand how you could ever hope to have a home with no rules. I can see, however, that this environment would irritate and exasperate a child.

If there are no defined expectations or guidelines by which to live and they get into trouble for doing things that they were unaware were wrong, they'll get irritated. It's just like trying to hit a target 100 yards downrange using a rifle without a properly sighted in scope.

It's nearly impossible. And the more you try, the more frustrated you're going to become. And ultimately, your arm is going to have a big bruise right here. That's what happens.

[33 : 23] I can tell from my dad's experience, not mine. They will also go into a world where rules do in fact exist. And they're going to get irritated when they're expected to follow those rules.

It is important that we teach our children godly principles. If we fail to do that, they're going to encounter a world that God created to have rules and get irritated when things don't work out as they expect.

So as I was studying, I made a note to myself with a question about why was this command given to fathers?

And I have a theory, and this is a Jeremy theory, so you know, not tons of backup. But fathers give general guidance with little detail and then don't always respond well when the outcome is not as expected.

And I'm speaking stereotypically here, right? I don't recall which parenting book I was reading, but it was talking about the importance of the mother and the father in the child's life. The father tends to provide little detail and expect the child to figure out how to solve the problem.

[34 : 25] While on the other hand, the mother will provide a little more detail to help the child complete the task. As an example, I could tell one of my children to go cut down that tree. The information is fairly general.

It doesn't tell them how to cut down the tree, what to do with the tree. Laura, on the other hand, may provide some more details, like you're going to want to use this saw, or you may, let's see, or be sure the tree falls this way.

These are helpful details that the child may or may not think of depending on their age and prior experience. The point of the example in this book was that both skills are required. Children, as they grow and mature, will need to be able to take both general and specific direction to complete a task.

I think that in this instance, in Colossians, Paul focuses on the fathers because general guidance has more opportunity to lead to exasperation. If I tell my child to cut down a tree and it falls on the fence, it's likely I'm not going to have a positive response to that situation, which will then lead the child to be irritated because they completed the task I asked them to do.

They just didn't do it the way I wanted. I don't know if you other fathers can, you know, commiserate with me on this, didn't provide a lot of detail, and now the fence has tore up and I've got to fix that too.

[35 : 43] So, it has, stereotypically, fathers are more prone to have that problem. The opposite of exasperation is encouragement. So we should seek to build up our children and encourage them in their endeavors.

It is vital that we not provoke them to anger if we are to bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. Our final section this evening comes from verses 22, chapter 3, verses 22, through chapter 4, verse 1.

Slaves, in all things, obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Whatever you do, do your work heartily as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance.

It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a master in heaven.

This section is the third section, if you're keeping the outline, on masters and servants or employer-employee relationships of integrity and loyalty. Let me begin this section with a note that Paul is in no way condoning slavery.

[37 : 01] He's speaking to the circumstances of the time, slavery was a heinous reality. In fact, he writes the letter of Philemon to the master of Onesimus, a slave that had become a believer.

Since, as we saw in verse 11 of chapter 3, everyone stands equal before Christ, there is instruction needed regarding how the master-servant relationship would change as a result of both of these individuals being believers.

The fact that Paul addresses slaves and masters here does not stop us from making application to our lives today. We can see this passage through the lens of the employer and employee in today's

society.

The partner passage in Ephesians is very similar to this one in Colossians. It's Ephesians 6, 5 through 9, and I'm going to read that for us. Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart as to Christ, not by way of eye service as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will, render service as to the Lord and not to men, knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. And masters, do the same things to them and give up threatening, knowing that both their master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with him.

[38 : 27] Both of these passages are calling to integrity and loyalty regardless of the circumstance.

The servant is called to work as working to the Lord, not with external service or to please men. This carries the idea of just working when your boss is watching, just working when the master is watching.

The servant's position was infinitely worse than most people's working conditions today, and the Christian servant was not to take advantage of the situation if he or she worked for a believing master.

Paul follows this with an encouragement to work heartily, to receive an inheritance from the Lord. This must have been a great assurance to slaves who would receive nothing in this world. To know that they were working for an eternal inheritance would have given their work value and significance.

He also tells them there will be consequences for wrong and without partiality. This is applicable to us today. No matter what you are doing or where you are working, you are working for the Lord.

[39 : 37] Today's culture, today's church, we've created this invisible barrier between the sacred and the secular, and we tend to put our work in the secular bucket. It is not so.

God ordained work at the beginning, before the fall. Work is a sacred activity. Our work, no matter what it is, is a sacred endeavor, and we should treat it as such.

Do you wake up in the morning ready to put forth your best effort to achieve what God has for you to do that day? Or do you drag yourself out of bed, into the car, to the desk if you're working at home, whatever it may be?

How do you set your attitude at the beginning of the day? Charles Spurgeon tells a story of a young woman seeking membership in his church. Spurgeon was conducting the interview process, and she was asked if there was any evidence that she was truly repentant and a genuine Christian.

This young lady had been a maid her whole life, and she responded that she no longer swept the dust under the rug in the house where she was employed. Spurgeon said, that'll do, and admitted her for membership.

[40 : 43] The second portion of the scripture focuses on the masters, or employers. Masters are told to grant your slaves justice and fairness. In Ephesians, they are encouraged to give up threatening.

Both passages have a reminder that the ultimate master is in heaven, and he will have the final say. If you have employees entrusted to your charge, it is important to be fair with them, treat them well, and help them to achieve their roles.

You have to be reflecting Christ-like leadership to them, such that you are different from the unbelieving bosses that they have worked for. If no one in your office can tell the difference between you and your unbelieving peer, then are you fulfilling the charge that Paul has given here? Whether you are an employee or an employer, you are working toward the Lord, not for men.

Embrace your work as a sacred endeavor, and treat it with the proper enthusiasm. So tonight, we've seen the new relationship, the new you in Christ, in new clothes, has new relationships.

We've talked about what those relationships look like in detail. If you don't have a relationship with Christ as your Lord and Savior, you'll not be able to have these new relationships. I'm sorry, it's not going to be possible in the power of your own flesh.

[42 : 03] Your marriage will not be what it could be. Your relationship with your parents or your children will not be what it could be. And your work will feel meaningless. I'm asking you right now to consider Christ.

He's calling you into a relationship with Him so that you can be saved from your sin and live forever with Him. If you have any questions about salvation, please come talk to me, Pastor Mike, Pastor

Tyler, one of our elders that are here tonight.

Don't leave tonight if you have questions. Believers, if we want to have a real impact on this world, it's going to start with new relationships, the new relationships that Paul laid out in Colossians and Ephesians.

Despite the world's attack on the family as God designed it, it remains the building block of society. Seek to build a stronger marriage of love and submission. Spend time with your kids, teaching them the importance of obedience and not exasperating them with your behavior.

View your work as a sacred endeavor, working with loyalty and integrity as under the Lord. Let's close in prayer. Heavenly Father, we thank You for another day You've given us, another evening to gather and study Your Word.

[43 : 17] Pray that as we leave out of here tonight, we'll consider our relationships, ones that may not be in the places where they should be, that You'll help us. give us the strength we need to be the loving husbands, submissive wives, the obedient children, the fathers who don't exasperate their children, the loyal employees, the masters with integrity.

Lord, give us that power. Pray that You'll help us this week and be with us as we leave here. In Jesus' name, Amen.