

# Orbital Impact

Colossians 3:12-4:1

## Description of Orbit

3:12-17

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Colossians 3:12-17

The teaching of Jesus should rule in the hearts of Christian brothers, producing peace and thanksgiving. If it dwells in their hearts they will be "one body" (v. 15) and social or ethnic distinctions (v. 11) will not destroy the body of Christ. The Colossian heresy (2:8) was evidently causing great division in that church. If Christ's word dwelled in them as it should, they would be teaching and admonishing each other in their worship (3:16) and in their daily living (v. 17). The kind of music used in the early church included psalms (the Old Testament psalms), hymns (religious songs, Matt. 26:30), and spiritual songs (evidently songs sung under the impulse of the Holy Spirit, perhaps at times even in an unknown tongue, 1 Cor. 14:13-15). The scenario Paul is presenting is one of peace and happiness. Therefore, singing praise to God is the appropriate and expected response by those who have truly become "new people."

*Evangelical Commentary on the Bible*

Paul encouraged them to express their corporate worship in real wisdom, which centers in and promotes Christ. Thus as they grew in their understanding of spiritual truth, they were to encourage others in the context of real wisdom. Among other aspects, wisdom means that there are proper means to an end, and those means will be employed.

*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*

## Orbits Influence on Home

3:18-21

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be embittered against them. Children, be obedient to your parents in all things, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord. Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they will not lose heart.

Colossians 3:18-21

Of course there are moral limits to this submission; it is only as is fitting in the Lord. Just as obedience to government is commanded (Rom. 13:1; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:13) but only insofar as government takes its place under God (Ex. 1; Dan. 3; 6), even so a wife's submission to her husband is only "in the Lord." That is, she is not obligated to follow her husband's leadership if it conflicts with specific scriptural commands.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

So they are to exercise loving leadership, not dictatorial dominion. Perhaps husbands need this reminder to be tender and loving as much or more than wives need the reminder not to usurp authority over their husbands. Assuming absolute authority will only embitter one's wife, not endear her. The words be harsh translate pikrainesthe, which is more literally, "make bitter." (A different word is used in Col. 3:21; see comments there.) Wives, like tender and sensitive flowers (cf. 1 Peter 3:7), may wilt under authoritarian dominance but blossom with tender loving care. So in a maturing marriage the husband exercises compassionate care and his wife responds in willing submission to this loving leadership.

*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*

## Orbits Influence on Work

3:22-4:1

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. Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve. 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.

Colossians 3:22-4:1

It is a common theme in biblical thought that punishment for sin involves being fully given over to its consequences (cf. Rom 1), and this is also true of believers. Here Paul's implication is that believers who sin and disobey the Lord whom they serve will receive the consequences of their actions, which is a fitting discipline.

*The NET Bible*

Some Greek and Roman philosophers warned that masters themselves could become slaves someday (unlikely as this was), so they should treat their slaves rightly. Aristotle attacked philosophers in his own day who said that slavery was against nature and therefore wrong. By contrast, Paul clearly believes all people are by nature equal before God; although he does not address slavery as an institution here, what he does write thus suggests that he does not favor it. Although he has no control over the system, he can warn masters to keep in mind their status before God. For an example of a situation in which he does have more potential influence, see Philemon.

*The IVP Bible Background Commentary*

In the Roman world, the household included all those who were the responsibility of the head of the house; therefore, the original readers would have included servants. The broad perspective that included servants suggests servants and masters were members of the Christian community at Colossae. The fact that Paul included servants often in his ethical lists points to the fact that there were actually people to whom the teaching applied. These rules were not simply theoretical discussions. At the church of Colossae, probably both Onesimus, the servant, and Philemon, the slave-owner, worshiped in the same fellowship.

*Philippians, Colossians, Philemon*

When Christ is the center of our faith,  
our lives reflect His influence  
at home and work.

Q1. What are things that compete for Christ influence in our homes? At work?

Q2. Who are some examples in your life that had Christ at the center of their life? What did their home life look like? What did their work life look like?