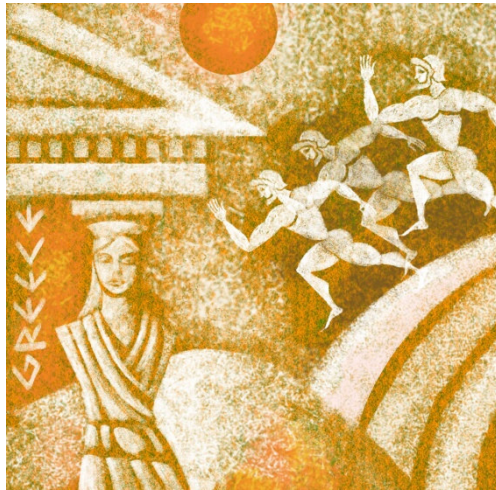


COLOSSIANS

Κολοσσαεύς



Calvary Bible Church Colossians 3:18-4:6 Study Guide

Wednesday Night Discussion Groups
Tim & Melinda Inman
March 30-April 27, 2011
April 6: No church, Spring Break.

The Inductive Method

Observation

What does the text say?

Overview

Establish Context by determining Historical Background

Where does it fit in the Bible timeline?

Ask: Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How?

Make simple lists of people, places, and events mentioned in the text

Make simple lists of key words that are used throughout large portions of the entire book

Determine Book and Chapter Themes

Mark questions to return to later for future study

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Chapter Studies

Ask: Who, What, When, Where, Why and How?

Make more thorough lists of people, places and events

Make more thorough lists of Key Words in chapter or section

Ignore chapter divisions when the theme is carried forward

Mark Contrasts, Comparisons, Expressions of Time, Terms of Conclusion

Beginning of Interpretation: Tie this all together by examining text verse by verse

Outline or complete Structural Analysis to break down difficult text

Examine meanings of Key Words as you study verse by verse

Meditate on text to determine paragraph themes

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Interpretation

What does the text mean in correct context?

What principles do I see that tie to other sections of scripture?

Complete Cross References of those passages of scripture

Complete examination of Key Words: meaning, tense, voice

Notice and examine meaning of verbs & descriptive adjectives

Note commands and warnings

Consult commentaries after completing your own study

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Application

Based on correct interpretation of the text:

What must I do?

How can I apply this truth to my life?

How does this affect me?

How does this better knowledge of God change me?

Meditate on scripture and Memorize important, applicable passages of scripture

What do I see? What does it *mean*? How does this *change* me?

Digging in: Observing, Interpreting & Applying the Text

Read and study prayerfully each day. “Prayer is really a key to effective Bible study. Learn to pray before, during, and after your reading of the Scriptures. Prayer is especially crucial when you come to a place in your study where you are stuck and confused.”¹

The Text: Everyone studies in their own unique way; therefore, there are several studies options available to you regarding the text of Colossians 3:18-4:6.

- (1) If you prefer to work from one marked copy, earlier in the year you probably already removed the working copy at the end of the Overview material, placed it in a three-ring binder, and have used it for our entire study of Colossians.
- (2) If you didn’t like that option, the text has been printed throughout the material this year; so, you’ve probably been using the Study Guide alone. The entire letter to the Colossians is printed at the back to help you set this particular section within the context of the book.
- (3) Or, use your own bible and simply refer to this material for your study suggestions.

We will now focus in and observe Colossians 3:18-4:6 carefully and thoroughly.

The importance of careful, thorough Observation continues:

“The more time you spend in **observation**, the less time you will need to spend in interpretation, and the more accurate will be your results. The less time you spend in observation, the more time you will need to spend in interpretation, and the less accurate will be your results.”² To observe the text thoroughly ask **who, what, when, where, why, and how** of the text. Always look for the obvious. Slow down to see what is actually there in the text, not what you *think* is there. Repeated, significant words and phrases, which are crucial to understanding the text, are always important. A key word or phrase is one that is vital to what the author is attempting to communicate.

What words or phrases are significant in this particular section?

As you read through the book and completed the Overview you will have noted that, in addition to the words that are significant in the entire book, there are key words and themes specific to each chapter or section. These essential words unlock the meaning of the text. **Commands and instructions are always significant.**

As always, use any study suggestions that help you; and, skip those that don’t.

March 30-April 6, complete the suggested meditations on pages 4-6...

¹ Howard G. & William D. Hendricks, *Living by the Book*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2007), 100.

² *Ibid.*, 43.

Read the text in at least two different translations:

Colossians 3:18-4:6 (NIV)

18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. **23**Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, **24**since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. **25**Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

4:1Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. **3**And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. **4**Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. **5**Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. **6**Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Week One: March 30-April 6, 2011—Begin on pg. 3, then...

Focus on this: What do I see? (We'll worry about what it *means* later.)

- 1. Read Colossians 3:18-4:6 on this page and the next. Read it in each translation.** Read thoughtfully. Read contemplatively. Read like you've never read it before. Reading a text in more than one translation helps us to comprehend meaning and reveals new things to us because we see the same thought stated in a new way. **Use the margins to write down observations and questions so you can investigate them later. Mark it up.**
- 2. Flip to the back of this Study Guide (pg. 45-49) and read the entire book of *Colossians* and the letter to Philemon** (written at the same time, to the same people, and delivered at the same time) **in order to set this section in context within the letter.**
- 3. This chapter begins with a brief list of household codes** and is a continuation of 3:1-17, all that Paul considered to be the application of what he wrote in 2:6-23 (and the entire letter). **How do the relationships in our households illustrate the true condition of our Christian walk? Why do you think this is so?**

Colossians 3:18-4:6 (ESV)

18 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.

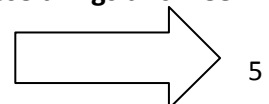
22 Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. **23** Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, **24** knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as 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.

4:1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

2 Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. **3** And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. **4** Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. **5** Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. **6** Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

- 3. Read through Colossians 3:18-4:6 thoughtfully one more time.** Determine what the key words and phrases are for this particular section. **With a pencil, lightly circle the words you think are “key” to understanding this section. Circle them in both translations.** If you’re using the working copy from the Overview, you will see the words you already marked in the Overview—those that were crucial to interpreting the entire book. Focus in on the significant words in *this* section. A key word or phrase is one that is crucial to understanding the meaning of the text.
- 4. Commands and instructions are always significant because they require action. They are the required response. Take special note of these. Put a number by each one and number them right through the passage.** How many commands or instructions are given in this section? What does this tell us about Paul’s emphasis in this section?
- 5. Notice things you want to study in greater detail later and make a note in the margin.**
- 6. (See the information on outlining, pg. 7, and make an outline if you’d like.)**

Examine the text and think about the questions given on pg. 6. This section requires cultural adaptation in some of the instances—the slave and master instructions, for one thing. We’ll examine how these instructions adapt to our culture in the following weeks. **For now, start to think about it.** Some of the instructions apply to us exactly as they did to the Colossians; therefore, we’ve made those instructions entirely personal by saying, “we” or “us.” These instructions show us how we are to live our lives; this is the “normal” Christian life. **Meditate on these things this week:**



- This section contains no introduction because it is tied to the previous application section, 3:1-17. **Review Col. 3:1-4, since it provides the foundation for obedience to the commands in 3:5-4:6. Since then...what? What** is now true? **What** has God done to them (and us) with Christ (3:1a)?
- **Review: how** does the statement in Col. 3:1a summarize everything Paul had already said about their (and our) position in Christ (**Review: 1:13-14, 21-23, 26-27; 2:2-3, 6-15, and 20-21**)? **Specifically, how** does Col. 3:1a relate to Col. 2:11-15, 20-21?
- **Because this is the case, what** is the command given in 3:1b? **What** is the follow-up command in 3:2? **What** is the contrast here—do this, **not what**?
- **In Col. 3:3-4, what** were the reasons Paul gave for obeying the two commands in 3:1, 2?
- **How** does our obedience to the commands in 3:1, 2 and our position in Christ result in our ability to obey the commands Paul gives next? **Review: What** was said in 2:6-15 about this? **What** about 3:10? **What** is continually happening to us? **How** are we described in 3:12? So, **how** do we obey?

