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THE BEREANS

ACTS 17:11

Colossians 3:18-4:1
Lesson #12
Culture Wars
04/12/2026

1

One of the **most politically incorrect** passages in the New Testament.

Colossians 3

“18 **Wives**, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 **Husbands**, love your wives, and do not be embittered against them. 20 **Children**, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. 21 **Fathers**, do not exasperate your children, that they may not lose heart. 22 **Slaves**, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; 24 knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 25 For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of the wrong which he has done, and that without partiality. 1 **Masters**, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.”

2

One of the **most challenging** passages in the New Testament.

At face value this seems inconsistent with New Testament values, of human dignity, social justice, & equality.

Why is this important?



Does dismissing it, as limited to 1st century culture, challenge the authority of Scripture?

3

Spiritual warfare - **two competing masters**.

Matthew 6:24

“No **one can serve two masters**; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon (rival master).”

James 4

“1 What is the **source of quarrels and conflicts** among you? Is not the source your pleasures that wage war in your members? ... 5 ... “He jealously desires the **Spirit which He has made to dwell in us.**” ... 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and **purify your hearts, you double-minded.**”

James 1

“6 But he (**wise man**) must ask in faith without any doubting, ... 7 For that man ought not to expect that he will receive anything from the Lord, 8 **being a double-minded man**, unstable in all his ways. 9 But the **brother of humble circumstances is to glory in his high position**; 10 and the **rich man is to glory in his humiliation.**”

4

The context of Colossians 3

Colossians 3

“1 If then you have been raised up with Christ, ... 2 **Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.** 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. ... 10 and have **put on the new self** who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him 11— **a renewal in which there is no distinction** between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman, but Christ is all, and in all.”

Galatians 3:28

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is **neither male nor female**; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

Social position does not define the worth of the **“new self”**

but should it provide an opportunity for Christ’s Spirit to **ILLUSTRATE THE “WAY OF THE CROSS”**

in responding to social differences?

5

Spiritual **“Body life building”** shares **Christ’s sacrifice**.

1 Peter 4

“12 Beloved, **do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you**, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing is happening to you; 13 but to the degree that you **share the sufferings of Christ**, keep on **rejoicing**, so that at the **revelation of His glory** you may also rejoice and be overjoyed. 14 If you are insulted for the name of Christ, you are **blessed**, because the Spirit of glory, and of God, rests upon you. ... 16 ... if **anyone suffers** as a Christian, he is not to be **ashamed**, but is to glorify God in this name.”

- The temptation of Jesus - Matt.4:1-11
- The death and resurrection of Christ - Phil.2:1-8
- Paul’s thorn in the flesh in ministry - 2 Cor.12:7-13
- The people God has chosen - 1 Cor.1:18-31

6

Ephesians

as the church
4:1-5:21

in the home
5:22-6:9

in the world
6:10-24

“Walking worthily” ch.4-6

New life “in Christ” ch.1-3

7

Spiritual “Body life building” is modeled in family manners.

Ephesians 5-6

“21 be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

22 **Wives**, be subject to your own husbands, as to the Lord. 23 For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. 24 But **as the church is subject to Christ**, so also the wives ought to be to their husbands in everything. 25 **Husbands**, love your wives, just **as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her**; 26 that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless. 28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 30 because we are members of His body. 31 For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh.

32 This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church.

“ Nevertheless let each individual among you also love his own wife even as himself; and let the wife see to it that she respect her husband: **Children**, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right: *Honor your father and mother* (which is the first commandment with a promise); that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth. And, **fathers**, do not provoke your children to anger; but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord: **Slaves**, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; not by way of eye service, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men. knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. And, **masters**, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.”

8

Spiritual “Body life building” is modeled by Paul in prison.

Ephesians 6

“19 and pray on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in proclaiming it I may speak boldly, as I ought to speak.

Paul viewed his circumstances as a framework for ministry.

21 **But that you also may know about my circumstances, how I am doing**, Tychicus, the beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord, will make everything known to you. 22 **And I have sent him to you for this very purpose, so that you may know about us, and that he may comfort your hearts.”**

Paul invited other Christians to learn from his testimony and follow it.

9

Spiritual “Body life building” uses worldly values as a contrasting background for showcasing Kingdom values.

1 Corinthians 12

“21 And the eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you”; or again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” 22 On the contrary, it is much truer that the members of the body which **seem to be weaker are necessary**; 23 and those members of the body, which we **deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor**, and our **unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness**, 24 whereas our seemly members have no need of it. But God has so composed the body, giving more abundant honor to that member which lacked, 25 that there should be no division in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another.”

Both the “have nots” and the “have lots” bear witness to the Spirit of Christ, but in different contexts & ways.

10

Spiritual “Body life building” mocks worldly values.

1 Corinthians 1

“18 For the **word of the cross** is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. ... 22 For indeed Jews ask for signs, and Greeks search for wisdom; 23 but we preach Christ crucified, to Jews a **stumbling block**, and to Gentiles **foolishness**, 27 but God has chosen the **foolish things of the world to shame the wise**, and God has chosen the **weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong**, 28 and the **base things of the world and the despised, God has chosen, the things that are not, that He might nullify the things that are,**”

The core longings in life for serenity, security, and significance are satisfied, not by worldly values, but in mocking them, by the way we respond to “worldly ways of defining value”.

11

	Not aggressive ←		→ Aggressive
	Dependent ←		→ Independent
	Easily influenced ←		→ Not easily influenced
	Submissive ←		→ Dominant
	Passive ←		→ Active
	Home-oriented ←		→ World-oriented
	Easily hurt emotionally ←		→ Not easily hurt emotionally
	Indecisive ←		→ Decisive
	Talkative ←		→ Not talkative
	Gentle ←		→ Tough
	Sensitive to other's feelings ←		→ Not sensitive to other's feelings
	Very desirous of security ←		→ Not desirous of significance
	Cries a lot ←		→ Rarely cries
	Emotional ←		→ Logical
	Verbal ←		→ Analytical
	Kind ←		→ Cruel
	Tactful ←		→ Blunt
	Nurturing ←		→ Not nurturing

Nature can camouflage into nurture over time.

FEMALE

MALE

12

Jesus set a model for all of us to follow.

Philippians 2

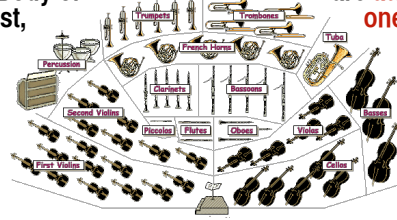
“3 Do nothing from **selfishness or empty conceit**, but with humility of mind let each of you **regard one another as more important than himself**; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this **attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus**, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but **emptied Himself**, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He **humbled Himself** by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 that **at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth**, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

13

The Body of Christ is a family, team, orchestra.

The church is the Body of Christ,

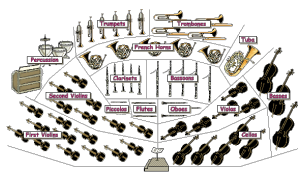
but only when the pieces are **attached to one another and the head.**



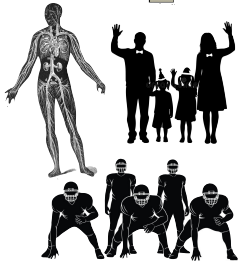
No one wants to listen to an orchestra **that is out of tune.**

14

Relationships within the “Body of Christ”.



Some parts may **seem to be more honorable**. Give special attention to parts that **seem to be less honorable**.



1 Corinthians 12

“ 22 ... the members of the body which **seem to be weaker are necessary**; 23 and those members of the body, which we **deem less honorable, on these we bestow more abundant honor**, and our **unseemly members come to have more abundant seemliness**, 24 whereas our seemly members have no need of it.”

15

Colossians

Next week
Col.4:2-9

the Mystery
of Christ?

16