



# MONDAY 17 JULY 2017

SERIES: COLOSSIANS – LIFE IN CHRIST

## Read: Colossians 3:17 – 4:1

### **Plug In...**

This is more than just commands to Christians, this is a vision of God's people holy, loving, doing, thinking, acting in the name of the Lord Jesus. Chapter 3:17 shapes each of the following lines.

The relationships addressed move from the most intimate circle (a marriage) to ever broader circles (family, masters-slaves [NB: which in Paul's day were more connected to the household family]).

### **Chew It Over...**

The Gospel is not a set of commands to push us along to be better people. Rather, it pulls up. The Gospel is a future vision of resurrection existence (a new heavens and earth), seen first in Jesus Christ. As we've already said, Jesus is a walking-talking garden of Eden reality. Everything is in harmony with Him. He perfectly relates to the Father, He perfectly relates to humans, to the rest of the creation.

Over this week, we'll take each relationship mentioned. First, imagine what it would be like. Second, remember you are guaranteed to be there because of Christ (you have died and been raised with Him). Third, allow the future reality to pull you up. You are a new person and these relationship experiences can ever-increase across the rest of your life. For, they are the way that we do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus giving thanks to the Father through Him.

### **Prayer Suggestion**

Thank God that you now are a new person and can actually work at these things thanks to Christ. Ask to be massively transformed in these areas.



# TUESDAY 18 JULY 2017

SERIES: COLOSSIANS – LIFE IN CHRIST

## Read: Colossians 3:18-19

### Plug In...

Both what husbands and wives are encouraged to do, they are called upon to do so voluntarily. Notice, neither party is commanded to *make* the other person do anything (for that would be slavery and servitude). It is not a societal or institutional structure. This concerns what occurs between two individuals, two free agents, within their marriage. Both are called to voluntarily do this as they understand verse 17 (which is even echoed): *Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.*

### Chew It Over...

These verses are very hard for us to read. We have to admit we all come to the Bible shaped by beliefs, culture, and carrying personal experiences. As Christians, we come like that, but also have added in what the Bible has already taught us and changed us in. As such, we approach the world as a shaped person. Because of that, each time we come to God's Word we have to do our best efforts to recognise that as everyone is biased, so are we. We can't escape it. It is not wrong to be biased (the truth is biased, God is biased), but our bias can be wrong. However, in recognising our bias we do open up space for the Bible to test our bias and critique if necessary.

No less these verse. We cannot read them without bias. We have heard the debates. We also are a part of an atrocious history where women have been abused and oppressed, where men have been arrogant and cruel. We are also part of a culture that on the one hand recognises the evil and indignity, but on the other hand, is increasingly rejecting that God has anything to say, and if He does exist He's evil. How do we proceed? What do verses 18-19 look like in a Christian marriage? This second

question cannot be explored here in detail, it is a big exploration. The first question can have some suggestions.

- Our aim is that of verse 17, “Do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus”. We answer to Him, and He is kind and loving and for our good and flourishing.
- We must work hard to figure out both ‘what the Lord is saying and asking of us in our relationships’ and also work hard at ‘what this verse is not saying’ (our biases have a habit of making us eagerly say a verse is saying more than it is saying, or less than it is saying).
- We probably have to slow down greatly with one another to hear what we are each saying. There are all sorts of equations made with language; words become loaded with tons of associations. For the sake of loving people – [Colossians 1:14](#) – whatever side of a debate we land, we need to lead with love by asking lots of clarification questions. For sure, when someone says, “equality” in a sentence, or “inferiority”, etc, they probably don’t assume what you’re assuming. Don’t assume. And, how can you make it safe for another to talk openly with you? [There is stacks of conversational, relational wisdom here in [Proverbs 18:13-23](#).]

Okay.

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Pray that Jesus is Lord within your heart. Pray for repentance, sensitivity, acknowledgement of evil and oppression in the world – along with our part in it. Ask the Lord for wisdom to build a different legacy.



# WEDNESDAY 19 JULY 2017

SERIES: COLOSSIANS – LIFE IN CHRIST

## Read: Colossians 3:20-21

### Plug In...

Children are addressed as Christians. Paul is speaking directly to them, and the assumption is they are Christian – they are 'in the Lord'. Parents are told not to 'embitter' or 'exasperate' their children. Exasperating your children results in discouraging them.

### Chew It Over...

The Bible calls each individual to a personal saving faith. However, on the way to a child having a personal faith, the Bible treats the child of believers *as* a Christian. They have the blessing of hearing the Gospel. Remember from Deuteronomy 6 that parents are to live out their faith, talking about it, showing it, as they do life, in every aspect of life. God displays that many children have their identity as a Christian before they even realise it – one of the wonderful blessings God gives to a Christian family. How are you treating your children as equally *in Christ*?