Therefore, since we're raised with Christ and are hidden with him in God, being renewed in knowledge in the image of Christ, chosen, holy, and dearly loved what does 3:18-4:6 say we are to do:

- **If you are a wife, what do you do** according to 3:18? **Why? What** is the reason given?
- **What** does 3:19 say you're to do **if you're a husband? What** quality should *not* be part of your behavior toward your wife?
- **If you're a child under parental authority, what** are you to do according to 3:20? **Why? What** is the reason given? **If you have children, might you** need to train your children so they'll know how to do this, since they have sinful natures just like you?
- **If you're a father, according to 3:21, what** are you not to do as regards your children? **Why? What** is the reason given? **What** results when children become discouraged? **Why** might Paul have singled out the fathers in Colossae for this instruction? **What** about fathers now?
- **How** were slaves instructed in 3:22? **When** were they to obey their masters? **How? Were** they only to obey when they were being watched or only to gain favor? **What** was to be the slave's motivation according to 3:22c?
- **In what manner were** the Christian slaves to work, according to 3:23? **Who** were they to regard their work as being done for? **Why** were they to consider their work as *not* being done for their masters? **What** does 3:24 say? **What** will the Christian slaves receive? **Who** are they really serving?
- **What** if they do wrong? According to 3:25, **what** was the consequence? **Who** will repay? **Think about it. Why might** more instruction have been given to Colossian slaves than to their masters?
- **How** does this instruction to first-century slaves apply to you today? **Does it?**
- **How** were masters instructed in 4:1? **What** was the master's motivation? **Who** was watching? **Who** also repaid them if *they* did wrong?
- **How** does this instruction to first-century masters apply to you today? **Does it?**
- **In 4:2, what** were the Colossian believers to do? **How? What** two elements of prayer are mentioned? **Does** this apply to us as well?
- **Who specifically** did Paul ask the Colossians to pray for in 4:3? **Why? What** did Paul ask them to pray for him and the other men who were with him? **What** did Paul want to happen? **How** did Paul ask them to pray for him in particular in 4:4? **If Paul asks for this type of prayer, what about us? Do** we need this same type of prayer when sharing the gospel, the mystery of Christ?
- **How** should believers act, live, and conduct themselves toward outsiders according to 4:5? **Who** is an outsider? **What** are we to seize or make the most of?
- **How** is a believer (new, chosen, holy and dearly loved) to speak? **How** should our conversation differ from unbelievers' speech? **What** is our speech to be full of? **What** about the metaphor about salt? **What** might that mean? **Why** are we to speak like this? **What** will be the result?

Experiment with making an outline at this point. It will help you see how the main points are connected and make it easier to trace Paul's instructions and reasoning.

OPTIONAL: Make an Outline

Consider making an outline of the book at this point: Some people find that making an outline opens the text up for them. A simple outline could be made at this point if this is something you find beneficial. **Skip it if this doesn't help you.**

➤ **Complete a word-for-word outline of each section.** If you are the type of person who benefits from this type of structural work, prepare this initial outline skeleton by filling in the theme of the entire book with a theme for paragraph as Roman numerals under the theme of the entire book. Then you can add the text word-for-word under the Roman numerals, with each new paragraph being categorized by a letter of the alphabet. **Example:** Colossians 3:18-20 (NIV)

- A. ¹⁸Wives,
 - 1. submit to your husbands
 - a. as is fitting in the Lord,
- B. ¹⁹Husbands,
 - 1. love your wives
 - 2. and do not be harsh with them.
- C. ²⁰Children,
 - 1. obey you parents in everything
 - a. for this pleases the Lord.

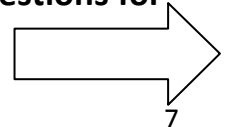
➤ **Other people find that it helps them to break down the text, completing a structural analysis of the text from the first day they begin to study a book or section of the Bible.** Experiment with outline forms or simply breaking down the text in a way that makes grammatical structure more obvious to determine if this helps you comprehend more. **Example:** Colossians 3:19-20 (NIV)

Wives
submit
to your husbands
as is fitting
in the Lord

Husbands
love
your wives
and do not be harsh
with them

Children
obey
your parents
in everything
for this pleases
the Lord

Next week we will not meet for discussion on Wednesday (4/6) due to Spring Break. Therefore, because we have one more week before we meet again to discuss the passage we're studying, there are some meditation suggestions for April 6-13 on the following pages.



Meditations for April 6-13: When the Colossians received their letter, what had already been written in Scripture about the households of believers?

When this letter was written in approximately 62 A.D., these portions of Scripture had been written and were circulating among the churches, where individuals made their own copies and memorized them in order to make them part of their lives. The Colossians *may have had* these:

- **All of the Old Testament Jewish Scriptures**
- **James** (written in 40-45 A.D. by James, Jesus' half-brother, head elder in Jerusalem, to Jewish believers outside Palestine, James 1:1)
- **Galatians** (probably written in 48 A.D. by the Apostle Paul, probably from Antioch, to new believers in that region where Paul had just evangelized with Barnabas)
- **1-2 Thessalonians** (written in 49-51 A.D. by Paul, from Corinth, and carried by Timothy back to new believers in the Macedonia city of Thessalonica from which Paul had recently been driven by Jewish opposition)
- **The Gospel of Mark** (53-55 A.D., written by John Mark, the Mark mentioned in Colossians 4:10, containing Peter's memories of Jesus' ministry, to be circulated widely among the churches)
- **1 Corinthians** (53-55 A.D., written by Paul from Ephesus, addressing problems specific to the Corinthian church, probably carried back by members of the church, 16:17-18)
- **2 Corinthians** (55-56 A.D., written by Paul from Macedonia as he traveled toward Corinth looking for Titus with news of how the reception of *1 Corinthians* went, carried back by Titus and 2 other brothers, a follow-up letter)
- **Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon** (62 A.D., written by Paul from prison in Rome, carried by Tychicus. Onesimus accompanied him with, at least, *Colossians & Philemon*.)
- **Philippians** (written by Paul in the same year as *Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon* and carried by Epaphroditus. The Colossians probably wouldn't have seen this letter yet, due to distance—Philippi was in Macedonia; whereas, Colossae was in Asia Minor.)
- **1 Peter** (62-63 A.D., written by Peter to encourage believers in northern Asia Minor who were enduring persecution, carried and/or scribed by Silas.)
- possibly **Hebrews** (written 60-70 A.D., author uncertain, written for Jewish believers.)³

Therefore, the Colossians would have most probably been aware of the doctrine and instructions given in the letters written prior to their own. Many of these they would have read and memorized, as was the first-century custom. And, depending on how well they had been taught by Epaphras and had learned from him (Col. 1:7; 2:7), they would have also been knowledgeable in the Old Testament Scriptures. For our study, therefore, we'll provide you with *some* of the household instructions previously recorded in the Old Testament and these first early New Testament writings.

³ Lan T. Dennis, Executive Editor, Wayne Grudem, General Editor, *ESV Study Bible*, (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway Bibles, 2007), timeline, pg. 1806-1807, which is contained in CBC material for *Philemon* and *Colossians* Overview.

Examine and meditate on these over the one week small group break.

WHAT TO DO:

- Examine these biblical passages over the next week (April 6-13)
- Circle or underline specific information that would apply to the household of the first-century (wife, husband, children, slave, and master). This would be the biblical foundation upon which Paul was building when he wrote his brief instructions.
- Also, make notes in the margin about how these instructions apply to us in the twenty-first century.

The last day of creation and the Genesis Mandate:

Genesis 1:24-31 (NIV)

24 And God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures that move along the ground, and the wild animals, each according to its kind.” And it was so. 25 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good. 26 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”

27 So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

28 God blessed them and said to them, “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.”

29 Then God said, “I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food. 30 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give every green plant for food.” And it was so.

31 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.

The creation of Eve and the giving of her to Adam:

Genesis 2:15-25 (NIV)

15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. 16 And the LORD God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

18 The LORD God said, “It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him.”

19 Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. **20** So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam no suitable helper was found. **21** So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man’s ribs and then closed up the place with flesh. **22** Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23 The man said,
“This is now bone of my bones
and flesh of my flesh;
she shall be called ‘woman,’
for she was taken out of man.”

24 That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

25 Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

The Ten Commandments:

Exodus 20:1-17 (NIV)

1 And God spoke all these words:

2 “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

3 “You shall have no other gods before me.

4 “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. **5** You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, **6** but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

7 “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

8 “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. **9** Six days you shall labor and do all your work, **10** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. **11** For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

12 “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

13 “You shall not murder.

14 “You shall not commit adultery.

15 “You shall not steal.

16 “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Responsibility of parents to instruct children:

Deuteronomy 6:1-9 (NIV)

1 These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 2 so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. 3 Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Old Testament Slave and Master instructions:

Leviticus 25: 35-55 (NIV)

35 “If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you. 36 Do not take interest or any profit from them, but fear your God, so that they may continue to live among you. 37 You must not lend them money at interest or sell them food at a profit. 38 I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

39 “If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves. 40 They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you; they are to work for you until the Year of Jubilee (our note: this day came every seven years). 41 Then they and their children are to be released, and they will go back to their own clans and to the property of their ancestors. 42 Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves. 43 Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God.

44 “Your male and female slaves are to come from the nations around you; from them you may buy slaves. 45 You may also buy some of the temporary residents living among you and members of their clans born in your country, and they will become your property. 46 You can bequeath them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life, but you must not rule over your fellow Israelites ruthlessly.

