

Theme: Our new status in Christ has not freed us from the relationships and responsibilities in our culture, but we now fulfill these under the Lordship of Christ.

## I. Intro – The Military, work, and China

- A. How to relate in military or work with other Christians?
- B. Story of Watchman Nee and Chinese authorities
- C. How do we handle our old human relationships?
- D. Do we still fulfill our old cultural responsibilities?
- E. If we do, how and why do we do this?
- F. These were major questions for early Christians!
- G. They are major questions for us!

## II. Household Codes in the New Testament

- A. The NT addresses this question in “household codes”
  - 1. Lists address members of typical Roman household
  - 2. Wives, husbands, children, slaves, masters
  - 3. Colossians 3:18-4:1 - all are addressed
  - 4. Col 3:18-4:1; Eph 5:22-6:9; Titus 2:1-10; 1 Peter 2:18-3:7
  - 5. Important part of NT instruction to believers!
- B. These were also very common in secular writings
  - 1. These codes in secular writers of the day as well
  - 2. Some real similarities in NT and secular codes
  - 3. Also some real differences in NT and secular codes

## III. A Look At the Household Code

### A. Reciprocal relationships and responsibilities

- 1. There are clear roles in household codes
  - a. Some are called to ‘submit’ or ‘obey’
    - 1. Wives - submit to husbands (v18)
    - 2. Children obey parents (v20)
    - 3. Slaves - obey your masters (v22)
    - 4. Some then & now thought Christ eradicated all this
    - 5. The NT does not abandon structure or authority
    - 6. Submission & obedience are one way based on role
    - 7. They are a recognition of authority
  - b. Surprise - the ‘leaders’ have responsibilities too!
    - 1. Husbands - love wives - do not be harsh (v19)
    - 2. Fathers/parents - do not embitter/discourage children (v21)
    - 3. Masters - justice and fairness (4:1)
    - 4. This is exceptionally rare in secular codes!
    - 5. Usually told husbands/fathers/masters - rule well
    - 6. Secular codes - concern is smooth operation for society
    - 7. Here leaders love, show concern, do what is right

### B. The basis - Christ the Lord

- 1. The Christ centered nature of this passage
  - a. 14 times ‘Lord’ refers to God/Jesus in Colossians

- b. 7 are in these 8 verses!
- c. Plus play on words for Lord/Master in 3:22, 4:1
- d. The focus of all is Christ the Lord!
- e. He is the lens through which we view these relationships & responsibilities

2. A new motive - obedience to Christ the Lord

- a. When relationships are rooted in God's design
  - 1. Family roles part of God's design in creation
  - 2. v18 - fitting in the Lord
  - 3. v20 - pleases the Lord (Eph 6 - 10 commands)
  - 4. Also see 1 Cor. 11; Eph 5 - family roles designed by God
  - 5. We obey Christ by embracing these

- b. When relationships are rooted in the fall
  - 1. Slavery is NOT part of God's design
  - 2. Never spoken of as God's design for humanity
  - 3. Not like Aristotle - slaves are not like animals
  - 4. [1 Cor 7] - if offered freedom, take it!
  - 5. v22 - obey masters in everything; sincerity of heart
  - 6. v24 - statement or command? - either way - serve Christ
  - 7. Obey Christ by serving human masters

C. Living with an eternal perspective

- 1. 3:23-4:1 - note the eternal perspective

- 2. This eternal perspective is to govern present actions

#### IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do I see I serve Christ through human relationships?
  - 1. Hyper-spirituality - I serve Christ alone; freed from others
  - 2. Christ - serve Me in these human relationships
  - 3. Am I serving Christ by fulfilling my God given roles?
  - 4. The Gospel - He came and served us!
  - 5. Our response - we go and serve others
- B. Do I live with an eternal perspective?
  - 1. It is so tempting to live with a temporal perspective
  - 2. A temporal perspective demands rights now
  - 3. An eternal perspective looks for rewards then
  - 4. Do I live with Christ and eternity in view?
- C. Prayer - embrace an eternal perspective & obey Christ!

#### Relationships and Responsibilities In Christ the Lord

Colossians 3:18-4:1

June 24, 2012

Prayer

1 Thessalonians 3:12-13

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 embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. 22 Slaves, 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. 1 Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

Colossians 3:18–4:1