**Lessons from a Lockdown**

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**Day 29**

**Colossians 3:18-4:1**

Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged.

Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to curry their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs, and there is no favoritism.

Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

***Questions for Personal Reflection:***

1. Why do you think Paul chose these specific expectations for each role?
2. Of the roles listed, which ones apply to you? How do you feel about the command(s) that apply to you?
3. How would you rate yourself (scale of 1 to 5) on how you are doing in terms of obeying the command(s)? Why?
4. Do you see something in common about all the commands Paul gives? If so, what is it?
5. What other roles do you have and what do you think are God’s expectation for you in those roles?

***Insight:***

All of us play different roles and God has expectations for each of the roles that we play. Paul focused on what is perhaps the most challenging expectation for each of the roles he identified.

*Wives.* During Paul’s time, women were treated as property. That wives were called to submit to husbands was not new. What was new is that Paul is commanding them to do so willingly because of Jesus. Wives were to submit to their husbands not because the law or society required them to but because Jesus is Lord. Wives submitted themselves to their husbands not because their husbands deserved it but because Jesus deserved it. That wives choose to submit to their husbands because of the Lordship of Jesus also means that this submission does not extend to violating Jesus’s commands. So, wives should submit for as long as it does not violate the Word of God. Submitting to husbands does not justify compromising commitment to Jesus. A Christian woman is a disciple first, then a wife.

*Husbands.* Men loving their wives may not be an expectation of society during Paul’s time. So, Paul was asking husbands to go beyond societal norms. This was not just any kind of love. Paul spoke of *agape* love —a selfless and unconditional love. This is the kind of love Jesus displayed. Thus, Paul was calling on the husbands to love their wives the way Jesus loved them.

*Children.* Children are to obey their parents. The challenging part is the phrase *in everything.* Does this mean children are forced to obey even sinful commands? The reason for obedience is that “this pleases the Lord.” If the motivation is pleasing God, obedience to parents that result in disobedience to God is contrary to the command. There may be arguments whether the term still applies to children who are adults. While the command to honor parents applies regardless of age, obedience is perhaps an expectation for those living under parental authority. The younger the child, the greater the expectation for obedience. This command therefore is most important to younger children. This means we should be teaching the Bible as early as possible to our children. How can they know this command if we do not teach them the Bible?

*Fathers.* The term used could refer to either parent so the command is for all parents. Parents must not exasperate their children. One obvious way Christian parents do this is when they only act like Christians in church but not at home. Parents also do this when they neglect the needs of their children. Parents should imitate Jesus’s example and love their children.

*Slaves.* Those of us with “earthly masters” should work with all our heart as if we are working for Jesus and not for people. This means we should work not only to the extent of what our employers deserve but to the extent of what Jesus deserves. We should give our best even if our earthly maters do not see us because Jesus sees us all the time. We work to please God not men.

*Masters.* All of us who are employers or who oversee people must provide what is right and fair. We must be just in what we give, whether it be salaries, work assignments, or praise. We are to give everyone their due. We need to remember that we too have a master in heaven who treats us fairly and perhaps gives us more than we deserve. We should therefore treat those we employ, supervise or lead in the way we want to be treated by Jesus.

In all the expectations laid out by Paul, it seems Christians should have higher standards than the expectations in the world. This is because in all these roles, the benchmark or standard of how we treat people is Jesus. Unlike the world, our standard is not how other people treat us but how Jesus treats us. Jesus is our model and our motivation in all our relationships.

During the lockdown, let us continue to fulfill Jesus’ expectations in the different roles that we play.