



BELIEVERS CHAPEL

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The Sermons of S. Lewis Johnson

Colossians 3:18 through 4:1

"The New Man in the Old Relationship"

TRANSCRIPT

[Message] We are studying Paul's letter to the Colossians, as those of you who have been attending know, and we are now at that stage of the epistle in which the apostle is going to make some very practical applications of the truths that he has discussed in a more theological fashion. Our Scripture reading for today is Colossians 3 verse 18 through chapter 4 verse 1, and our subject is "The New Man in the Old Relationships."

We have, in the immediately preceding context, been dealing with the fact that the apostle has said that when Christ died and was buried and raised again, he did that as our representative or covenantal head, and that the people of God are reckoned to be with him as he carries out his activities as the head of the people of God, and so when he suffers and pays the penalty for sin, he suffers and pays the penalty for our sin.

When he dies, when he is resurrected, he is one who has died and has been resurrected for us, and we have been reckoned to have died and to have been resurrected in him, and even at the present moment when he is at the right hand of the Father, we are regarded as having been raised together with him, and we are regarded, Paul tells us in Ephesians chapter 2, as being seated together with him in heavenly places in Christ, so the fact of the covenantal headship of the Lord Jesus is one of the fundamental facts of

biblical doctrine. It's one of the things that we must, if we are to understand the Bible, come to understand. But then of course the doctrine that we believe in which we rejoice in has its most practical and ethical significance. The apostle has said that in the light of what has happened in the work of Christ, we have put off the old man, we have put on the new. There are certain things that characterize the life of the old man. They are to be put off. There are certain things that characterize the life of the new man. They are to be put on just as, to use Paul's figure, one changes one's clothes.

Now, this life that we have in which we live as a new man, is a life that we live in the most ordinary of relationships. We live it in the home. We live it in relationship with our wives, or our husbands, our children, and also there are other applications of that kind of life, and so Paul is going to write about that in this section, and he begins in verse 18 with the wives. He says,

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them. Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged. Servants, (This word really means something like slaves. That's its fundamental sense in the days of Paul, and slavery was of course a social fact in the Roman Empire. It's been estimated that there were sixty million slaves in the Roman Empire, and so the apostle has a special word for them. And in fact, you'll notice that he devotes more space to the relationship between master and slave, than he does to these other relationships. I'll make a reference later on as a speculative reference to the reason for that. But he continues.) Servants or slaves obey in all things your masters according to the flesh;" (Now, that does not mean obey them according to the flesh. It means obey your masters who are your masters according to the flesh.) not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ. But he that doeth wrong shall receive for the

wrong which he hath done: and there is no respect of persons. (And the final text, this really should have been the last verse of chapter 3, but occasionally in the New Testament you will find that versification, which is not part of the original inspiration of the word of God made later sometimes, it's wrong, and so this first verse should really be a part of the preceding context.) Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven."

You may remember that in the division of the New Testament English translation, and really the Greek text, later Greek texts, into verses and chapters that they were done considerably later, and of course Paul didn't write verses, and he didn't write paragraphs actually. In fact, some of the later manuscripts do have references in them, little marks that indicate that perhaps a change of thought is to be regarded as taking place, but no chapter divisions as we know them.

There is a tradition that Archbishop Stephen Lankton, made the chapter divisions when he was riding a horse from London to Paris, or I have forgotten exactly the destination, but anyway he was riding his hoarse, and he had the Bible in one hand and his pencil or pen in the other hand, where he was making the chapter divisions, and occasionally, as he went to make the chapter division the hoarse jumped a log, and instead of making it the place he intended to, he made it at another place. That of course is biblical tradition. It doesn't have any truth to it, so far as we know, but nevertheless chapter divisions are not always happy divisions, and we are perfectly free to make changes if it's necessary in the flow of Paul or anyone else's thought. May the Lord bless this reading of his word, and let's bow together now in a moment of prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we are grateful, and thankful to Thee for the word of God, and we are especially thankful for sections such as we study today because, Lord, they say so plainly and in understandable language how we as new men and new women in Christ are to live out the life that Thou hast implanted within us by divine grace. We pray, Lord,

that the Holy Spirit who indwells all true believers may enable us to please Thee in the ordinary relationships of life. We ask Thy blessing upon each one present here in this auditorium, and we pray that the time that we spend together, and singing together, and the fellowship that we have with one another, and the listening to the word of God that this time may be fruitful in these activities may be edifying for us in our Christian life. Strengthen us, Lord, for the testimony and the witnessing of this week.