47 “If a foreigner residing among you becomes rich and any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to the foreigner or to a member of the foreigner’s clan, 48 they retain the right of redemption after they have sold themselves. One of their relatives may redeem them: 49 An uncle or a cousin or any blood relative in their clan may redeem them. Or if they prosper, they may redeem themselves. 50 They and their buyer are to count the time from the year they sold themselves up to the Year of Jubilee. The price for their release is to be based on the rate paid to a hired worker for that number of years. 51 If many years remain, they must pay for their redemption a larger share of the price paid for them. 52 If only a few years remain until the Year of Jubilee, they are to compute that and pay for their redemption accordingly. 53 They are to be treated as workers hired from year to year; you must see to it that those to whom they owe service do not rule over them ruthlessly.

54 “Even if someone is not redeemed in any of these ways, they and their children are to be released in the Year of Jubilee, 55 for the Israelites belong to me as servants. They are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.

Fugitive slave law:

Deuteronomy 23:15-16 (NIV)

15 If a slave has taken refuge with you, do not hand them over to their master. 16 Let them live among you wherever they like and in whatever town they choose. Do not oppress them.

Warnings against marrying unbelievers, OT household codes:

Exodus 34:8-16 (NIV)

8 Moses bowed to the ground at once and worshiped. 9 “Lord,” he said, “if I have found favor in your eyes, then let the Lord go with us. Although this is a stiff-necked people, forgive our wickedness and our sin, and take us as your inheritance.”

10 Then the LORD said: “I am making a covenant with you. Before all your people I will do wonders never before done in any nation in all the world. The people you live among will see how awesome is the work that I, the LORD, will do for you. 11 Obey what I command you today. I will drive out before you the Amorites, Canaanites, Hittites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 12 Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land where you are going, or they will be a snare among you. 13 Break down their altars, smash their sacred stones and cut down their Asherah poles. 14 Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.

15 “Be careful not to make a treaty with those who live in the land; for when they prostitute themselves to their gods and sacrifice to them, they will invite you and you will eat their sacrifices. 16 And when you choose some of their daughters as wives for your sons and those daughters prostitute themselves to their gods, they will lead your sons to do the same.

Nehemiah 13:23-27 (NIV), approximately 1200 years after Moses

23 Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. 24 Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah. 25 I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God’s name and said: “You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. 26 Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. 27 Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women?”

New Testament instruction written prior to the letter to the Colossians, pertaining to the household:

Mark 7:1-23 (NIV), Clean and Unclean

1 The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus 2 and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. 3 (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. 4 When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

5 So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?”

6 He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written:

“These people honor me with their lips,
but their hearts are far from me.

7 They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules.’

8 You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

9 And he continued, “You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! 10 For Moses said, ‘Honor your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone who curses their father or mother is to be put to death.’ 11 But you say that if anyone declares that what

might have been used to help their father or mother is Corban (that is, devoted to God)— 12 then you no longer let them do anything for their father or mother. 13 Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that.”

14 Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. 15 Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.” [16] [some manuscripts contain here the words of Mark 4:23]

17 After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. 18 “Are you so dull?” he asked. “Don’t you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? 19 For it doesn’t go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)

20 He went on: “What comes out of a person is what defiles them. 21 For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. 23 All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

Mark 9:33-50 (NIV), The Greatest, Little Children

33 They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” 34 But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. 35 Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “Anyone who wants to be first must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

36 He took a little child whom he placed among them. Taking the child in his arms, he said to them, 37 “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”

38 “Teacher,” said John, “we saw someone driving out demons in your name and we told him to stop, because he was not one of us.”

39 “Do not stop him,” Jesus said. “For no one who does a miracle in my name can in the next moment say anything bad about me, 40 for whoever is not against us is for us. 41 Truly I tell you, anyone who gives you a cup of water in my name because you belong to the Messiah will certainly not lose their reward.

Causing to Stumble

42 “If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them if a large millstone were hung around their neck and they were thrown into the sea. 43 If your hand causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life maimed than with two hands to go into hell, where the fire never goes out. [44] [Some manuscripts include here the words of v. 48] 45 And if your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off. It is better for you to enter life crippled than to have two feet and be thrown into hell. [46] [Some manuscripts include here the words of v. 48] 47 And if your eye causes you to stumble, pluck it out. It is better for you to enter the kingdom of God with one eye than to have two eyes and be thrown into hell, 48 where

“the worms that eat them do not die,
and the fire is not quenched.’

49 Everyone will be salted with fire.

50 “Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can you make it salty again? Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

Mark 10:1-16 (NIV) Divorce, Little Children

1 Jesus then left that place and went into the region of Judea and across the Jordan. Again crowds of people came to him, and as was his custom, he taught them.

2 Some Pharisees came and tested him by asking, “Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?”

3 “What did Moses command you?” he replied.

4 They said, “Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce and send her away.”

5 “It was because your hearts were hard that Moses wrote you this law,” Jesus replied. 6 “But at the beginning of creation God ‘made them male and female.’ 7 ‘For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, 8 and the two will become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. 9 Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate.”

10 When they were in the house again, the disciples asked Jesus about this. 11 He answered, “Anyone who divorces his wife and marries another woman commits adultery against her. 12 And if she divorces her husband and marries another man, she commits adultery.”

The Little Children and Jesus

13 People were bringing little children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them, but the disciples rebuked them. 14 When Jesus saw this, he was indignant. He said to them, “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. 15 Truly I tell you, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it.” 16 And he took the children in his arms, placed his hands on them and blessed them.

Mark 10: 35-45 (NIV), The Servant Model of Christ

35 Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. “Teacher,” they said, “we want you to do for us whatever we ask.”

36 “What do you want me to do for you?” he asked.

37 They replied, “Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.”

38 “You don’t know what you are asking,” Jesus said. “Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?”

39 “We can,” they answered.

Jesus said to them, “You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, 40 but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.”

41 When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. 42 Jesus called them together and said, “You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 43 Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Mark 12:18-27 (NIV), Marriage at the Resurrection (The Sadducees’ question is according to Levirate marriage laws from Deuteronomy 25:5-10)

18 Then the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him with a question. 19 “Teacher,” they said, “Moses wrote for us that if a man’s brother dies and leaves a wife but no children, the man must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother. 20 Now there were seven brothers. The first one married and died without leaving any children. 21 The second one married the widow, but he also died, leaving no child. It was the same with the third. 22 In fact, none of the seven left any children. Last of all, the woman died too. 23 At the resurrection whose wife will she be, since the seven were married to her?”

24 Jesus replied, “Are you not in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God? 25 When the dead rise, they will neither marry nor be given in marriage; they will be like the angels in heaven. 26 Now about the dead rising—have you not read in the Book of Moses, in the account of the burning bush, how God said to him, ‘I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? 27 He is not the God of the dead, but of the living. You are badly mistaken!”

Household-based instruction from the New Testament Epistles:

1 Cor.6:9-7:40 (ESV), This begins with one of the many sections in this letter that focus on sexual immorality, a particular problem in the Corinthian church, which Paul addressed repeatedly. Footnotes have been included.

9Or do you not know that the unrighteous^[b] will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality,^[c] 10nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. 11And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

12“All things are lawful for me,” but not all things are helpful. “All things are lawful for me,” but I will not be enslaved by anything. 13“Food is meant for the stomach and the stomach for food”—and God will destroy both one and the other. The body is not meant for sexual immorality, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the body. 14And God raised the Lord and will also raise us up by his power. 15Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16Or do you not know that he who is joined^[d] to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For, as it is written, “The two will become one flesh.” 17But he who is

joined to the Lord becomes one spirit with him. **18**Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin^[e] a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. **19**Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, **20**for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.

Footnotes:

- b. 1 Corinthians 6:9 Or *wrongdoers*
- c. 1 Corinthians 6:9 The two Greek terms translated by this phrase refer to the passive and active partners in consensual homosexual acts
- d. 1 Corinthians 6:16 Or *who holds fast* (compare Genesis 2:24 and Deuteronomy 10:20); also verse 17
- e. 1 Corinthians 6:18 Or *Every sin*

Principles for Marriage

7:1Now concerning the matters about which you wrote: "It is good for a man not to have sexual relations with a woman." **2**But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband. **3**The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. **4**For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. **5**Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer; but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control.

6Now as a concession, not a command, I say this.^[a] **7**I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another.

8To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. **9**But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to burn with passion. **10**To the married I give this charge (not I, but the Lord): the wife should not separate from her husband **11**(but if she does, she should remain unmarried or else be reconciled to her husband), and the husband should not divorce his wife.

12To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. **13**If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him. **14**For the unbelieving husband is made holy because of his wife, and the unbelieving wife is made holy because of her husband. Otherwise your children would be unclean, but as it is, they are holy. **15**But if the unbelieving partner separates, let it be so. In such cases the brother or sister is not enslaved. God has called you^[b] to peace. **16**For how do you know, wife, whether you will save your husband? Or how do you know, husband, whether you will save your wife?

Live as You Are Called

17Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him. This is my rule in all the churches. **18**Was anyone at the time of his call already circumcised? Let him not seek to remove the marks of circumcision. Was anyone at the time of his call uncircumcised? Let him not seek circumcision. **19**For neither circumcision counts for anything nor uncircumcision, but

keeping the commandments of God. **20**Each one should remain in the condition in which he was called. **21**Were you a slave^[c] when called? Do not be concerned about it. (But if you can gain your freedom, avail yourself of the opportunity.) **22**For he who was called in the Lord as a slave is a freedman of the Lord. Likewise he who was free when called is a slave of Christ. **23**You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men. **24**So, brothers,^[d] in whatever condition each was called, there let him remain with God.

