

THE FRUIT OF THE WORD IN OUR HOME

Colossians 3:18-4:1

How can we live in a way that pleases God?

False teachers say to live by obeying man-made rules—their version of O.T. law.

Since we never *fully* obey God's law, Judaizers invent their own rules.

They insist everyone should live by *their* standards.

WE'll never produce enough good fruit to please God. We aren't capable!

Solution is provided by Christ's work, completed when He died

4 FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES FOR GODLY LIVING:

True spirituality is the result of . . .

* *Faith, not works.* **2:6-7** “As you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith...”

* **Christ's finished work.** **2:9-10**

“In Him, the totality of God dwells, in bodily form, and you are complete in Him...”

* **NEVER legalism.** **2:16-23 (20-21)** “If you died with Christ to the fundamental principles of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to rules: “Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!”

Spirituality doesn't come from “playing by the rules”—anyone's list

* **Living to glorify God** **3:1-4:1 (3:17)** “Whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus...”

FOUR SPECIFIC IMPLICATIONS of this last principle.

**1. Focus your attention on Christ's finished work
3:1-4**

Walk with eyes fixed on Christ, seated in heavenlies,
not on ourselves.

**2. Consider dead things that characterized old
lifestyle 3:5-11**

The things that used to control us are dead!

They no longer control us!

So consider them DEAD!

3. Dress appropriately as members of God's family.

3:12-14 *"Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved
... [new clothes]"*

In contrast to the old lifestyle, adopt a new lifestyle.

Presented as "clothing" God's people ought to put on.

God wants us to get a new "wardrobe"—to dress differently.

Dress in a way that's appropriate for our new status in life

—We ought to look different!

4. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you 3:15-4:1

Allow Christ's Word to take up residence in our life.

It will transform our life and produce its fruit in us.

These 4 *theological* principles underlie godly living.

This is good theology. It's *the basis* for godly living.

Now Paul moves *beyond* the *theological* basis

to the *"how-to"s of godly living*.

**Judaizers say live a godly life by keeping the law—living by
the rules.**

That's fine. Except for one problem:

We can't do it! We don't measure up!

Those reacting, suppose that the opposite of legalism is *libertinism*.

“Do whatever you want. We're saved by grace, not law.

SO, live it up!”

Paul makes clear that's NOT the answer!

So how do we live a godly life?

Summed up in 4 simple keys:

FOUR COMMANDS FOR GODLY LIVING:

They are commands to keep!

But *NOT* the legalist's rules! It's not about legalism.

Simple, but we'll spend rest of our life learning to flesh these out in daily living!

Each deals with a new *attitude*; a different *perspective* on life.

1. Let the peace of Christ determine how we should live. 3:15

*“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts,
to which indeed you were called in one body.*

“Rule” => lit.-“function as referee”—continually (pres.)—from athletics.

Who decides who wins the game? **The referee**

God's peace fills that role—determines who wins

—NOT the score.

2. Be thankful 3:15b

Pres. cont.—always—be continually grateful

3:15 - *“be thankful”*

3:16 - *“singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God”*

3:17 -"giving thanks through Him to God the Father"

God's people should be the most *grateful* people on earth!

3. Let the Word of Christ permeate your thinking.

3:16 *"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.*

When the Word of Christ produces its fruit,

it's evident through our desire to encourage each other.

We teach one another wisely.

We admonish each other wisely.

Teaching affects our knowledge of the truth

Admonishing transforms relationships with one another

4. Do everything so that Christ gets the credit 3:17

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

When His Word resides in our hearts, we do everything in His name.

Doesn't refer to formula we repeat to sound religious—using His name.

Whatever we do is *for Him*—He gets the credit

We do it in dependence on Him and in recognition of His authority

**WHEN THE WORD OF GOD PERMEATES OUR LIFE
IT PRODUCES IT'S FRUIT IN US!**

Have you ever seen a fruit tree?

How many of you have seen an orange tree? an apple tree?

How many have seen an apple tree that produces oranges?

Why not?

Every tree produces fruit, according to it's own nature!

This principle is simple. Yet we don't get it!

It's also true for godly living.

Gal. 5:16-23: When the Spirit lives in us, He produces His fruit in us.

Eph. 5:18-6:9 Parallel passage based on same principle.

It points to the results in our life when the Spirit controls us.