We thank Thee for this the first day of the week, the Lord's Day. We desire to honor him and glorify his name. We pray for those whose names are listed in our Calendar of Concern. We thank Thee for their interest in spiritual things and their desires and their aspirations and their needs. And, Lord, we ask in accordance with Thy will that Thou wilt minister in healing and encouragement and the supply of all of the things that are necessary for those who have need. We commit them to Thee. We pray Thy blessing upon them, and also upon those who have ministered to them, their families and their friends as well.

We give Thee thanks for the whole church of Jesus Christ wherever the word of God goes forth today, oh Father, bless it richly, build up the church. Enlarge it in accordance with Thy purposes and plans for this age. We give Thee thanks and praise for the one who loved us and gave himself for us. We are indeed, Lord, grateful for the forgiveness of our sins, for justification, for association with our head, in all of the redeeming work that he has accomplished.

We look forward to the second coming, and we thank Thee for that hope, which is ours. Bless the ministry of the word today. Bless it in Believer's Chapel, and those who are here, Lord, we pray Thy blessing upon them, and especially those who may not yet have the assurance of the forgiveness of sins, and this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Message] For those of you who were listening today on WRR, you'll recognize that the same subject is our subject today in the epistle to the Colossians. We have been

studying the epistle to the Ephesians, over WRR messages that were given during the week on Wednesday nights here, and it just so happened that this morning as Martha, turned on WRR after KRLD, there I was saying the things that I am going to say in the particular hour. It just was an accident that, or a part of the overall providence of God speaking theologically that I should be saying the same things in this hour that was said in the other hour, so for those of you who heard it beforehand and don't like what you heard, well, you are excused now. Martha came with her earplugs, and so after a while she can take them out, especially after we get over the husband and wife relationship and deal with the children, then you can, Martha, you can take out your earplugs then.

The subject is "The New Man in the Old Relationships." Conversion has made us new men and new women, and the new man, Paul has pointed out quite plainly in the preceding context, has a new life. We say so often the it's of course a cliché here and in many Christian churches as well, that Christian doctrine involves Christian duty, and we often go on to say that a Christian duty is rooted in Christian doctrine, and that is certainly true. We cannot subscribe to Alexander Pope's for creeds and forms let senseless bigots fight. His can't be wrong, whose life is in the right.

Paul shows us how to put truth into practice in the most familiar places. In the home, in verse 18 through verse 21, and then in the household. That is the arrangements or the relationships that are just a bit broader than husband and wife and parents and children. So in one sense, as one commentator, who has a gift for little happy phrases has said, "We move from the heavenliness to the homeliness. This is something that all the Bible witness to, and it's not something that is found only in Paul. In the Old Testament, in the New Testament, in the life of our Lord we see this constant stress upon living the truth in the practical relationships that we claim that we have taken to ourselves. When the Lord Jesus, for example healed the man in the Gaderenes, when the man out of whom the devils or demons were departed was in the presence of the Lord

Jesus, the Lord sent him away and said, "Return to your own house and show how great things, God hath done unto you."

Well, that's precisely the whole of what the Bible says. Paul says in 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 4, "But if any widow hath children or nephews let them learn first to show piety at home, and to requite their parents, for that is good and acceptable before God." So to learn first piety at home, how important that is. It's not surprising that we should find sections in the New Testament that have to do with duties like this because even in the pagan world, there was often instruction given that had to do with the relationships of people in the families. They might be called *haustafel* as Luther did. House tables. That is lists of things that people who belong to household are responsible to do. In the New Testament we have these house tables or house lists. The source of them, well, we don't exactly know the source of it. It may well be that they originated in the pagan world, or perhaps more likely in the Hellenistic Judaist world, or Judaistic world because they are the kinds of things that are very suitable to ethical living in the home life.