The Unmarried and the Widowed

25Now concerning^[e] the betrothed,^[f] I have no command from the Lord, but I give my judgment as one who by the Lord's mercy is trustworthy. **26**I think that in view of the present^[g] distress it is good for a person to remain as he is. **27**Are you bound to a wife? Do not seek to be free. Are you free from a wife? Do not seek a wife. **28**But if you do marry, you have not sinned, and if a betrothed woman^[h] marries, she has not sinned. Yet those who marry will have worldly troubles, and I would spare you that. **29**This is what I mean, brothers: the appointed time has grown very short. From now on, let those who have wives live as though they had none, **30**and those who mourn as though they were not mourning, and those who rejoice as though they were not rejoicing, and those who buy as though they had no goods, **31**and those who deal with the world as though they had no dealings with it. For the present form of this world is passing away.

32I want you to be free from anxieties. The unmarried man is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to please the Lord. **33**But the married man is anxious about worldly things, how to please his wife, **34**and his interests are divided. And the unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be holy in body and spirit. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband. **35**I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord.

36If anyone thinks that he is not behaving properly toward his betrothed,^[i] if his^[j] passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: let them marry—it is no sin. **37**But whoever is firmly established in his heart, being under no necessity but having his desire under control, and has determined this in his heart, to keep her as his betrothed, he will do well. **38**So then he who marries his betrothed does well, and he who refrains from marriage will do even better.

39A wife is bound to her husband as long as he lives. But if her husband dies, she is free to be married to whom she wishes, only in the Lord. **40**Yet in my judgment she is happier if she remains as she is. And I think that I too have the Spirit of God.

Footnotes:

- a. 1 Corinthians 7:6 Or *I say this*:
- b. 1 Corinthians 7:15 Some manuscripts *us*
- c. 1 Corinthians 7:21 Greek *bondservant*; also twice in verse 22 and once in verse 23 (plural)
- d. 1 Corinthians 7:24 Or *brothers and sisters*; also verse 29
- e. 1 Corinthians 7:25 The expression *Now concerning* introduces a reply to a question in the Corinthians' letter; see 7:1
- f. 1 Corinthians 7:25 Greek *virgins*

- g. 1 Corinthians 7:26 Or *impending*
- h. 1 Corinthians 7:28 Greek *virgin*; also verse 34
- i. 1 Corinthians 7:36 Greek *virgin*; also verses 37, 38
- j. 1 Corinthians 7:36 Or *her*

2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 (NIV), Paul speaks of all covenants or partnerships or “yoking together” here, including marriage

14 Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? **15** What harmony is there between Christ and Belial^[b]? Or what does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? **16** What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said:

“I will live with them
and walk among them,
and I will be their God,
and they will be my people.”^[c]

17 Therefore,

“Come out from them
and be separate,
says the Lord.

Touch no unclean thing,

and I will receive you.” ^[d]

18 And,

“I will be a Father to you,
and you will be my sons and daughters,
says the Lord Almighty.” ^[e]

1 Therefore, since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Footnotes:

- b. 2 Corinthians 6:15 Greek *Beliar*, a variant of *Belial*
- c. 2 Corinthians 6:16 Lev. 26:12; Jer. 32:38; Ezek. 37:27
- d. 2 Corinthians 6:17 Isaiah 52:11; Ezek. 20:34,41
- e. 2 Corinthians 6:18 2 Samuel 7:14; 7:8

1 Peter 2:13-3:18 (NIV), Submission in the household

13 Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, **14** or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right. **15** For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. **16** Live as free people, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as

God's slaves. **17** Show proper respect to everyone, love the family of believers, fear God, honor the emperor.

18 Slaves, in reverent fear of God submit yourselves to your masters, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. **19** For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. **20** But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. **21** To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

22 "He committed no sin,
and no deceit was found in his mouth."

23 When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate; when he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. **24** "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." **25** For "you were like sheep going astray," but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

3:1 Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands so that, if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives, **2** when they see the purity and reverence of your lives. **3** Your beauty should not come from outward adornment, such as elaborate hairstyles and the wearing of gold jewelry or fine clothes. **4** Rather, it should be that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. **5** For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to adorn themselves. They submitted themselves to their own husbands, **6** like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her lord. You are her daughters if you do what is right and do not give way to fear.

7 Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. **9** Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing. **10** For,

"Whoever would love life
and see good days
must keep their tongue from evil
and their lips from deceitful speech.

11 They must turn from evil and do good;
they must seek peace and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous
and his ears are attentive to their prayer,
but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil."

13 Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? **14** But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. “Do not fear their threats; do not be frightened.” **15** But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, **16** keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. **17** For it is better, if it is God’s will, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil. **18** For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.

Ephesians 5:21-6:9 (NIV), Household codes

21 Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

22 Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. **23** For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything.

25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her **26** to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, **27** and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. **28** In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church— **30** for we are members of his body. **31** “For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.”^[a] **32** This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church. **33** However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** “Honor your father and mother”—which is the first commandment with a promise— **3** “so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.”^[b]

4 Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord.

5 Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. **6** Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. **7** Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people, **8** because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

Footnotes:

- a. Ephesians 5:31, Gen. 2:24
- b. Ephesians 6:3, Deut. 5:16; Exodus 20:12

Philippians 2:1-11 (NIV), Christ's Model of Submission

1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

7 rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

and gave him the name that is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

Christianity confronted the cultural norms of the first century. These were the facts of day-to-day living, which Paul addressed and challenged. What norms were in place regarding the household?

“The instruction that the wife submit to her husband fits the norm of what was regarded as becoming conduct for a wife in Paul’s culture. Plutarch argued, ‘If [wives] subordinate themselves to their husband, they are commended, but if they want to have control, they cut a sorrier figure than the subjects of control.’ (Plutarch, *Advice to Bride and Groom* 33 [142E]). Husbands congratulated themselves on having an obedient wife.

“Paul does not overtly dispute this cultural assumption. The change in women’s status in our age and modern sensibilities lead many today to wish he had. The command to wives to submit, however, was not inappropriate in his context. (1) It reflects the legal state of affairs. The husband as *paterfamilias* (the head of the household) was the only fully legal person in the family and had power over all property and almost absolute authority over every member in it. They were all obligated to obey him, and Paul does not challenge the existing legal order.

“(2) The verb ‘submit’ (*hypotasso*) does not convey some innate inferiority but is used for a modest, cooperate demeanor that puts others first. It was something expected of all Christians regardless of their rank or gender (Mark 10:41-45; 1 Cor. 16:16; Eph. 5:21, 24; Phil. 2:3, 4; 1 Peter 5:5)(our note: all except 1 Cor. 16:16 are given above in the NT passages listed). According to the *Letter to Aristeas* 257, God welcomes this attitude, and ‘the human race deals kindly with those in subjection.’ The command therefore promotes a demeanor that was believed to help elicit kindness from the husband.

“(3) The command addresses wives directly as ‘ethically responsible partners.’

“(4) The directive is not one-sided; demands are also made of the husband...

“Sirach, who regarded a ‘silent wife’ as ‘a gift from the Lord’ [Sirach 26:14], advises: ‘If she does not go as you direct, separate her from yourself’ (i.e., divorce her; 25:26). Paul’s advice is quite different. Any defiance or insolence on the wife’s part does not cancel the husband’s absolute obligation to love her. Sulking, fuming, grumbling, or worse, lashing out in verbal or physical violence, regardless of the provocation, real or imagined, is strictly forbidden. Paul recognizes that if bitterness is allowed to taint the relationship between husband and wife, the whole household will suffer...

“Children were legally regarded as their fathers’ property, and their status, theoretically, was little better than that of slaves. A slave in one of Dio Chrysostom’s works responds to the taunts of a freedman: ‘Perhaps you do not know that in many states which have exceedingly good laws fathers...may even imprison or sell [their sons]; and they a power even more terrible than any of these; for they actually are allowed to put their sons to death without any trial or even without bringing any accusations at all against them.’ [Dio Chrysostom, *Dialogues*, 15.20]. Epictetus observes that the duty of a son is ‘to treat everything that is his own as belonging to his father, to be obedient to him in all things, never to speak ill of him to anyone else, nor to say or do anything that will harm him, to give way to him in everything and yield him precedence, helping him as far as is within his power.’ [Epictetus, *Discourses*, 2.10.7]...

