

## Discover the New You: A New Look at Relationships

You can show up at church and look, act, talk and give right. But our home life might be a war zone. Almost anyone can fake it for an hour or so on Sunday. Imagine the countless homes that could be changed by the power of the Gospel.



**Colossians 3:18-4:1** 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. Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged. 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. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism. Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

## Reflections

We can show up at church and look right, act right, talk right, and give right. But our home might be a war zone. The drive over to church can be filled with cutting words and shouting matches, or with ice-cold silence. But once we walk into the church building, it is easy to put on a performance worthy of an Oscar. Almost anyone can fake it for an hour and some of us become masters at maintaining the illusion.

We can sit next to our spouse, smile at our children, and play the role of “happy family.” But the acid test comes inside the walls of our homes. Our Christian faith is not expressed in one or two performances a week in public as a family. Followers of Christ know that real faith brings real change in the relationships of those who are closest to us ... our family members.

Paul also discusses the relationship of slaves and mas-

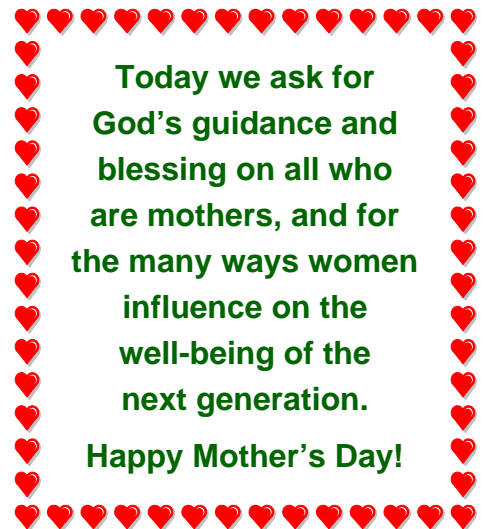
ters. It is important to remember that in the first century over half of the Roman world was in some kind of slavery. Paul’s words were not written to affirm slavery or advocate the continuation of this godless institution. Paul was actually trying to give dignity to the slaves and a challenge to the masters.

Although we can’t draw a one-to-one parallel, there are transferable principles between slavery and modern-day vocational life. The words to slaves can speak volumes to employees and the words to masters can be of great benefit to employers. How does your faith impact your vocational life? How should your faith impact your vocational life?

Work is a gift from God. We don’t always see it that way, but God does. All we have to do is read the opening chapters of Genesis to discover the goodness of work. In the garden, before the fall, in perfect paradise, God gives meaningful work to Adam (Genesis 2:15).

At home and at work, people see us as we are. We can fake it for an hour a week at church, but no one can keep up a façade all of the time. At home and at work, people know who we really are ... for better or for worse.

— Mickey Kibler



Reference:  
Hybels, Bill. Discover the New You - Colossians. Small Group Workbook. 1999

## Readings

### Sunday, May 9

#### Colossians 3:18 – 4:1

Imagine a world where everyone willfully and joyfully followed Paul's counsel. How would this impact – marriage relationships, the local church, the workplace, society at large, seekers?

### Monday, May 10

#### Colossians 3:18 - 21

If you are married, what is one goal you want to set for developing and deepening your relationship with your spouse? If you are single, what is one goal you want to set for growing a relationship with a family member, friend, or coworker?

### Tuesday, May 11

#### Colossians 3:18 – 21

Put Paul's challenge to each family member in your own words – wives, husbands, children, parents. Of all the challenges God could have spoken to these people, why do you think He chose to emphasize these specific ones?

### Wednesday, May 12

#### Colossians 3:22 – 4:1

What would happen in your workplace if everyone followed Paul's vocational guidelines?

### Thursday, May 13

#### Colossians 3:22 - 24

How would your coworkers describe you and your work habits, and why would they describe you that way?

### Friday, May 14

#### Proverbs 31:13 - 22

Proverbs 31 describes a productive worker. What characteristics described would you like to apply to your work?

### Saturday, May 15

#### 2 Thessalonians 3:7 – 9

Paul and his companions set an example of dedication, integrity, and diligence at work. What kind of example are you to your coworkers?

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