

**Surviving in a Family — Colossians 3:18-4:1**  
*Basil Howlett - Carey Baptist Church - 12 October 2008*

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The Christians in Colosse had been influenced by some false teaching which belittled the Lord Jesus Christ, so Paul spends the first two chapters emphasising the supremacy and sufficiency of Christ. Then in chapter 3 he reminds us that we have been raised to a new life in Christ. The old guilty, condemned people we used to be have, as it were, died and been buried. We are now new people. We have been looking at how these new people should live. We should put off the old filthy rags we used to wear, things like sexual immorality, greed, anger, malice and filthy language, and we should put on (3:12) some new clothes, things like compassion, kindness, humility. Now in 3:18 he tells us how we should live in our families now that we are new people in Christ.

**A. Wives 3:18) - should submit to their husbands.**

- Not a licence for him to be a power-freak
- She should recognise him as the head of the family (Ephesians 5:23)
- Respect him (Ephesians 5:33)
- Obey him (1 Peter 3:6)
- Recognise that her primary duty is to care for him, the family and the home (Titus 2:5, Genesis 2:18)

**Why?**

- Not because she's inferior in any way.
- Because it's God's will and has been from the beginning of time (1 Timothy 2:13).
- Because it's winsome (1 Peter 3:1-6).

**B. Husbands (3:19) - should love their wives**

Husband & wife have a unique relationship in that they are one (Genesis 2:24, Ephesians 5:31) and therefore the husband should love his wife with a special love. This includes:

- Total faithfulness.
- Great tenderness (3:19).
- Physical intimacy (1 Corinthians 7:3-5, Proverbs 5:17-20).
- Much thoughtfulness about her physical and spiritual needs (1 Timothy 5:8, 1 Peter 3:7).

**C. Children (3:20) - should obey their parents.**

God has planned that children should live in families under the supervision of parents and it's the will of God that children should obey these parents and honour them (Exodus 20:12)

- Even if they are not Christians ?
- What if they tell me to do something wrong? See Acts 5:29
- What about when I'm no longer a child?
- Be careful not to bring shame upon them (Proverbs 28:7).
- What about when they are old and frail? !!!! (1 Timothy 5:4).

#### **D. Fathers (3:21) – should not embitter their children.**

Paul addresses fathers because they are the head of the family but there are lessons here for both parents. This verse does not mean that parents should let their children behave just as they please, nor does it mean that they should never discipline their children (Proverbs 13:24). It is telling them that they must be careful how they correct and discipline their children: We must:

- Never rebuke our children for things which are not sins; e.g. struggling with maths.
- Never lose our temper with our children (Ephesians 4:26)
- Never rebuke our children for doing wrong things which we also do (Matthew 7:3-5).
- Never be inconsistent and unpredictable.
- Don't keep nagging.
- Never treat them as infants when they are growing up.
- Never, never criticise the church or fellow church members in front of our children. (Eccl 3:7)
- Never give your children the impression that if they don't become Christians they are second-class members of the family.

We need to get your priorities right. Our primary concern should be to see our children saved. But how do we show this concern?

- Not by putting emotional pressure upon them to make a decision.
- By our conduct in the home.
- Making sure that the home is a place where the Lord is central (Colossians 1:18).
- By showing our children that the Christian faith is something attractive and full of joy (Romans 14:17).
- And above all else we must pray for them.

#### **E. Slaves (3:22-25) – should obey their earthly masters.**

We don't have too many slaves and slave-masters in Carey Baptist Church but there are principles here which hold good for employees and employers.

- Obey your employer at work
- Work hard for him even when he is not looking.
- Be a good time-keeper.
- Do every job, even the most mundane as though you were doing it for Christ.

#### **F. Masters (4:1) –provide what is right and fair.**

If you are a boss – a master or a manager, you must be a good employer, You have a Master in heaven who is watching you and will judge you.