The distinguishing mark of Paul's *haustafel* is this, life is not to be lived simply in conformity with the order of nature, but life is to be lived according to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. I don't know whether you noticed it or not, but in these verses that is read here, you can see that thrust very plainly. Look for example, at verse 18, "Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." Verse 20, "Children obey your parents and all things for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Verse 22, "Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh. Not with eyes service as men pleases, but in singleness of heart fearing God." Verse 23 again, "But whatsoever ye do, do it hardily as to the Lord and not unto men." Verse 24, "Know that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance, for ye serve the Lord Christ." Twice in that verse, reference to the response of the individual to the Lord God, and then in verse 25, I should say, verse 1 of chapter 4, "Masters give unto your servants that which is just and equal

knowing that ye also have a master in heaven." So the important thing is to remember that we are doing these things as unto the Lord.

Wives, and their responsibilities ultimately as to the Lord. Husbands as to the Lord. Children as to the Lord, and for parents and fathers particularly, you do your work as a father, or a parent as to the Lord, and even in the other relationships of life. We don't have slavery. Maybe there is some application of what Paul is saying to employer and employee relationships, and the kind of ethical or the attitude in ethnics that characterizes Christians may be an should be carried out in the lives of those of you who have responsibilities toward employees, and you who are employees, to your own employer. There is a revealing contrast between Christian and pagan teaching. In paganism the rights lie on one side, the duties on the other, but in Christianity, you notice the reciprocal relationships and duties.

It's true wives are to submit themselves unto their own husbands as unto the Lord. But the apostle quickly says, "Husbands love your wives and be not bitter against them." In paganism the motives were always man ward, but in Christianity the motives are grounded in a new factor, the fact that we are in Christ. One of the things that has caused so much trouble, I think, in our day is the growth of what may be called feminism.

Now, we don't deny at all the fact, at least, I don't think we do. We don't deny the fact that when women and men work they should be treated in the same way. When they do the same tasks they should be rewarded in the same way financially. We don't have any questions about that. We feel too that they should be promoted in an equitable way. In other words, in the market place, equity should govern our relationships, but when we come to other matters, it's necessary for Christians, especially Christians to recognize that we are creatures of the Lord God, and therefore our relationships are measured by that and we are responsible to live in accordance with the things that Scripture sets forth, as being applicable to those who are creatures of God.

If you study feminism today, it's quite possible for us to take the viewpoint of some who've said that what we are in today in feminism stage three. Stage one was the stage in which feminism suggested that way to psychological fulfillment and independence of men was by paid employment, by having a career, and so consequently that was pushed. Occasionally you'll still see it pushed. It seems that in our daily life, and particularly in our newspaper life, in which the media is usually six months, a year or two years behind things that are happening in the intellectual world, we find today often still that approach to things.

Stage two, however is the reality produced by the application of stage one. This particular issue of commentary magazine, a Jewish intellectual magazine, which I've always found very enlightening, I suggest if you don't take it, and if you are interested in current events, foreign affairs, the life of this nation on a little bit more than the kind of level that you find in the ordinary periodical, take commentary. They're not paying me for this, but I suggest you read it. It's really, to my mind, a class magazine.

Well in the present issue there's an article by the professor of philosophy at the City College of New York, and it's entitled *Feminism Stage Three*. And he goes on to talk about the contrast between the brave promises and the current reality, and states it could hardly be more stark. A major reward for the five million three hundred and seventy five thousand women with children under six who work full time, has been strained and guilt at in Barbara Berg's words, the exploiting interface of our two roles, at noon babysitters far out number mothers. It's an amazing fact when you think about it. Nine and half million children under six or sixty percent of all American children have mothers in the part time or full time labor force. In the late afternoon the mothers retake possession of their offspring, or retrieve them from daycare centers, to spend a little "quality time" before bedtime made excessively early by the mother's need to recuperate, or excessively late, by the mother's inability to discipline her emotionally demanding children.