“It was unusual, however, to address children directly, as if they were independent, responsible subjects. Children are told here to ‘obey your parents in everything,’ a variation of the command to honor one’s mother and father (Ex. 20:12). This command assumes that parents will not demand anything unseemly from their children (cf. Mark 6:24-25). The command also takes for granted that the parents have the best interest of their children at heart. When their children ask for fish, they will not give them stones (Matt. 7:7-9; Luke 11:11-13). But the children’s duty to obey their parents is transformed into obedience ‘in the Lord.’ Paul emphasizes a child’s pleasing the Lord, not just the parents. He or she owes obedience above all to the Lord. The child’s independent relationship with the Lord surpasses the relationship with parents, and Christ’s obedience to his Father in all things serves as the model.

“Fathers are addressed in the next command, not mothers or the inclusive ‘parents,’ because the father had absolute control over the lives of his children even after they were grown and married. Dionysius of Halicarnassus remarked:

‘The law-giver of the Romans gave virtually full power to the father over his son, whether he thought proper to imprison him, to scourge him, to put him in chains, and keep him at work in the fields, or to put him to death; and this even though the son were engaged in public affairs, though he were numbered with the highest magistrates,

and though he were celebrated for his zeal for the commonwealth.’ [Dionysius of Halicarnassus, *Roman Antiquities* 2.26.4]

“This power only ended when the father emancipated his son or he died. [Gaius, *Institutes*, 1.55]. The attitudes toward disciplining children in the ancient world varied, just as they do today. For some, ruling with an iron hand was the norm. Quintilian, however, contended that ‘physical punishment inflicts shame’ and ‘breaks the heart.’ [Quintilian, *Institutes*, 1.2.7] Others complained—as they have throughout the ages—about permissiveness which allows the younger generation too much latitude [For example, Tacitus, *A Dialogue on Oratory* 29. 1-3]...

“Paul...comes closer to Quintilian’s view on discipline and cautions fathers against alienating their children by being too austere. The causes that provoke a child’s resentment are countless but usually involve nagging, belittling, and overly harsh punishment. Pliny wrote to a friend cautioning him about his severe rebuke of his son:

‘I was reminded by this example of excessive severity to write to you, as one friend to another, lest you on some occasion treat your son too harshly and strictly. Remember that he is a boy, and that you were once a boy, and perform your duty as a father always remembering that you are a human being and the father of a human being.’ [Pliny, *Letters*, 9.12]

“The command that slaves must obey their masters in everything is jarring to those who now consider the institution of slavery to be abhorrent. In the first century, however, it was an entrenched reality that the early Christians could neither change nor ignore. Paul does not sanctify slavery with these commands but subtly undermines its very premises while encouraging obedience as an expression of loyal to the family group.”⁴

Recommendation: Here we recommend reading the “Bridging Contexts” section pertaining to slavery in the *NIV Application Commentary: Colossians/Philemon*, pg. 341-359, unless you studied *Philemon* with us and, at that time, completed a thorough examination of first-century slavery. In the *NIV Application Commentary* you will find detailed: (1) slavery in the ancient world, pg. 342-348, (2) the differences between ancient slavery and slavery in the new world, pg. 348-351, (3) slavery and Christianity, pg. 352-359, (4) a comparison of *Philemon* with a first-century appeal on behalf of a slave and the master’s response, pg. 311-312. **This commentary is in the church library.**

This link provides a wonderful summation of how and why Christianity appealed to first century slaves: <http://www.faithfulslave.com/docs/articles/Term%20Paper%20-%20First%20Century%20Slavery%20and%20the%20Gospel.pdf>. (Type in that lengthy URL carefully and exactly.) The Faithful Slave website (www.faithfulslave.com) has many interesting articles about how the Bible addresses slavery—important for correctly interpreting and applying the instructions to slaves here. However, though the website’s emphasis is on slavery, this website teaches that baptism is necessary for salvation, which is contrary to the gospel we hold here at Calvary. Always use discernment and apply a critical eye to articles that contain interpretation of scripture.

New Testament Instructions: In coming to the household codes that Paul commanded (3:18-4:1), because he wrote so succinctly, we know that he was building on the information that he knew they had already received from Epaphras (1:7; 2:7) and/or other portions of scripture, some of which are listed on the previous pages. However, he went into greater detail in the slave and master section of the household code than he did in the other sections. **Why do you think this is so, in light of the context of this letter and the companion letter that arrived with it (*Philemon*)?**

⁴ David E. Garland, *The NIV Application Commentary: Colossians and Philemon*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), 243-248.

Week Two: April 13-20, 2011

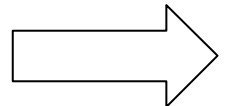
Day One: What we'll be doing with key words and why...

Key Words: Re-assess the words you circled the first week (look at your marked copies on pg. 4 & 5). Then consider the questions you meditated on from pg. 4-6. What words that help to answer those questions are crucial to understanding the text and to answering the meditation questions? What words, if you removed them from the text, would remove the meaning or intent of the passage? Were you correct in your initial assessments about which words were key? If not, adjust. In this section, people and the commands or instructions given them are important.

On the following page (pg. 26), we will now complete some marking in the text that will help us to pull together all the observations we made during our previous study days. **We want to mark the key words to help us see them more clearly and to see how each use of that particular word is connected to the other uses of the same word in the letter.** Use **color** or **pencil** or **ink**, whichever you prefer. Mark each key word with a unique mark for that particular word (a different color for each key word, or a different way of circling it, or drawing a box around it, or any other creative mark you want to use for each particular word). **The purpose of marking is to help us see what's there. Use whatever techniques help you.**

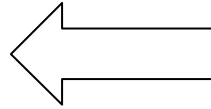
Where to mark these words: (1) If you're using the working copy you used to complete your Overview, you will see that some of these words are marked already—words that are significant for the entire letter. **(2)** If you're not using the working copy, use the text on the next page (pg. 26), or **(3)** complete this exercise in your own bible. Or do any combination of the three; it's your choice.

Mark these key words in the copy on the next page:



On the following page, mark these words in the text with unique markings for each:

- **The Lord, the Lord Christ, Master in heaven, Christ**
- **Each group of people among the Colossian recipients** (wives, husbands, children, fathers, slaves, masters) **and the Colossian church as a whole** (yourselves, your, you, 4:2-6)
- **Every command and instruction given to each group of people; these can be numbered in the text if there is more than one command (see page 27)**
- **Key/Significant Words observed and marked during the Overview and our study of Col. 1:1-3:17** (Using similar colors or markings, in this section mark the words you've already marked in previous sections.)
- **Other Significant Words that are crucial for understanding Col. 3:18-4:6**



Mark key words—instructions on previous page

What do I *see* (observation)? What does it *mean* (interpretation)?

How does this *change* me (application)?

Colossians 3:18-4:6 (NIV)

18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

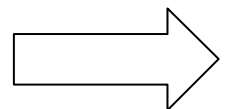
22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. **23**Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, **24**since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. **25**Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

4:1Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. **3**And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

4Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. **5**Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. **6**Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Continue the next part of this exercise with instructions from the facing page (pg. 27)...



DO THIS: Make a list of all you observe about each Key Word: In your notebook, or the margin of your working copy or bible, or the margin of pg. 26, **make a thorough list** of everything you observe about the instructions given to each group of people, along with the verse reference. **Because these instructions are brief, most of the lists can be noted by numbering right into the text.** As you do this, **question the text** in order to slow you down to observe the important facts surrounding each key word or phrase. Ask: **who, what, when, where, why and how.** **There are reasons given for each instruction.**

Example: What are slaves to do?

22Slaves, ^{#1}obey your earthly masters in everything; and ^{#2}do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but ^{#3}with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23
^{#4}Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, ^{How:}as working for the Lord, not for men, 24
^{The reason:}since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25 ^{Another reason:}Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, ^{A third reason:}and there is no favoritism.

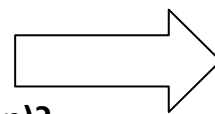
AS YOU DO THIS, QUESTION THE TEXT: An example of questioning and noting some of the key ideas follows: In this example, inside the parentheses in a different font, as sub-points under the main points, are written my own personal reflections or inner thoughts as I recorded each bit of information. In my own study of this section, I might write down these thoughts, or I might just meditate or ponder on them. This is provided as an example of how you might want to do this. **However, do whatever works for you in recording significant information in this section.**

Instructions to wives:

- **3:13, “Wives, submit to your husband”**
 - **HOW or WHY? “as is fitting in the Lord”**
 - (I think: I need to make sure I understand what “submit” means. Is it the same word translated as “obey” for slaves and children? I need to look up these words. How does this look in my culture? What is the same for me as for the Colossian wives? What is different? I am to do this “as is fitting in the Lord.” What does the Lord expect? What is “fitting” in him? What does “fitting” mean? What were the other scriptural instructions about wives in the front of this study guide? How am I doing in this area?)

I would then continue in this same way, carefully examining all of Col. 3:18-4:6. **The purpose of the above exercise** is to cause us to really *think* about what the text says, how it applied to the Colossians, and how it applies to us. **Reasons for each command are given in the text.** Thorough and careful observation should help us to discern which word definitions to examine. **Today, in your own way, complete these types of complete and contemplative lists for each of the key words or key themes.** **Ask the Holy Spirit to help you—to empower you as you meditate on his word. Follow His leading.**

As always, use any study suggestions that help you; and, skip those that don’t.



