

Colossians 3:15-4:6 (New International Version)

¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. ¹⁶Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. ¹⁷And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

18-21: Wives...Husbands...Children...Fathers...

²²Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. ²³Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, ²⁴since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. ²⁵Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there is no favoritism.

Colossians 4: ¹Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair, because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.

²Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. ³And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. ⁵Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. ⁶Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

The Message (MSG): ¹⁵⁻¹⁷Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

18-21 Wives...Husbands...Children...Fathers...

²²⁻²⁵Servants, do what you're told by your earthly masters. And don't just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best. Work from the heart for your real Master, for God, confident that you'll get paid in full when you come into your inheritance. Keep in mind always that the ultimate Master you're serving is Christ. The sullen servant who does shoddy work will be held responsible. Being a follower of Jesus doesn't cover up bad work.

Colossians 4: ¹And masters, treat your servants considerately. Be fair with them. Don't forget for a minute that you, too, serve a Master—God in heaven.

²⁻⁴Pray diligently. Stay alert, with your eyes wide open in gratitude. Don't forget to pray for us, that God will open doors for telling the mystery of Christ, even while I'm locked up in this jail. Pray that every time I open my mouth I'll be able to make Christ plain as day to them.

⁵⁻⁶Use your heads as you live and work among outsiders. Don't miss a trick. Make the most of every opportunity. Be gracious in your speech. The goal is to bring out the best in others in a conversation, not put them down, not cut them out.

OASIS: Good People—Good Workers, Colossians 3: 15-4: 6

Possible starter question: We all do different things for our “work”(work being loosely defined as the things we do or get done). Some of us have employers; some of us are self-employed. Some of us are paid; some are volunteers; and others are homemakers (still awaiting the long-overdue paycheck). Despite the varieties and differences, we all work.

What is your current work or preferred area of work? In one sentence, why do you do it?

Transitional comment: Christianity is not just about faith and spiritual matters. It has a lot to do with our work—and the way we do it. Today we will dig into a section of Paul’s letter to the Colossian church—and transfer some good insights to our context.

- Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead your study (if you haven’t already prayed)

Read and Overview observations:

- Let’s listen as someone reads the passage (or 3 people read the 3 paragraphs).
n.b. You can skip over verses 18-21 that deal more with households than work.
- Now take several minutes to individually study this passage. Look for repeated words, ideas, and concerns. What do you see about actions? Attitudes?

First section (3: 15-17):

- O What resources does Paul encourage the Colossians to utilize?
 - I What do you think is our role in engaging or accessing these resources?
- O What attitudes does Paul say need to be activated or cultivated?
 - I Why do you think thanksgiving is so emphasized?
 - A What are some reasons or ways that you could increase your “thankfulness quotient” in your work? What differences might that make?

Second section (3:22-4:1):

- O In these 5 verses, what idea is repeated? Identify the phrases. What is Paul’s overriding point?
- O What are some of the differences that Paul thinks it should make in the way the Colossians do their work?
 - I Why do you think it makes such a big difference whom you regard as your ultimate employer?
 - A Several of you share a story or example where “working for the Lord” made a difference in the way you worked for an early master.

Third section (4:2-6):

- O In vs. 2-4, what does Paul want the Colossians to do?
- O What do we learn about Paul's situation and ministry? How specifically does he want them to pray?

I Why do you think this matters so much to Paul?

A Who are a few people that we need to be praying for in similar ways?

- O In vs. 5-6 What insights and encouragement does Paul give to the Colossians for their interactions with their neighbors and fellow-workers?

I What phrases are helpful or instructive to you? In what way?

A What are some of the life contexts (in the next day or week) where you will get to "live out" these encouragements?

Summary/Conclusion:

A In thinking through this passage, is there any specific resource, or attitude, or action that God is putting on your heart to apply or live out new determination?

Prayer together: for one another individually and collectively, that in our work and relationships, we will be able to reflect these actions and attitudes, in words and deeds.

Text is on other page or www.Biblegateway.com

- a. BIG idea: We all work for the Lord!
- b. Key verse/idea: Col. 3:17 "Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him."
- c. KEY: O = Observation; I = Interpretation; A = Application (or C = Challenge).

Advice to study leaders:

- d. Complement your OIA questions with "process questions" (what else? what more? What do others of you see/think?).
- e. Determine the core questions you'll ask (know which ones to skip if pressed for time).
- f. Always reword questions in words are comfortable for you (and, if the question doesn't make sense to you, then discard it.)
- g. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. How long do you wait? Take your time; don't rush people but encourage their participation. And avoid answering your own questions!
- h. Timing/pacing: allocate your time and move forward gently, with a steady pace.
- i. Application: Pace the study to conclude with "difference making" application.
- j. Secondary texts—use other texts very sparingly, even if they are relevant. Otherwise, other texts will push you more into the "teacher role," rather than that of facilitator. It also can cause some people to feel distracted or de-powered.
- k. If you are utilizing this "on-line" study and not part of the OASIS course, I recommend that you get the 1-volume commentary entitled New Bible Commentary, Revised (21st Century Edition, IVP). It is well worth the \$40.