Working mothers, Professor Laven says, are always tired, and worried that their children will start to call the sitter mommy. And he goes on to make a very perceptive comment, I think. "For their part American men have responded to the message that they are no longer needed by giving women their independence in the form of unprecedented rates of divorce and abandonment. One point six million women, now raise children under six with not spouse present, in the language of the bureau of labor statistics. It's no wonder that we have tremendous maladjustment and disorder in American social life. But we are in stage three now, and those who believe in sexual egalitarianism, are now forced by the fact, by the simple empirical fact that that life does not work are now as a last resort, appealing to daycare and the intoned constantly daycare, daycare, daycare, and would love to have us fund daycare in a social way.

Now, it's striking. I know some people don't like this, but it's striking nevertheless that one of the appeals that is made today by feminists is the appeal to Sweden, the appeal to Sweden, the appeal to Denmark, and even to Germany, but Sweden particularly. In Sweden today, marriage is largely becoming a thing of the past. The cohabitation rate in Sweden, which was one percent in 1960, has risen today to thirty percent. Almost as many concepts result in abortions or illegitimate births as in live legitimate births.

And what is further interesting is the fact that in Sweden the population has begun to decrease. Two people marry. In Sweden, the people who marry produce today one point five births. In other words what they are practicing ultimately will lead to the loss of the population of Sweden. What they are engaged in is actually contrary to the growth of the nation. That is not yet been much made of but nevertheless that I think is true today.

What we are failing to recognize is that God has created man with certain impulses and certain drives, and he has created women with certain impulses and certain drives, and while it's the that people are out there telling us men and women are really

the same, as Professor Laven says, "Our genes have yet failed to receive the message." Meanwhile, despite changes in the rhetoric, of the women's movement, and speaking of motherhood the pressure for collectivized child rearing continues. What the feminists would really like is the institutionalization of children. That is really what we are leading to.

Now, what is fundamentally back of that however, is not what the feminists are saying, but what is fundamentally back of that is departure from the word of God. That is really our problem, so when I hear people say these things, which are so contrary to our creation, and what we are as men and women, the real problem is not what the feminists are saying. The real problem is what they and our society has come to believe, that there is no real social truth in the word of God, but we will have to find out the sad way, imperially by experience that the truth of the word of God is divine truth for creatures, and my own hope and prayer is that America and particularly the Christian public, the professing Christian public will realize that to follow the Scriptures is the solution to our problems. People may say that's very simplistic. No, it's not simplistic. We of course should want to do everything that we possibly can also see all that that involves, but nevertheless that's the solution to our problems.

Now, looking at what Paul has to say in the light of this, you'll see how appropriate, at least it seems to me, what Paul says is. He talks about three relationships, and the first one is the relationship of wives and husbands. "Wives submit your selves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord." Submit, one of the first errors of those who look at that word is to say, as is so often said, by evangelical feminists today, to submit is to be inferior. That is a fundamental error to submit is not to be inferior. We are not talking inferiority. Paul was not talking about inferiority when he said, "Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands." We know that females are not inferior to men. I learned that very quickly when I went to school, and the teachers started handing back exam papers, as I discovered that my grade was not always better than the grade of some

of the females in the class, and then when I discovered that sometimes the grades that were the highest in whole class, that was a tremendous shock, and so we learned by experiment, imperially, that the females in the class were able to do as well as we males were able to do. When Paul says, ""Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands." He's not suggesting inferiority that's the fundamental error. I see this so often in evangelical feminism. To submit is to be inferior.

Now, if one reads the Bible and studies the Bible you can see the error of that, but so often we don't read the Bible, and when we read it, we often doesn't read in proper context. Let me ask you to turn if you have your New Testaments with you to 1 Corinthians chapter 11 in verse 3. We don't have time to deal with this in great detail, but I think that this one text will show you that for Paul to say, "Wives submit to your own husbands." Does not mean that he thought that wives were inferior to their husbands. Verse 3, of 1 Corinthians 11, reads this way, "But I would have you know that the head of every man is Christ, and head of the women in the man, and the head of Christ is God."