Day Two: Instructions are on pg. 29-30...
What do I see (observation)? What does it *mean* (interpretation)?
How does this *change* me (application)?

Colossians 3:18-4:6 (NIV)

18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

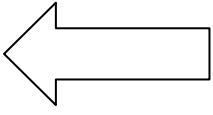
21Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

23Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, **24**since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. **25**Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

4:1Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. **3**And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. **4**Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. **5**Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. **6**Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.



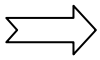
Day Two: What now? How do I tie all of these ideas together?

Mark Grammatical Phrases: The exercises on pages 28-30 will help you see how the main ideas of this section tie together. Note these with marks in your working copy or on the facing page (pg. 28).


- Mark **words of contrast** (*but, however, nevertheless, or, neither, nor, not, etc.*) with a lightning bolt mark above the word (or any mark you choose that you feel shows contrast). And, record in the margin a short description of what is being contrasted. **Example:**

*v. 19, Husbands, love your wives, and
DO NOT
be harsh with them.*

- Mark **words of comparison** (*like, likewise, also, in addition, as, in the same way, furthermore, just as, etc.*) with an = sign or arrow (or any mark you choose). What things are similar? What is the same? In the margin of your working copy, write what is being compared. **For example:**



*v. 23, Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
AS
working for the Lord.*

-  Draw a little clock face (or another mark you choose) above words showing **expressions of time** (*when, then, after, until, at that time, the day, etc.*). Several phrases in this section point to the future inheritance when we're with the Lord in heaven. **Why are these words or phrases important?**
- Mark with an "x" words that show **conclusions or an end result** (*therefore, so that, for this reason, in order that, because, since, consequently, etc.*) and **draw arrows** to connect the linked ideas. **Ask yourself, "What is the "therefore" there for?" What is the author trying to show or prove? What is the conclusion or result that he is emphasizing? For example:**



*v. 20, Children, obey your parents in everything, **for** this pleases the Lord.*

- Mark **commands** in a way that draws the eye, such as highlighting, in order to ponder on these: They clarify the purpose of the letter and make clear how the Colossians can grow to spiritual maturity. They are the forceful statements, nuanced to command continual action. There are 9 commands:
 - 1) v. 18, "submit"
 - 2) v. 19, "love"
 - 3) v. 19, "do not be harsh"
 - 4) v. 20, "obey"
 - 5) v. 21, "do not embitter"
 - 6) v. 22, "obey"
 - 7) v.23, "work at it"
 - 8) v.2, "devote yourselves"
 - 9) v. 5, "be wise in the way you act"

Continue on the next page...

➤ The New Testament was written in Koine Greek. Due to Greek word formation and syntax, some things would be obvious in the original Greek that are not obvious in English.



○ In the Greek, these words express continuous, habitual action. Mark like this (~):

- v. 18, “submit
- v. 19, “love, “do not be harsh”
- v. 20, “obey”
- v.21, “do not embitter,” “discouraged”
- v. 22, “obey,” “reverence”
- v. 23, “do,” “work”
- v. 25, “does wrong”
- 4:2, “devote yourselves,” “being watchful and thankful”
- 4:3, “pray”
- 4:5, “be wise in the way you act,” “make the most of every opportunity”
- 4:6, “know,” “how to answer”



○ Two words express actions that were completed in the past, but which have ongoing or continual results. Mark like this (→):

- v. 24, “you know that...”
- 4:1, “because you know that...”
- 4:3, “for which I am in chains”
- 4:6, “seasoned with salt”

Pause to meditate on anything that this exercise revealed to you that you hadn’t previously seen before. Ask God to empower you as you grow in Christ.

What next? Timeline of coming study:

April 13-20: The rest of this week, **days 3-5**, continue to examine these household codes, and how and why they are given in Col. 3:18-4:6. **Begin to look up word definitions and to put these commands and instructions into your own words** to make sure you understand what Paul intended the believers in Colossae to do. **Space to do this is given on pages 32-38. Scan the next pages, plan your strategy, and begin...**

April 20-27: Continue investigating word definitions. Then, put it all together; summarize; develop a plan of action.

As always, use any study suggestions that help you; and, skip those that don’t.

Continue with this week’s study, days 3 - 5, on the next pages...

Part 1 of Interpretation: First, investigate the definitions of key words.

Options to try: **ALWAYS PRAY FIRST!** Ask the Holy Spirit to help you comprehend.

- **Outline the passage** if this study method helps you (see pg. 7 for how-to instructions).
- **Read the passage in other translations**, like we did on pg. 4 & 5. Also, use additional translations if it helps you. Sometimes just reading the passage stated another way helps us to comprehend.
- **Look up word definitions** for words in this passage that you *need* to understand, for instance: “submit,” “love,” “obey,” “embitter,” “discouraged,” “sincerity,” “reverence,” “serving,” “devote,” etc. **Examine any of the words that will help you comprehend the text.** How? **Page 44 details “how to use a concordance,”** or ask your group leader.
- A good Greek lexicon (dictionary) is available at: <http://www.studylight.org/lex/grk/>.
- Use your concordance to **find other places these same key words are used** (called finding the “cross references”) if you need additional help comprehending the meaning. **Look up the words that are assigned the same Greek reference numbers.** Then, look at other places in the NT where this word is used. Consult **page 44 for “how to find a cross reference,”** or ask your group leader.
- **Final option:** Examine the notes at the bottom of your study bible or in one of the listed commentaries (pg. 41), **after** you’ve completed the above steps. Try on your own first and experience the joy of discovery; then, find out if you were right in your assessment.

Pages 32-38 provide a worksheet area for your concordance work this week and next. Continue on the following page...

DO THIS:

- 1) **Read carefully.** Which words do you need to look up in the concordance?
- 2) **Circle them in the text below. All commands are significant.**
- 3) **Start to investigate these today and continue for the rest of this week (days 3-5) and the first part of next week.**
- 4) **As you comprehend each definition, paraphrase the verse**—write it out in your own words to see if you truly understand what Paul has written. **Space is given on pgs. 33-38.**
Complete this exercise in any way that helps you to understand what we're to do and how.

**What does it *mean* (interpretation)?
How does this *change* me (application)?**

Colossians 3:18-4:6 (NIV)

18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

4:1Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

4Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

The end of Week 2, April 13-20 and the beginning of Week 3, April 20-27:

Col. 3:18-4:1, Household codes:

18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Why are Christian wives to submit to their husbands, according to this verse? How? Look up any words necessary to help you comprehend; then put it into your own words:

How is this similar to the previous instructions given by Paul and Peter to other churches and by Mark's gospel (scripture meditations, pg. 9-22, given in two-week spring break meditation)?

Wives, how are you doing on applying this?

19Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

What are Christian husbands to do and not to do? How might these two things relate to each other? Harshness wasn't mentioned in the letter to the Ephesians. Why might Paul have needed to instruct the Colossian husbands this way? Look up any necessary words; then put the instructions into your own words.

How is this similar to the previous instruction given by Paul and Peter to other churches and by Mark's gospel (scripture meditations, pg. 9-22, from the two-week spring break)?

Husbands, how are you doing on applying this?

20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

According to this verse, why are Christian children to obey their parents? What was the biblical and cultural basis for this instruction (Meditations from the two-week spring break, pg. 9-24)? Parents, are you training your children to do this? Look up any words that you need to examine, and put this in your own words.

21 Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

Why are Christian fathers told not to embitter their children? What will happen in the children's lives? What can be the result of discouragement? How does this relate to all the teaching Jesus gave about little children in Mark's gospel (Meditations from the two-week spring break)? Look up "embitter" and "discouraged." Consider if you want this to be a result in the lives of your children. Write this in your own words to make sure you understand.

Fathers (and parents), how are you doing?

(Remember, this work spans 2 weeks. Get as much as you can get done this week; then continue next week.)

22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

Review scripture and cultural meditations on pg. 9-24. Keep in mind that these instructions were given to the church where Philemon was a slave owner and Onesimus had been a slave (Re-read *Philemon* on pg.48-49). How might these instructions (more instruction than was given to any other group of the household) apply to the situation between Onesimus and Philemon and the other slaves who witnessed their conflict?

What were the Christian slaves to do?

When were they to obey? In what tasks?

Did that mean they should commit a sin if asked to? What should they do in that case? With what attitude?

Were they only to obey when their master was looking, in order to win their favor? Why?

What was their heart attitude to be?

What about their regard for the Lord was to motivate them?

How were they to work? In every task?

Who were they supposed to regard their work as being done for?

Why? From whom will they receive their reward?

Who were they serving in reality?

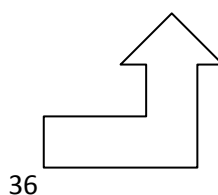
What will happen to those who do wrong? Does the situation with Onesimus and the fact that Paul appealed on his behalf give any of the other slaves the freedom to run away, not work hard, or to do wrong? Whose eye is on them? What is the promise about Him?

