

Further Bible Study Questions

- A) I find it amazing that I can be so nice to people I hardly know (someone at Starbucks, a supermarket, restaurant, etc.), but I can be so unforgiving and merciless with my own family. There was a point in my life where I held a grudge against my parents, and harbored that grudge for many years! How can this be?! How can I happily receive the grace of God (forgiveness beyond comprehension) and then turn around and hold a grudge against ANYONE (especially my family members)?! It's insanity, when I think back on it... How about you? Do you treat others better than your family members? Your spouse, your kids, your grandkids? Do you find yourself treating those closest to you with a lower standard than others? What are the biblical implications of this kind of behavior (re-read Colossians 3:12-25).
- B) Statistically speaking, Christian marriages fail just as often as those where Jesus Christ is of no issue. Roughly 50% of all Christian marriages end up in divorce court! It would seem, speaking strictly statistically, that Jesus Christ doesn't make much of a difference in marriage... What kind of a difference is Jesus Christ making in your marriage? Is He being served, is He being loved, is He being obeyed? If you could make one change in your marriage which would cause you and your spouse to draw closer to God (be practical), what would it be?
- C) For many singles, verses like these fall on deaf ears. I mean, you're not married, so this kind of stuff is for the future, not the present, right? I would agree that most of what you read about marriage, children, and all the rest is stuff which will make more sense once you are married (and have kids). However, many dating couples suffer from being so "in love" with one another, they miss the absolute essential elements which are necessary for a great marriage. Colossians 3:12-25 includes these strategic elements which are REQUIRED for marriage and families. The absence of these authentic Christian characteristics in a person (yourself or another person) is a strong indicator that a lasting relationship should be avoided AT ALL COSTS. Many Christian marriages find themselves on the rocks of failure because they ignored the warning signs -- are you paying attention to the critical ingredients for marriage? How do you measure up, how about your "other half?" Does anything need to change?

Real Deal Relationships

Long Beach Alliance Church • September 30th, 2007 • Pastor Chris Lankford

**WHATEVER YOU DO, DO YOUR WORK
HEARTILY, AS FOR THE LORD RATHER
THAN FOR MEN, KNOWING THAT FROM
THE LORD YOU WILL RECEIVE THE
REWARD OF THE INHERITANCE. IT IS
THE LORD CHRIST WHOM YOU SERVE.
~COLOSSIANS 3:23-24 (NASB)**

1) Getting Personal

- A) Much of the teaching in Paul's letter to the Colossians seems to be most easily applied to the context of the church (e.g. Colossians 1:2, 2:1, 3:11-13).
- B) Suddenly, Paul shifts the attention from outward/public responses to Jesus Christ to more personal responses (3:18-25). Why the sudden change?
- C) Clearly, those in the church can be fooled by people who appear to be walking with Christ, but in reality are putting on an elaborate show (cf. Matthew 7:21-23).
- D) However, those who are in our closest family are not so easily fooled by outward attempts at "clean living." Family is God's provision of accountability for His followers.

- E) Further, if we are truly living out of a heart which trusts Jesus Christ's sufficiency for our lives, it will manifest itself most vividly in our families! This has an authenticating effect on our testimony (cf. 1st Timothy 3:4-5).

- F) Simply put, how you live in your closest family relationships is one of the most vivid and pure measures of Jesus Christ in your life. The potential for "faking it" is dramatically lowered in our families.

2) Authentic Living For Families

- A) As Paul directs his attention to the family, he begins with the most significant pace-setter in family relationships, the wife (Colossians 1:18, cf. Ephesians 5:22-22ff).

- B) Paul's motivation for beginning his family instruction with the wife is clearly because of her role of subordination to the head of the family (in this case, the husband), and its relationship to Christ's submission to God (Colossians 1:18, cf. Ephesians 5:22ff, 1st Peter 2:25-3:2).

- C) The call to wives to "subject/submit" to their husbands is meant as a voluntary act which is in devotion and love for Jesus Christ ("fitting in the Lord," Colossians 3:18) directed toward her husband.

- D) Submission is meant to manifest itself as "respect" (Ephesians 5:33) from the wife to the husband. While mutual submission to one another in Christ (Ephesians 5:21) is the general rule, the woman provides what is best for her family and husband by voluntarily initiating submission.

- E) Husbands are called to "love" their wives, going beyond affection and feelings into the realm of active and continual care for her well-being (Colossians 1:19, cf. Ephesians 5:25ff).

- F) A Christian man is called to be "compassionate, kind, humble, gentle, etc." in his relationships with everyone (3:12ff), how much more in his relationship with his wife?!

- G) Thus, the call to not become "embittered" (or "treat harshly") is a direct call to Christian husbands to treat their wives with words and actions which convey a voluntary initiation of understanding, forgiveness, and environment of response.

3) Authentic Living For Kids & Parents

- A) Children are called to "obey" their parents in "all things" with the same voluntary attitude (3:20, without compulsion). Once again, the measure of our obedience is not how it relates to the other person(s), but is "unto the Lord."

- B) Fathers are particularly singled out (as head of the home and the primary source of discipline, cf. Hebrews 12:7-8) to treat their children properly (3:21), not "exasperating" (same word as "embitter" or "treat harshly" from 3:19) their children.

- C) The motivation for fathers treating their children well (as measured by 3:12-17), is so that children do not "lose heart" (become discouraged). Firm, Christ-like guidance (cf. Ephesians 6:4) is demanded, but no servitude (slavery).

- D) Christians are implored to "serve the Lord" (submit, love, obey...) instead of men (husband, wife, parents). This is the heart of the Christian home, serving the Lord Christ (3:24).