Now, let me ask you a question. As a Christian, as a knowledgeable Christian do you believe in the doctrine of the Trinity? Well of course if you are a Christian you have to believe in the doctrine of the Trinity. If you don't believe in the doctrine of the Trinity you are not a Christian. You are like a Mormon or a Jehovah's Witness, who say they are Christians, but deny the fundamental Christian doctrine of the Christian Trinity and the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, but if we believe in the Christian doctrine of the Trinity we believe that all three persons of the Trinity posses fully and equally all the attributes and powers of deity. We believe that the Father, Son and Spirit are coequal in the possession of the divine attributes, and therefore the Son is just as much God as the Father, is God. The Spirit is just as much God and the Father is God and so on.

Now, when we read here then that Christ has a head. The head of Christ is God, how are we to understand that? Well, now if we remember that the Lord Jesus came to perform a mediatorial function, that he became incarnate, that he became incarnate to act

as mediator to die and to be resurrected and now at the right hand of the Father, to pray that the benefits for the work that he has accomplished in redemption may be secured for all for whom it was done, and that ultimately as Paul says in the same epistle in the 15th chapter, he will turn over everything to the Father, that God may be all in all.

Then we see that the mediatorial function was a temporal function and will ultimately come to an end, but during that time, the Lord Jesus submits to the father though the second person of the Trinity is equal with the first person. That's why in John 14:28 he says, "My Father is greater than I." You notice he doesn't say, "My God is greater than I," but "My Father is greater than I." He means as the Son is the mediatorial Son he is submitting to the Father during the mediatorial work. To submit is of the essence of the function of the Lord Jesus Christ, so when Paul says to the wives, "Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands." He is not asking of them even as much as was asked of the Lord Jesus Christ, who submitted though the eternal, God to the Father to carry out a specific function.

Now, in the life of husbands and wife in the Christian church the wife is to submit because she represents the church of Jesus Christ. She is an illustration of the church of Jesus Christ. There are women in churches in the city of Dallas, in fact we know of some who have been in Believer's Chapel maybe some are still in Believer's Chapel, who say, "Submit, obey I couldn't possibly do that." That's unchristian, as a matter of fact, looked at in this light. It's remarkable that a person could actually say something like that. For the Lord Jesus is the great illustration of submission, and he's called upon the wife to submit for a particular function among others perhaps, but to represent the church of Jesus Christ in our relationship to our head the Lord Jesus. Further, in the case of the husband, he too has a function. And his function is to love as Christ loved the church.

Now, if I had to decide between those two, I think I would prefer to submit than to attempt to love as Christ loved the church, that's infinite, but at least when it comes to submission, well, that's infinite ultimately too as an infinite requirement because it's so

contrary to our nature, but I hope you understand that when Paul says, "Wives submit yourselves to your own husbands." He is not suggesting that you are inferior. He's asking you to assume a particular function for a particular purpose and the spiritual purpose that lies back of it is one of the greatest things that any wife or any husband, for that matter, in his responsibility can ever hope to perform here. "Wives submit yourselves" (of course) "to your own husbands, and do it as it is fit to the Lord."

And now, the men. We can pass by what the men are to do. [Laughter] Well, no we cannot. As a matter of fact the apostle says, "Husbands love your wives." Love, the very term that he uses is a term that suggests the most significant sacrificial kind of love. We don't have time to talk about the different terms that are used for love. As a matter of fact, it's impossible to clearly separate those terms, but it's also plain that this particular term is a term that refers to sacrificial love of the will, and so when he says, "Husbands love your wives." And we think of that in the context of all Paul's writings, it's obvious that the husband takes the place, in illustrative fashion of the Lord Jesus Christ, as the redeemer and lover of the church of God, and as Chrysostom so said, so many centuries ago, something I repeat in the marriage ceremony. "The husband is to be willing to be crucified for his wife, and those husbands, who by the grace of God are able to truly love their wives in this way, as a general rule, don't have any problems with submissive wives, so wives submit and remember Christ submitted. Husbands love and remember Christ has loved.