Look up any necessary words. Paraphrase.

Now, apply this to your life. How does this affect you? You are not a slave (contrary to how you might feel after a particularly bad day at work). You can quit your job if you have a vindictive boss; and, he cannot beat or kill you. You are a free person. But, your work habits are a reflection of your testimony in the workplace. Do you model this type of work ethic in your employment? The quality of your faith is demonstrated in your work ethic. This affects how you conduct yourself in the workplace. How are you doing in this area?

4:1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

These instructions were radical in the first century; slaves had no rights and were regarded as property, merely possessions. Yet, Paul had written his radical appeal to Philemon on behalf of Onesimus. What did Paul say the first-century Christian master was to do? Why was the master to do this? What did he know? Who was watching? Look up any words you need to and put it in your own words.



If you are manager or employer of people, do you remember Who is watching you? Can your workers tell you're a Christian by the way you manage them? Do you provide your employees with what is right and fair? What kind of boss are you? Is 3:25 a warning for you?

(Remember, this work spans two weeks. Only get as much as you can get done this week, then next week...)

Col. 4:2-6, Instructions to the entire church:

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful.

What was the church commanded to do? What does it mean to "devote" yourself continually to prayer? What two elements are necessary in prayer? Look up any necessary words. Paraphrase:

Evaluate: Do you do this? Does our church do this? Are we devoted to this? Are we being watchful and thankful all the time?

3And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should.

Paul asks them to put their devotion to prayer to work immediately. What does he ask the Colossians to do for him and Timothy and the other men named at the end of this chapter?

What does he ask them specifically to pray for? Why, so that they can do what?

For what was Paul in chains?

What does Paul ask that they pray specifically for him?

Is it reasonable that we should also need to pray for an open door when we take the gospel to people? If Paul asks for prayer for his clear proclamation of the mystery of Christ, might we need to pray for this, too, when presenting the gospel? Look up necessary words. Put this in your own words.

5Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Look up any words in this verse that you don't understand, so that you can answer these questions:

How were the Colossians commanded to act toward outsiders? Who was an outsider?

What else were they to do? How could they make the most of every opportunity with outsiders?

What were they instructed concerning their conversation? What does "full of grace" conversation sound like?

What does the metaphor "seasoned with salt" mean? How does food taste with salt? What is it like without it?

What will be the result of this gracious, finely seasoned speech? What would they know how to do?

What about us?

End of final week, April 20-27, Part 2 of the interpretation process:

What does it *mean* (interpretation)? How does this *change* me (application)?

Now integrate all this information, and put it all back together. Can you walk away with these instructions in your mind so that you can apply them? Make it personal. What did you recognize about yourself? Where do you need spiritual and personal growth?

Which area(s) needs immediate attention? Summarize here the areas that are now evident:

Where do you need to grow in your marriage and/or family life?

Where do you need to grow in how you treat others at work?

How do you need to grow regarding prayer?

How do you need to grow in sharing the mystery of Christ with others?

How do you need to grow in wise behavior toward outsiders/unbelievers?

What about your speech? What needs to change?

What does it *mean* (interpretation)? How does this *change* me (application)?

As you worked through the chapter verse by verse, you pondered on the meaning and application of all you discovered. Therefore, you should now be able to summarize the content of Col. 3:18-4:6. **Why do this?** Just like paraphrasing helped you to ponder on the text and to see if you really comprehended the verse clearly, so summarizing allows you to pull together the basic ideas of this section. It also helps you retain what is in each section when you walk away from the text and go about your daily life. This step aids your meditation on Scripture by organizing in your mind what's here so that you can apply it.

Meditate on each paragraph. Then write a summary of the main topic of each paragraph.

Colossians 3:18-4:6 (NIV)

Theme of Col. 3:18-21: _____

18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

Theme of Col. 3:22-4:1: _____

22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, 24since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. 25Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

4:1Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Theme of Col. 4:2-6: _____

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. 3And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. 4Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. 5Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. 6Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Theme of Colossians 3:18-4:6: _____

[If you discovered that you like to outline, make these themes the paragraph headings within your outline. Take the time to do that now. Experiment with outlines to help you discover what aids you in understanding the meaning of the passage.]

Part 3 of correct Interpretation: Next, check your conclusions

Final step of interpretation: Don't consult a commentary until you are at this point in your study. Use the commentary to verify your own findings and to double-check what you have discovered. If you consult commentaries before beginning they will influence your own study. Now is the time to check your conclusions. You'll gain from someone else's study by doing this; but, remember commentary notes aren't scripture. They aren't infallible.

Good commentaries to use (hard copies are all available in the church library):

- *The NIV Application Commentary: Colossians/Philemon*, by David E. Garland, Zondervan
- *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Colossians & Philemon*, by John MacArthur, Moody Press
- *The Expositor's Bible Commentary, Abridged Edition*, Barker & Kohlenberger III, Zondervan.

Check the online sources to see what commentaries they have and what they say. Usually these are older commentaries because they're beyond copyright law regulation. For instance, you'll always find *The Matthew Henry Commentary*, a solid, highly respected, reformed commentary from the 1700s. It's always worth reading. Check out: blueletterbible.org, crosswalk.com, and/or biblegateway.com. Investigate their commentary sections.

Part 4: Apply what you've learned. Let God's word change you.

Application: How does this work in my life? How can this change me?

Live it: Begin to implement the specific portions that the Holy Spirit has moved you to observe and notice as areas of growth necessary for your own life. As you studied, periodically we asked you questions to help you consider how the text might relate to you. Now, consider the questions below to contemplate even further application. What additional applications can you find from this letter?

Consider these personal questions:

- 1. In coming to the text, what did I find to be the most significant statements? Why?**
- 2. How can these statements affect my life and change it?**
- 3. What specifically did the beginning of this section, Colossians 1:1-4, tell me that God has done for me through Christ? What about 3:10-17? How have I changed and how does it affect my ability to obey the commands in Col. 3:18-4:6? How do these truths change everything? What do I now have the power—the ability—to do?**
- 4. As in the previous section, is there an example here in Col. 3:18-4:6 for me to follow? What am I specifically commanded to do in this section, just as the Colossians were commanded? What positive motivations do I find in the passage that convince me to lead a righteous life and pinpoint for me how to do so?**
- 5. Do any portions of Col. 3:18-4:6 produce a sense of conviction within me?**
- 6. Do any parts of this section cause me to want to live differently? What solid steps am I going to take in that direction? What is my plan of action? What am I going to change in my life in order to begin to implement the spiritual growth that I now realize is necessary? What needs to be adjusted? Do I recognize that if new things are coming in, old things have to go?**
- 7. Do I also pray this for myself—that I would submit more lovingly to my husband, if I'm a wife; that I would love more thoroughly, refraining from harshness, if I'm a husband; that I would obey my parents in a pleasing way, if I'm a child, or train my children to do so, if I'm a parent; that I would not embitter my children, lest they become discouraged, if I am a father (or parent); that I would implement a godly work ethic at my workplace, working as for the Lord who always watches; that I would be a godly boss/employer, one who does what is fair and right, since the Master's eye is upon me; that I would devote myself habitually to prayer, being watchful and thankful; that I would always pray for those who proclaim the mystery of Christ; that I would pray that I, too, would be a more effective presenter of the gospel, able to proclaim it clearly; that I would be wise toward outsiders, seizing the opportunities God gives me with them; that my speech would always be gracious, so that I will know how to answer everyone? Do I recognize these truths as they apply to my own life? How will I begin now to apply them?**
- 8. Is there a prayer to repeat for others? If I see these needs for growth in my own life, might my brothers and sister in Christ have the same needs and benefit from my prayers?**
- 9. Is there a verse or verses to memorize?**

Truth that Transforms: “Ultimately the mirror of God’s Word brings about a conversion, meaning that we actually begin to live differently as a result of our exposure to the truth. That transformation begins the moment we come to faith, which is why we refer to that milestone as a conversion. But, true conversion is not a one-time event; it’s a transformation that results in living differently as a result of exposure to God’s truth. It’s an ongoing process of becoming more and more like Christ.”⁵

Coming to the passage: What did you find significant as you came to this section of Colossians?

Conviction: Search for any potential sins in order to deal with them. Though we may feel a sense of reproof and correction from portions of Scripture, the desired response is repentance in order to change and move forward. Do any portions of this section or book promote a sense of conviction within you?

Convincing: What positive motivations do you find in the Scripture passage that convince you to lead a righteous life?

Conversion: Conversion is not a one-time event, but a transformation that results in living differently as a result of exposure to God’s truth. Do any portions of this section or book cause you to want to begin to live differently?

In moving forward, don’t make these mistakes:

1. Don’t substitute interpretation for application and do nothing.
2. Don’t substitute superficial obedience for substantive life-change.
3. Don’t substitute rationalization for repentance.
4. Don’t substitute an emotional experience for a volitional decision to change.
5. Don’t substitute communication for transformation and merely talk about what you’ve learned.⁶

⁵ Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, *Living By the Book*, (Moody Press Publishers, Chicago, 2007), adapted from pg. 305 and from accompanying workbook.