The discouragement is not lack of self-esteem, but whereby they feel that they are not in the Lord. The child/children does not experience the grace of God. How have you been on-the-back of your kids lately? Think over whether their identity in Christ is threatened. Could it be that you give them a message of unless they are perfect, then God won't except them? If they feel that, they for sure feel that their own parents don't accept them.

### Prayer Suggestion

Ask for wisdom for those moments where you want to teach, direct, and correct your children. Seek wisdom and patience, and kindness from God so you can relate to your children in a way that grace dominates.



# THURSDAY 20 JULY 2017

SERIES: COLOSSIANS – LIFE IN CHRIST

## Read: Colossians 3:22

### Plug In...

The Roman Empire of Paul's day, where Colossae is, did not have slavery based on race (i.e. like England and America had last century). You became a slave because of bankruptcy. There was no bankruptcy laws like Australia: you only stay bankrupt for 3 years and then a fresh start. Regarding debt you can't pay back, in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century you sold yourself (sometimes the family) in to 'slavery'. It didn't necessarily mean you did menial tasks. You could be well educated and so work off your debt as the family's teacher, or manage affairs.

In the situation of slave, the Christian slave doesn't take a minimalist approach, they maximise the situation for and because of the Lord.

### Chew It Over...

We may move quickly to applying principles from this scenario to the employment realm. And there certainly is application. The first principle is more focussed on circumstances. A person may not have control over a situation but the situation dictates their present-day circumstances. (E.g. the economy in Colossae has a crisis, and some people in the middle get caught by it. They did nothing wrong, but they now have to sell themselves into slavery to pay off the debt). Whatever circumstances have brought you to a certain position, it is in that position you have a responsibility.

Think about your circumstances. Especially the ones where you feel stuck in a web, in a hole that you can't get out of. What things do you need to do, stop doing, start thinking, stop thinking, in order to work wholeheartedly for the Lord *within* your circumstances?

## **Prayer Suggestion**

Help us Lord to have joy in the midst of our circumstances (Colossians 1:24a). We pray for a change in circumstances. But Lord please don't bypass working in us patience, resilience, and an attitude whereby we are sold-out for the Lord. Working hard for you, right here, right now.



FRIDAY 21 JULY 2017

SERIES: COLOSSIANS – LIFE IN CHRIST

## Read: Colossians 3:23-25 & Philemon

### Plug In...

Notice this section on slaves and masters gets some extended treatment. There is a link between this letter to the Colossians and the letter to Philemon. At the end of this letter to the Colossians, Paul mentions that he is posting this letter by the hand of Tychicus. So Tychicus will take the letter from Paul in prison to the people at the church of Colossae. Paul says that Onesimus will be with Tychicus. Onesimus is described as “a faithful and loved brother, who is one of you” ([Colossians 4:9](#)).

The letter to Philemon is Paul writing, not to a church, but to an individual. Paul tells Philemon that Philemon’s runaway slave Onesimus is returning. In the letter to Philemon, Paul encourages him, since Philemon is a Christian, to receive Onesimus as a Christian brother (it seems that Onesimus runs away while not a Christian, but comes into contact with Paul and his crew and becomes a Christian – now “a faithful and loved brother, who is one of you [a Christian too]”).

The reality of slave-master relationships gets transformed in a Christian context. It is not mere business. But the transactions that God has done for His people are to flow on and shape the economics of other relationships.

### Chew It Over...

From 3:23 to 4:1 there are several motivations given for serving and mastering in a certain way. Can you list them?

### Prayer Suggestion

Thank God for freeing us. Ask God to show you how you can serve Him – serving a Redeemer God.



## WEEKEND 22-23 JULY 2017

SERIES: COLOSSIANS – LIFE IN CHRIST

### Read: Colossians 4:1

#### **Plug In...**

There are three times in the New Testament when God's impartiality is spoken of: [Romans 2:11](#); [Ephesians 6:9](#); and here, [Colossians 3:25](#). God does not shirk justice.

#### **Chew It Over...**

Consider how the Old Testament communicated justice: "An eye for an eye." A person was to be met with equal proportion punishment for what they had done. The only way a criminal doesn't receive the due punishment is if God absorbs it on his or her behalf.

A Christian understands this. A Christian master, leader, parent, employer, must copy God in their dealings with those they lead and are responsible for. It means dealing with people on the basis of how they have been dealt with by their Master in heaven. To do otherwise, betrays that we've forgotten what has been done for us. It may even be articulating that we have placed ourselves back under a system whereby grace can no longer be found ([Matthew 6:14-15](#)).

#### **Prayer Suggestion**

Help us to so know your forgiveness that we are full of grace, mercy, loving-kindness, and forgiveness to our fellow man or woman. Show us today where grace must be dispensed into my relationships gone bad.