We are functioning with a particular testimony in the world of which we live, and there is no better day to testify to the biblical truth than in our day today. For believers who live in accordance with the Scripture, stand out in our society, as they have never stood out. What a magnificence opportunity for testimony for a husband and a wife. When our society is so disordered and so maladjusted and characterized by so many evils and sins, and iniquity, the Christian couple, loving, submitting and representing faithfully

the relationship of Christ in the church, you stand out in our society. May God help you to carry out your functions well.

Remember this, we live in four spheres. We live first of all, in the sphere of in Christ, personally. We have the same privileges. In fact, when Paul says that in Christ there is neither male nor female, he is talking about the spiritual privileges, the status that we enjoy. There is no difference there. To apply that however to other relationships, is faulty exegeses and hermeneutics. When we say that there is no difference between male and female, we are not to suggest that there are not genuine differences in different spheres, but in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female. Bond nor free, so it's evident that when the apostle says, "In Christ there is no difference." He is talking about spiritual privilege and status. But when we come to other relationships, and there are three other spheres in which we live, these types of differences do prevail. For example we live in the sphere of the state, and all of us are to be submissive to our rulers. We are to submit to them. We are to pay our taxes, and we are to observe the laws of the land, and that type of thing. All of us wither male or female, whether bond or free. That's the second sphere.

We also live in the family. That's what Paul is talking about here. He is talking about the relationships we have in our families. That's the third sphere. And then we also live in the church, and there are certain functions that we have in the church. Those of us who are not elders are to submit to the leadership of the elders. We are to respect the deacons. So there are functions that we carry out in Christ. There are functions we carry out in the state. There are functions we carry out in the family. There are functions we are responsible for in the church of Jesus Christ. And if we mingle these spheres, it's not wonder that confusion exists, and the confusion of today is traceable also even by evangelicals to failure to exegete properly the word of God. So that's really marvelous advice. Professor Laven, if he had only said some things about that, well, I could have put my imprimatur upon the article that he wrote, but that did not penetrate his analysis

at all. He was just looking at it imperially. That what we see has happened in our society.

The second relationship is children and parents. And Paul writes, "Children obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing unto the Lord." Well, this is put a little bit more strongly here, but then the word obey is in other context used of the relationship between a wife and a husband. Children are to obey their parents in all things for this is well pleasing unto the Lord. Incidentally, when Paul says children, he doesn't mean so far as I can tell from this word, infants. In fact, it's unlikely that he meant little children. There is a term for little children. That's not the word that is used here. I don't want to base an argument on that particular point, but probably from the context he's talking about what we would, the people that we would call youths. That is those who can read because notice this is addressed to children. Children are expected to read the Bible. Yes, mother, father, they are expected to read the Bible. "Children obey your parents in all things." The Holy Spirit addresses them, expecting them to read the Bible. When the children cannot read, you fathers, you are ones who are responsible, not mother. That's part again of our society, which is falsely given to the women, a position that they shouldn't have. The father should do it, and he should sit his children upon his knee and instruct them in the word of God.

I know what you men are saying, "I am too busy." That's your problem. That really is your problem. That's the cause of your children growing up the way they are. If you are a Christian, they haven't been instructed by you. They'll listen to you. You are tier father, so "Children obey your parents, and your parents," Paul says in Ephesians, "Bring your children up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." Instruct them. As Mr. Prier likes to say, "The best Bible teacher anyone shall ever have is their own, not mother, father. The best Bible teacher."