⁶ Some of these application ideas are adapted from *Living By the Book*, Howard G. Hendricks and William D. Hendricks, Moody Press Publishers, Chicago, 2007, especially pg. 290-317.

How to use a Concordance: skip this box if you already know how.

Complete Word Studies: The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew (some Aramaic). The New Testament was originally written in Koine Greek. Use an exhaustive concordance for a basic definition, or a lexicon or bible dictionary for expanded definitions.

How to use a Concordance:

1. Look up the word in the alphabetized front section of the concordance. (Remember: If you're using a Strong's concordance, you have to find how the word was translated into English in the KJV. "Stored up" in the NIV is translated "laid up" in the KJV, for instance).
2. Under the word, look for the verse reference where that specific word is used
3. Look for the number on the right. Each number corresponds to a Greek or Hebrew word.
4. Turn to the appropriate dictionary or lexicon in the back of the concordance (Hebrew for the Old Testament and Greek for the New Testament)
5. Look up the number for the definition
6. The words in italic are the definition. Write down the Greek word's transliteration (in English alphabet); and write the definition down next to your key, essential word.

How to Find a Cross References: Using the concordance, compare references in the Bible which use any word(s), or quoted passages of scripture, that you determined needed further study. To find these look in the concordance at the list of all the references given for the same word, such as "slaves," (Col. 3:22; 4:1). Find the same Greek or Hebrew reference number that is given for the Greek or Hebrew word you are examining. (For instance, "slaves" is Strong's #1400, if you're using a Strong's Concordance, or GK (NIV) #1528 if you're using an NIV Concordance). Examine several other verses or all the verses that use the same Greek translation number to find more instruction that is given to or about slaves. When the same word is studied in more than one account it is understood more fully. Other Greek words translated as "slave" or "slaves" are numbered GK (NIV) #1526, 1528, 1530, 2871, 3860. What is the difference between these words? Use your concordance to find all the references under "slave" and "slaves" to find out.

It is helpful to examine the other New Testament uses of "slave" or "slaves" or "slavery." Of primary importance to Paul, Peter, and the other apostles was that believers not continue to be slaves to *sin*: Romans 5:12-21; 6-8:17; Galatians 2:1-5; 4:1-5:26; Heb. 2:10-18; 2 Peter 2:19-22, etc. Freedom from slavery to sin changed everything, whether one was a slave or a free man or woman. Most significant was slavery *to* Christ and freedom *in* Christ: Romans 3:21-31; 5:1-11; 1 Corinthians 9:19-27; 12:12-31; Gal. 3:26-29; Eph. 6:8; Col. 3:11, 23-24; Philemon 16; 1 Peter 2:13-25; Philippians 2:5-18, etc. Of secondary concern was *the institution* of slavery: 1 Corinthians 7:17-24; Ephesians 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-4:1; 1 Timothy 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Peter 2:13-25, etc.

Try these online sources: www.blueletterbible.org, www.biblegateway.com, and www.crosswalk.com.

Find which you like best; they all have online concordances. Example: The steps to Blue Letter Bible's concordance are clean and simple. On the opening page, enter the passage you want to examine in the Bible/Dictionary Search. Pick the version (translation) and press "search." When the new page opens, click the button for what kind of help you want: C is for "Concordance and Hebrew-Greek Lexicon." Next, click on the concordance number by the word you want to investigate. This opens the concordance with the definition, or *biblical usage*, as well as the cross references. All the verses where this word is used are at the bottom of the concordance entry. Also, a very thorough Greek lexicon (dictionary) is available at: <http://www.studydrive.org/lex/grk/>. Just enter the word or the Strong's number you want to look up in the search box on the right hand of the page. A detailed definition will be given.

Colossians 1 (NIV)

1Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother,

2To the holy and faithful brothers in Christ at Colosse:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father.

3We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, **4**because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all the saints— **5**the faith and love that spring from the hope that is stored up for you in heaven and that you have already heard about in the word of truth, the gospel **6**that has come to you. All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth. **7**You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, **8**and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

9For this reason, since the day we heard about you, we have not stopped praying for you and asking God to fill you with the knowledge of his will through all spiritual wisdom and understanding. **10**And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God, **11**being strengthened with all power according to his glorious might so that you may have great endurance and patience, and joyfully **12**giving thanks to the Father, who has qualified you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the kingdom of light. **13**For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, **14**in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

15He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. **16**For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. **17**He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. **18**And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. **19**For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, **20**and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

21Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. **22**But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation— **23**if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the gospel. This is the gospel that you heard and that has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

24Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church. **25**I have become its servant by the commission God gave me to present to you the word of God in its fullness— **26**the mystery that has been kept hidden for ages and generations, but is now disclosed to the saints. **27**To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

28We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. **29**To this end I labor, struggling with all his energy, which so powerfully works in me.

Colossians 2 (NIV)

1I want you to know how much I am struggling for you and for those at Laodicea, and for all who have not met me personally. **2**My purpose is that they may be encouraged in heart and united in love, so that they may have the full riches of complete understanding, in order that they may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, **3**in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. **4**I tell you this so that no one may deceive you by fine-sounding arguments. **5**For though I am absent from you in body, I am present with you in spirit and delight to see how orderly you are and how firm your faith in Christ is.

6So then, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him, **7**rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness.

8See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.

9For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, **10**and you have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority. **11**In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, **12**having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.

13When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, **14**having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. **15**And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.

16Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. **17**These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. **18**Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. **19**He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow.

20Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: **21**"Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? **22**These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. **23**Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.

Colossians 3 (NIV)

1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. **2**Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. **3**For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. **4**When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.

5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry. **6**Because of these, the wrath of God is coming. **7**You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived. **8**But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. **9**Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices **10**and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. **11**Here there is no Greek or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all.

12Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. **13**Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. **14**And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

15Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. **16**Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. **17**And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

18Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

19Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

21Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

22Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. **23**Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, **24**since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. **25**Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

Colossians 4 (NIV)

1Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

2Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. **3**And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains.

4Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. **5**Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the

most of every opportunity. **6**Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

7Tychicus will tell you all the news about me. He is a dear brother, a faithful minister and fellow servant in the Lord. **8**I am sending him to you for the express purpose that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts. **9**He is coming with Onesimus, our faithful and dear brother, who is one of you. They will tell you everything that is happening here.

10My fellow prisoner Aristarchus sends you his greetings, as does Mark, the cousin of Barnabas. (You have received instructions about him; if he comes to you, welcome him.) **11**Jesus, who is called Justus, also sends greetings. These are the only Jews among my fellow workers for the kingdom of God, and they have proved a comfort to me. **12**Epaphras, who is one of you and a servant of Christ Jesus, sends greetings. He is always wrestling in prayer for you, that you may stand firm in all the will of God, mature and fully assured. **13**I vouch for him that he is working hard for you and for those at Laodicea and Hierapolis. **14**Our dear friend Luke, the doctor, and Demas send greetings. **15**Give my greetings to the brothers at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

16After this letter has been read to you, see that it is also read in the church of the Laodiceans and that you in turn read the letter from Laodicea.

17Tell Archippus: "See to it that you complete the work you have received in the Lord."

18I, Paul, write this greeting in my own hand. Remember my chains. Grace be with you.

Philemon (NIV)

1Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, To Philemon our dear friend and fellow worker, **2**to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier and to the church that meets in your home: **3**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

4I always thank my God as I remember you in my prayers, **5**because I hear about your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints. **6**I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ. **7**Your love has given me great joy and encouragement, because you, brother, have refreshed the hearts of the saints.

8Therefore, although in Christ I could be bold and order you to do what you ought to do, **9**yet I appeal to you on the basis of love. I then, as Paul—an old man and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus—**10**I appeal to you for my son Onesimus, who became my son while I was in chains. **11**Formerly he was useless to you, but now he has become useful both to you and to me. **12**I am sending him—who is my very heart—back to you. **13**I would have liked to keep him with me so that he could take your place in helping me while I am in chains for the gospel. **14**But I did not want to do anything without your consent, so that any favor you do will be spontaneous and not forced. **15**Perhaps the reason he was separated from you for a little while was that you might have him back for good—**16**no longer as a slave, but better than a slave, as a dear brother. He is very dear to me but even dearer to you, both as a

man and as a brother in the Lord. **17**So if you consider me a partner, welcome him as you would welcome me. **18**If he has done you any wrong or owes you anything, charge it to me. **19**I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand. I will pay it back—not to mention that you owe me your very self. **20**I do wish, brother, that I may have some benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ. **21**Confident of your obedience, I write to you, knowing that you will do even more than I ask. **22**And one thing more: Prepare a guest room for me, because I hope to be restored to you in answer to your prayers.

23Epaphras, my fellow prisoner in Christ Jesus, sends you greetings. **24**And so do Mark, Aristarchus, Demas and Luke, my fellow workers. **25**The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit.