

1. This morning we are continuing in our study of Colossians. Over the last several weeks we have been looking at Paul's admonitions to walk in a way that is in keeping with our calling; to put off the old man... those things associated with our old nature... and to put on the new man... those things associated with our new nature in Christ.
  - a. These are things such as compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patience, forgiveness, long suffering and love.
2. Last week we examined the focus of heart... the mindset... that is needful in setting a foundation for our sanctification... our becoming like Christ.
  - a. Letting the peace of Christ rule in our hearts
    - i. A confidence in our understanding of the world and our place in it
    - ii. A confidence in God's love and care for us
    - iii. A confidence in our eternal destiny; our glorification and life with Him
  - b. Having thankful hearts... always giving thanks for all things
  - c. Having the word of God fill and be at home in our hearts because we joyfully yield to it.
  - d. Participating in mutual edification... in rich fellowship together
  - e. Worshipping God together and keeping His presence before us
3. This week, and in the weeks to come, we will be looking at how these characteristics of our new nature are played out in some significant relationships.
  - a. Col 3:18ff *"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, so that they will 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. Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven. 2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving; 3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God will open up to us a door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; 4 that I may make it clear in the way I ought to speak. 5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. 6 Let your speech always be with grace, as though*

*seasoned with salt, so that you will know how you should respond to each person.”* Why are these relationships singled out?

1. They are somewhat comprehensive, but not entirely
2. No mention of coworkers, siblings, friends, associates, or even fellow “church goers”

ii. We see several important aspects... or truths... pertaining to these relationships. These relationships are significant because...

1. They are intimate
  - a. Husband/wife
  - b. Parent/child
  - c. Master/slave
  - d. Insider/outsider
  - e. With the exception of the last, the context and setting of all of these relationships is in the home.

i. At home is where we are most our true selves

1. Our spouse and children know us like no one else

a. Pretense is unsustainable

ii. At home is where our greatest joys reside... and our greatest struggles and pains.

iii. In Roman and Greek society, your closest and most trusted servants would reside in the home.

2. They are impactful
  - a. They provide the greatest opportunity for joy or sorrow
  - b. They provide the greatest opportunity to exhibit and confirm our faith
  - c. They affect the people we most care about... and who most care about us

3. And in my opinion... most telling... They are hierarchical... they deal with relationships in which one party has authority and where one party is under authority. The rest of our time together this morning will be spent looking at this God ordained reality.

4. God’s ordained hierarchy

- a. A current societal view is that hierarchy is inherently evil... that is oppressive and robs an individual of their dignity and rights. It asserts that any inequality or distinctions of social or economic class is inherently oppressive and needs to be overturned.

- b. In a certain context, it has some merit and recognizes a certain underlying truth... that we share more in common as members of the human race than we have differences. For example...
- i. All created in the image of God
    - 1. Gen 1:26ff *"Then God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them."*
  - ii. All under the curse of sin
    - 1. Rom 3:9 *"Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin; 10 as it is written, "THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE; 11 THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS, THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;"*
    - 2. Rom 3:23 *"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"*
  - iii. All come to Christ as equals
    - 1. John 3:16 *"For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life."*
    - 2. Gal 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."*
    - 3. Col 3:11 says the same thing *"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."*
- c. But it is also an unbiblical view, for God Himself created and instituted hierarchies... distinction in roles, responsibilities, and authority
- i. Within the triune Godhead themselves
    - 1. John 5:30, 36 *"I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me...the works which the Father has given Me to accomplish—the very works that I do—testify about Me, that the Father has sent Me."*

2. John 14:26; 15:26 *“But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I said to you... “When the Helper comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify about Me”*
  - a. Hierarchy does not automatically convey inferiority/superiority
    - i. This is a critically important point!
- ii. Between God and man
  1. Is 29:16 *“Shall the potter be considered as equal with the clay, That what is made would say to its maker, “He did not make me”; Or what is formed say to him who formed it, “He has no understanding?”*
  2. Is 55:8,9. *“For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD. 9 “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts.”*
- iii. Between man and woman
  1. Gen 1:27 *“male and female He created them.”*
  2. 1 Tim 2:11ff. *“A woman must quietly receive instruction with entire submissiveness. 12 But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. 13 For it was Adam who was first created, and then Eve. 14 And it was not Adam who was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression.”*
  3. 1 Pet 3:7 *“You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman,”*
    - a. What shall we do with these verses?
      - i. Are woman inherently “inferior” to men?
      - ii. Are they inherently less spiritually mature?
      - iii. Paul (speaking to church function/restriction)
        1. Order/rank of creation
          - a. 1 Cor 11:8 “For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; 9 for indeed man was not created for the woman’s sake, but woman for the man’s sake.”
        2. Actuality of deception

- a. Notably more gullible? More easily deceived?
    - b. More likely related to headship; made to be protected, nurtured, and cared for
  - b. But this we know... there is a hierarchy
- iv. Between husband and wife
  1. 1 Pet 3:7 *"You husbands in the same way, live with your wives in an understanding way, as with someone weaker, since she is a woman;"*
  2. Eph 5:22ff. *"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."*
    - a. We will unpack this more next week, but for now we merely point out the hierarchy
- v. Between parent and child
  1. Eph 6:1ff. *"Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 2 HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise), 3 SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH."*
  2. Prov 22:15 *"Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a child;*
  3. *The rod of discipline will remove it far from him."*
    - a. Presupposes parental authority; an authority which is to honored and respected
- vi. Between government and governed
  1. Rom 13:1 *"Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God... for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. 5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. 7 Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."*
- vii. Between master and servant

1. Eph 6:5ff. *“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; 6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free. 9 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.”*

- a. Note, both master and servant are to act “as unto the Lord”

viii. Between Israel and the other nations

1. Rom 9:3ff. *“For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ for the sake of my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh, 4 who are Israelites, to whom belongs the adoption as sons, and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the temple service and the promises, 5 whose are the fathers, and from whom is the Christ according to the flesh, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.”*

- a. Here the focus is on those were the recipient

2. Eph 2:11ff *“Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called “Uncircumcision” by the so-called “Circumcision,” which is performed in the flesh by human hands— 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.”*

- a. Here the focus is on those who were NOT the recipient

d. While hierarchy is clearly divinely ordained, it can go wrong quickly and disastrously when abused or wrongly understood. **We see it in ALL these categories do we not?**

- e. Hierarchy is meant to operate a certain way in accordance with God’s will and design. It is when we pervert it that it becomes a curse rather than a blessing
  - i. A focus on responsibility, not privilege
  - ii. A focus on serving, not ruling
  - iii. A focus on loving, not demanding

- f. Over the next weeks, we will be looking in greater detail at God's inherent purpose and design in all these areas of interaction and hierarchy.
  1. But to close, let us reflect upon to Paul's words that precede these specific exhortations; "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." And why? Because we understand the truth we read earlier in Is 55:8,9. *"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways," declares the LORD. 9 "For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways And My thoughts than your thoughts."*

Let us pray.