As a matter of fact, that's the way the rabbis speak about the instruction of children and that's the way the Jewish father's did. They instructed their children, and the

fathers did it. It was their responsibility. So children, here is a verse for you. "Obey your parents, the Lord says, and further if you find it a displeasure to even think about it. Think of what Paul adds. He says, "This is well pleasing to the Lord." So when you obey your parents, children you please the Lord. Do you want to please the Lord? I don't know of any little child in a Christian who doesn't say, "Yeah, I want to please the Lord." Well, here's a way to please the Lord, obey your parents. Listen to what they tell you. Obey them. That pleases the Lord. Marvelous to have a little child that's obedient. What a pleasant thing it is to see a child that is obedient. What a terrible thing it is to see a child that's disobedient. Disobedient children, very unpleasant to look upon them. I know you feel that way. Children obey your parents, and obey them in all things. This is well pleasing to the Lord.

If you want a good illustration well, think of the Lord Jesus Christ. We read in Luke chapter 2 in verse 51, of what he did. Mind you he is the second person of the Trinity. He is the eternal Son, and yet we read he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them. The Lord Jesus think of it, subject to his parents. Of all the people who would least need to be subject to parents, it was the Lord, but he was subject unto them. Same term by the way, in the original text. Subject, submissive to them.

Now, the text says in Colossians here, "Children obey your parents in all things." It doesn't say parents obey your children in all things. I know people who select the church that they go to by their children's choice. That's amazing to me. That's astonishing, and I have, over the years, over thirty-five years of teaching in Dallas, Texas, I have innumerable people come to me and say, "We chose our church because of our children. That's an amazing thing. Amazing to say that. Amazing to admit it. Amazing really to say it without recognizing what you are doing. When you say that. Think of that astonishing. We choose our church on the basis of what our immature children think. You are heading for disaster. It's the grace of God that prevents disaster from often

happening. That's the wrong way to raise your children. "Children obey your parents" not, "Parents obey your children." "For this is well pleasing to the Lord."

Now, the parents we would think would be singled out, but in verse 21 we read fathers. That's rather interesting. You would expect Paul to say, "Parents provoke not your children to anger lest they be discouraged." But probably the reason for that is the father is singled out because he's the head of the household, and furthermore the unreasonable use of authority can often be traced to a father, and so Paul exhorts them not to irritate their children lest they be discouraged. In other words don't overly discipline them. Don't play the tyrant with them, and as far as quality time is concerned, let it be as much as possible.

Quality time, well, I don't even like that term, time with your children, encouragement, instruction, the kind of thing that a true Christian father will do. Raise his children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Don't be such a tyrant that you discourage them is Paul's instruction, and use wisdom and when your children up to teenage years, when your daughter has her first date, and she's sitting in the sitting room with the young man who's there, and she's all excited, and the young fellow is all excited too, and doesn't know exactly how to act so you come in and sit down there for the whole evening with them. [Laughter] That isn't the thing to do, and it isn't to stand around the corner and listen either or to wire the room. [Laughter] I think it's all right to drop a shoe from the top at 10:30 or whatever it is at your time.

We used to in Charleston, we had a beautiful young girl that all of us liked to date, and her father was a rather strict man, and at 10:30 we would hear the shoe drop upstairs, and that meant that it was time to leave, and he had a reputation for that, and so when I was initiated into the fraternity at the college, one of the most terrible things that you had to do. There were two terrible things that you had to do. One was to go out on the major thoroughfare of Charleston. Walk out into the center of the street and to direct traffic, and you were to just do it on your own authority. You were to go out and stop

and make a certain number of people turn down a side street, [Laughter] and you had to have twenty five cars, or whatever it was turn down a side street, but the other thing which was feared even more was to this man's house, and knock on the door and say, "I've come for supper." [Laughter] and to walk in and of course we didn't find this out until afterwards, it had all been arranged, with this man who was a terror to all of us, and so you would come in tremblingly, and then you would sit down at the table, and you were to eat with them, but when you were finished you were to stand up, now this was in Charleston society, you were to take your napkin, and throw it down on the table, and say, "This is the worst meal that I have ever had." And then you were to walk out. Well fortunately I directed traffic, rather than going to his house.

But any way fathers, remember in your dealing with the children do not discourage them with your tyrant attitude. Don't always say to them, "Don't, don't, don't." Say, "Do not. Cut it out." Or whatever [Laughter] but anyone I think who has ordinary intelligence will know what Paul is talking about when he says, "Don't provoke your children to anger lest they be discouraged."

