

# Colossians 3.<sup>17</sup>-4.<sup>1</sup>

## 9. 'The best mindset!'

### Background

This week's passage is a continuation and in some ways an expansion of the passage we studied last week. Paul is here spelling out in greater detail what the 'future way' (as opposed to your 'former ways') entails and elaborating on the life of the kingdom.

It's important to appreciate the extent to which Col.3.17 is the 'controlling' verse: to jump straight in to vv.18ff without grasping the context of those exhortations gives rise to many of the misunderstandings and mis-application of the apostle's teaching.

That verse is comprehensive in its scope – "*whatever you do ..*" – and sets out the basic premise on which our lives as followers of the Lord Jesus are now lived. Everything we say and do is to be '**in the name of** the Lord Jesus': that's to say, our whole manner of living is to

- reflect the values of the kingdom,
- display the glory of the Lord, and
- express the truths of the gospel

always with an abiding and eager gratitude to God for all that He is and has become to us in Christ.

That's then illustrated by Paul with reference to certain key areas of our living – notably, marriage, family life, and the workplace. These are *illustrative* of the basic exhortation he is making (3.17), rather than an *exhaustive* application of that; but as such they demonstrate how we are to go about applying that call to 'do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus' to every sphere of our living.

The specific illustrations he gives, however, are carefully chosen and significant – not simply because they are central areas of human life, but because each itself provides a picture of the gospel: our relationship with Jesus, our belonging to the Father's family, and the privilege of service.

Almost certainly Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus was written at much the same time as this letter (both seem to have been 'circulars', intended to 'do the rounds' of the churches in the area), and there's a parallel passage in the letter to the Ephesians at which it's worth having a look: doing so will help to give you a yet more 'rounded' appreciation of what the apostle is teaching.

You'll see in that parallel passage ([Eph.5.15-6.9](#) – a markedly longer passage, but covering the same ground) that

- Paul's exhortation in Col.3.16 – "*let the Word of Christ dwell among you richly ..*" – is matched in Ephesians by the exhortation to "*be filled with the Spirit*":
- the exhortations in Ephesians regarding marriage and family in particular are amplified: and that
- his exhortations in Ephesians are followed immediately, and significantly, by a reference to the spiritual battle in which we're engaged.

**'Days' (1), (4) and (6)** are the ones with which to start!

## 1) Monday 21<sup>st</sup> November – discipleship

Read [Colossians 3.17](#)

*“.. do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father ..”* (Col.3.17)

The verse establishes a key principle for the life of discipleship – your whole life as His follower is to be lived ‘in the name of Jesus’: that’s to say, in every context what you do or say is to be expressive of the Lord Jesus’ person and work. Make sure it is!

Read [Eph.5.15-20](#), a parallel passage in a different letter: what does Paul mean by your ‘making the most of every opportunity’ (Eph.5.16)?

How can you ensure that you are ‘filled with the Spirit’ (Eph.5.18)?

**For the 3<sup>rd</sup> time in 3 verses Paul urges on believers the importance of ‘giving thanks to God the Father’: why is this so important?**

**Prayer:** *Enable me by Your Spirit, Lord, to live my life today for Your glory: may Your beauty be seen in me through my words and deeds and attitudes.*

## 2) Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November – proclamation

Read [Colossians 3.18-19](#)

*“.. as is fitting in the Lord ..”* (Col.3.18)

Our living is not to be shaped by the world and its values, but by Christ and by the desire to proclaim Him and His gospel. Husband and wife unite in displaying the grace of Christ’s love for His church and the blessing there is in embracing His lordship.

What does a wife ‘submitting’ to her husband, in a way that is ‘fitting in the Lord’, involve?

How does Paul’s exhortation to husbands ensure a wife’s submissiveness is not abused?

**Prayer:** *Where I’m called to lead, my Lord, help me show Your love: where I’m bound to submit, help me display the grace of Your obedience. Help me proclaim Your name!*

## 3) Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November – Father

Read [Colossians 3.20-21](#)

*“.. obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord..”* (Col.3.20)

Jesus brings you into a family; and, more specifically, at the heart of all that He has done for you has been His desire to bring you to the Father (see [Eph.2.18](#)). Family life affords as good a context as any for illustrating this central affirmation of the gospel.

Why does such obedience on the part of children 'please the Lord'?

How careful are you to ensure that in what you say and do you are encouraging those around you?

*Prayer: How glad I am that I may come to you as my Father in heaven, O God! And how glad I am that I may safely pour out my heart to You always.*

#### 4) Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> November – service

Read [Colossians 3.22](#)

*".. but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord .." (Col.3.22)*

Submissiveness, properly understood, is one of the core values of the kingdom. Your place of work (whether or not it's paid employment) is the stage on which you portray the glory of the gospel and the beauty of a life reflecting the servant King.

To what extent is your conduct conditioned by the desire to impress other people?

How 'absolute' is Paul's instruction to slaves to obey their earthly masters *in everything*?

**How does a reverence for the Lord affect the manner of your work?**

**Read [2 Chron.26.3-5](#). As a 16-year-old Uzziah was instructed 'in the fear of God': how would you go about cultivating that reverence for the Lord in teenagers today?**

*Prayer: Help me, Lord, to keep my eyes fixed on You. Help me to remember that Your eyes are always on me, even when there is no one else around me.*

#### 5) Friday 25<sup>th</sup> November – excellence

Read [Colossians 3.23-24](#)

*".. whatever you do, work at it with all your heart .." (Col.3.23)*

No half measures! As the apostle elsewhere declared, always abound in the work of the Lord for you know that your labour in the Lord is never in vain ([1 Cor.15.58](#)). All that the Lord does is marked by excellence: strive to ensure that your work is too!

How easy (or otherwise) do you find it to think of the daily tasks you're doing as your 'working for the Lord'?

How does it affect the way you do your work when you know that you are actually working for the Lord?

*Prayer: Each day is a gift from Yourself, my Lord. Help me by Your Spirit to live it to the full, that, like the heavens above, my whole being may proclaim Your excellencies.*

## 6) Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November – service

Read [Colossians 3.23-25](#)

“.. it is the Lord Christ you are serving ..” (Col.3.24)

Your privilege and joy throughout eternity will be to serve your Lord and Saviour (see [Rev.7.15](#)): start practicing now! Whatever today’s “work” may involve for you, learn to rejoice as do it that You are serving Christ. Do it well. Do it rightly. Do it gladly.

How are you motivated to be always giving your best?

What is the ‘inheritance from the Lord’ to which Paul refers here?

In what sense should it be understood “as a reward”?

How does Paul’s statement in v.24 that ‘you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward’ sit comfortably with a gospel of grace?

**Prayer:** *Lord, You make Your servants a flame of fire. God deliver me from the dread asbestos of 'other things.' Saturate me with the oil of the Spirit that I may be aflame.\**

## 7) Sunday 27<sup>th</sup> November – Master

Read [Colossians 4.1](#)

“.. you know that you also have a Master in heaven ..” (Col.4.1)

What has the Lord required of you but that you act justly, love mercy and walk humbly with your God ([Mic.6.8](#))? In all your relationships walk closely with the Lord and mirror both His justice and His mercy in the ways you speak and act.

How regularly do you pause and engage in self-examination to discern whether your conduct and words reflect the justice and mercy of God?

Paul spoke of himself as the ‘slave’ of Christ: in what sense is that the truth about a believer and how does that find expression in your life?

**Prayer:** *O for a closer walk with You, my Lord! Draw near to me today as, together with Your people, I draw near to You. Cultivate Your character in my daily living.*