Col. 3:16: fruit produced when *God's Word* dwells in us.

His Word controls our life.

His fruit is totally different than what *our* nature produces.

When God's Word controls our life, it's reflected in our conduct, especially in *relationships with each other*—

3 CHANGED RELATIONSHIPS 3:18-4:1

We seek to build up one another; to glorify God in everything we do **3:16-17**

When we're controlled by God's Word, and do everything in His name, we have a distinct attitude toward authority, that affects our relationships

We recognize God as sovereign over the universe.

He has all authority.

We recognize His right to rule His universe—His right to govern our life.

We submit to authority He established

3 truths presented concerning each sphere of authority:

1. All flow out of a spirit of peace and unity 3:15-17

Focus on love, unity, gratitude, edification and glorifying Christ.

Ephesians 5 affirms that WE ALL submit to one another.

Submission to authority flows from submission to God and each other.

These instructions aren't given so some of us can dominate others.

They encourage us to love and mutual edification!

2. All focus on our personal responsibility, *not our rights*.

These exhortations aren't given so we can insist on our rights.

They're given so each of us might do what God called US to do.

3. All are reciprocal, but **NOT conditional.**

They aren't given so we'll do our part when others do theirs.

We'll NEVER reach the goal that way!

They're **reciprocal**—both parties receive exhortations about *our* role.

Main focus directed to person who should submit to authority.

Submission to authority is evidence of our submission to the Lord.

3:18 *“as is fitting in the Lord.”*

3:20 *“for this pleases the Lord.”*

3:23 *“Work heartily as for the Lord, and not for men.”*

In most extreme case, the slave—who's usually subject to pagan owner—each verse repeats: a slave really serves the Lord.

When life seems unfair, slaves [employees] can remember: we aren't working for the unjust owner, but for the Lord.

3:22 *“obey ... your earthly masters ... fearing the Lord.”*

3:23 *“work heartily, as for the Lord ... not for men.”*

3:24 “*knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.*”

So **those in charge** don't start thinking of themselves as too powerful, each is given a warning against abusing their authority.

People who recognize God's authority don't *abuse* their privilege.

3:19 “*Husbands, love your wives, and don't be harsh with them.*”

3:21 “*Fathers, don't provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*”

4:1 “*Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly.*”

[Let's take a closer look at each of these spheres of authority:]

Relationship between wives and husbands 3:18-19

Wives 3:18 “*Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.*”

Wives submit to your husband.

Has to do with *establishing order*, not with *giving orders*.

Not effort to prove inferiority of women, nor put them down.

In any team effort, somebody has the last word.

Otherwise, when we disagree, everybody tries to do things their way.

God says husband has last word,

–NOT to get what HE wants, but for *her welfare*.

Husband's use of “final” word should affirm his love for her.

Submission is ALWAYS voluntary. A wife chooses to submit.

You can't force anyone to submit; submission is an attitude!

It must come from inside her.

Submission is continuous.

Decision's made over and over again

It's appropriate response for a godly woman:

"as is fitting in the Lord."

Husbands 3:19

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

Husbands love your wife.

Contemporary view sees women as **property**, to use as he chooses.

Paul doesn't share that attitude; a wife isn't the man's property.

Positive side: exhorts husbands to love their wife.

Godly love is different than pagan love.

Godly love isn't based on what she is, or what she does.

We choose to love her and seek her best interests,

whether she deserves it or not (1 Cor. 13; Rom. 5:8).

Like wife's submission, such love requires continuous, daily decision

Negative side: husband should not be harsh with wife.

Husband should be careful how he treats wife.

Peter indicates we should *"treat her like fine china!"*

"Harsh" refers to a sharp point.

It's used of spicy food that stings or tastes bitter.

I'd use it to describe INDIAN food!

They used it for a pungent taste—like vinegar.
 Describes a person who is disagreeable, critical, or angry.
 –treatment which makes life unpleasant and disagreeable.
 They've been doing that. Paul urges: stop treating your wife harshly.

Relationship between children and parents 3:20-21

Children 3:20

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

Children obey your parents.

Command for children is not the same as for wife.

Wife submits; children **obey**.

We can obey, without submitting. *“I’m still standing up on inside!”*

It’s possible to submit, while unable to DO what’s asked of us.

Such “disobedience” is never done in rebellion or defiance. –willing to accept discipline imposed.

That’s how apostles respond when suffering for Jesus

Acts 5:17-42

Children are to *obey*—doesn’t offer children same options as a wife.

Negative *attitude* covered by passages requiring *honor*.

Paul calls for total obedience—“obey your parents in everything!”

God is big enough to accomplish his purpose *through* parents.

Children demonstrate they trust God and submit to His authority

by obeying parents, whether their instructions *seem* right or not.

God accepts responsibility for results for our welfare and His glory.

Obedience to parents is equivalent to obedience to God.

It *pleases Him*.

[God's instruction to godly parents: **WE** aren't to abuse authority]

Parents 3:21

"Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged."

Parents should NOT embitter their children.

Distinction between godly discipline,

and nagging, bawling out, or criticizing our kids.

Consistent discipline, motivated by love, is clearly encouraged!

Continual bawling out and criticism leads to discouragement.

Children grow up thinking they can never satisfy their parents!

This doesn't mean that if our kids get upset, we've done something wrong.

Correction is necessary, but we also seek to encourage children so as not to discourage and defeat them.

Relationship between slaves and masters 3:22-4:1

Slaves 3:22-25 *"Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord."²³ What-*

ever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men,²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ.²⁵ For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality.”

Employees obey your employer.

21st C. => Employees faithfully do what your boss asks you to do.

We don't face *slavery* as these believers did.

But we do face *similar circumstances* in the workplace. Master's control over daily life of slaves was more pervasive, but same principles apply.

Slavery included most—even professionals, like teachers or doctors.

Swindoll: Some employers prefer *not* to hire Christians.”

“They tend to be presumptuous—take advantage of a Christian boss ... “

”I find them negative, critical, resistant to change ...”

... preoccupied with other things—witnessing, church, whatever ...”

“I can't trust them when I'm not around ...”

[Maybe it's just a minority; ... true of others too; but it's still unacceptable!]

“Show me a lazy, irritating Christian on job and I'll show you an office, store, customer or shop that isn't interested in his message.”

“Best platform to build a case for Christ at work rests on six pillars: integrity, faithfulness, punctuality, quality workmanship, pleasant attitude, and enthusiasm.

Hire such a person; it will only be a matter of time before business improves . . . people will be impressed . . . and Christianity will seem important.”

Ironside as a boy worked for Christian cobbler. His job was to pound out leather soles before they were sewn on. Another cobbler who didn't do that, found they wore out sooner and had to be replaced. He made more money that way. When he suggested this to his employer, the godly man replied, "Son, I don't repair shoes to make money; I do it to glorify God."

Essence of exhortation: worker should do good work,

so his master receives full benefit—whether boss is a believer or not. Worker should dedicate himself to do conscientiously what boss asks. Don't just work faithfully when we're watched, to make impression. We ought to be faithful, whether the boss finds out or not. **3:22**

Job performance should be based on reverence for God, aware God establishes authority; our testimony is important.

Ultimately we work for *God*, not for *people* (3:23a, 24b)

Our true "salary" comes from God, not people (3:24-25)

Those who serve Christ are paid from His inheritance **3:24a.**

Those who do unjustly are paid according to their injustice
3:25

Paul sees work as a way to present a good testimony and glorify God.

[Other side, speaks to bosses about our responsibility to employees.]

Masters **4:1** *"Masters, treat your slaves justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.*

Employers, treat employees fairly

Perspective of contemporaries: slaves have no rights; they're property

Master's free to do whatever he wants.

No one expects *mutual* submission.

Bosses should remember we too have a Boss, Who's judges fairly and rewards each person according to our use of resources God places in our hands.

Christian employers ought to be different!

We should treat employees justly and fairly.

We ought to reflect submission to God, by way we think of workers.

Since we're God's servants, we should treat our workers as we want God to treat us.

Underlying summary:

**WHEN GOD'S WORD RESIDES IN US,
IT PRODUCES A PROPER ATTITUDE
TOWARDS AUTHORITY**

*When our life is controlled by God's Word,
attitudes and activities change!*

Do our attitudes model unity, gratitude, encouragement, and glorifying God?

How do our lives reflect the control of God's Word?

*If people who watch us don't see a difference,
why should they believe us and follow our God?*

**WHAT EVIDENCE PROVES GOD'S WORD CONTROLS
OUR LIFE?**