The third relationship, I think we can dispense with, with just a few comments. It's obvious that this doesn't directly apply to us today. We don't have slaves. Paul did not seek to overthrow the society of his day because he knew that if Christian were thoroughly carried out that would take care in a more peaceful way of that solution to social problems. "Slaves, obey in all things your masters. Their masters according to the flesh. Not with eyeservice as man pleases, but in singleness of heart, fearing God." This has application perhaps to industrial and domestic employer employee relationships. Their masters according to the flesh and other realms, Paul suggests they are equal, and do that fearing God. In other words, in the relationship that you are engaged in do it as unto the Lord.

Now, I think that has application to our industrial and commercial relationships that we have in our business world. Isn't it interesting that one of the greatest sources of

difficulty in business is stealing from employers by employees? That's striking, and that has been growing and not surprisingly to steal, take a pencil, take some other equipment. Steal it. It belongs to you so you feel because you work for them. Christians, don't do that. They serve as unto the Lord, and consequently they are to be obedient to those who are over them even in commercial world or business or industrial world. "Not with eyeservice as men please, but in singleness of heart fearing God, and whatever you do, do it heartily as to the Lord and not unto men. Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance for ultimately you serve the Lord Christ."

I always remember Dr. Ironside used to tell the story of the maid who was converted, and she was talking about her conversion and someone said, "Well, what difference has it made in your life?" And she said, "Well not I sweep under the rugs." Well, that's a small thing, but that does reveal a change of life. May I close by pointing out this? I could read verse 1 of chapter 4, "Masters give unto your servants, that which is just and equal." Equity is the way in which our Christian employer should act toward his employees knowing that you have a master in heaven, and so the way in which you deal with your employees will be the way in which the Lord God will deal with you. It's well for us to remember that.

Two final things. You notice how often the word Lord occurs, about 7 times in this passage. In other words household life that pleases God is pervaded by the relationship to the Lord God. I often go in Christian homes, you don't see this plaque very often any more, but it's still good, I think. Christ is the head of the house, the unseen guest at every meal, the silent listener to every conversation. That's true.

And finally the importance of the little things, the little seen things, the kinds of things that only you know about, those are the things that may often really count. The thing that the little maid said, in Naaman's presence was ultimately the reason why Naaman received the cleansing, the kind of advice that she gave in a household relationship, it's the little things. May God help us to remember that, and when you who

belong to Believer's Chapel go out into our society about us, may your own kind of life, a Christian life, characterized by the things that Paul talks about, be seen, recognized by the society about you. For in doing that, you'll be a witness for Jesus Christ.

If you are here today and you've never believed in him, of course you cannot do these things. You cannot do things in the Lord. You cannot do things as unto Christ, but the gospel message is that Christ has died for sinners, such as you are, and you may respond by recognizing your lost condition before him, recognizing the fact that you have offended a Holy God, recognize too that he has died for sinners, and therefore his saving work is for you, and fleeing to him, and receiving from him the free gift on the basis of grace, not by works, the free gift of eternal life, you may become a child of God, a member of the family of God and therefore possessed of the enable men to live as unto the Lord. May God help you to respond. Let's stand and bow for a word of prayer in closing.

[Prayer] Father, we are so grateful to Thee for the word of God, and we thank Thee that in the word of God we have all of these important exhortations and admonitions that touch our everyday life, in its most intimate way. Lord, for the husbands, enable them to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. For wives, enable them to submit to their own husbands in the Lord as is fit. For the children, enable them obey their parents in all things, and for fathers, deliver us from provocation and irritation of our children, and the discouragement of them thereby.

May if there be some here who have never believed in Christ, may at this very moment the Holy Spirit be bringing home to them, their lost condition, and oh God, so work in their hearts that right now, they give Thee thanks for the Lord Jesus Christ recognizing their lost condition and the shedding of his blood for the forgiveness of sins, and may the receive him as their own personal savior. And, Father, go with us as we part, for Jesus' sake. Amen.