

SO WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

I. Colossians 3:18-24

A. One of Nicole's favorite verses has long been Ecclesiastes 9:10a (NIV): **10** *Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might...* A week ago the last verse I read was Colossians 3:17 (ESV): **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.* Both of these verses are good lead-ins to our text today.

B. Was there ever a time in your life when you were doing something stupid and someone caught you and said, "*What are you doing?!*" Maybe their confrontation came with more colorful language: "*What in blue blazes are you doing?!*" Maybe you've caught one of your kids doing something. Or maybe you caught them doing nothing when they should've been doing something you had asked them to do.

C. None of us wake up in the morning and pray, '*Lord, help me do stupid stuff today.*' Nor do we pray, '*Lord, help me to be a do-nothing lounge lizard today.*' Our better prayer might be, '*Lord, help me today to do your will and accomplish your work for the glory of Your name and for the encouragement of Your people.*' Our emphasis is on the word, "*Do.*" This sermon is brought to you by the word, "*Do.*"

D. Colossians 3:18-24 (ESV) isn't flamboyant or mysterious. It's pretty straight forward. Similar verses can be found in other places, particularly Ephesians 5 & 6. God's Word is never old fashioned or culturally irrelevant. It is always spot on and it often reveals where we're way off. These verses are all about "*doing.*"

1) **V18: 18** Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. (Yes, it is possible to submit in ways that are unfitting. In many cultures at the time of this writing, including Greek and Roman cultures, wives were treated harshly, like property. To willingly submit to a loving husband would have been totally counter-cultural.)

2) **V19: 19** Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. (Ephesians 5:25 (ESV) says: **25** *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her...* (The Scriptures do not teach tyrannical husbandry. It teaches husbandry rooted in sacrificial love as exhibited by Jesus. Lay down your gavels and whips, pick up your cross and follow Jesus as Godly husbands are called to do.)

3) **V20: 20** Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. (Exodus 20:12 (ESV): "*Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.*" Ephesians 6:1-3 (ESV) reiterates: **1** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.* **2** "*Honor your father and mother*" (this is the first commandment with a promise), **3** "*that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land.*" (Parents, for some reason, still like the 5th Commandment. 'Let's keep that one!')

4) **V21: 21** Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. (Ephesians 6:4 (ESV) affirms: **4** *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.* (Godly authority of any kind, parental authority included, should be rendered with love for the highest good of the person you're called to serve. Fathers serve their children by Godly example, faithful provision, fierce protection, and loving discipline. Quoting Proverbs 3:11-12, Hebrews 12:5-6 (NIV) reminds us: **5** *And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses His son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, 6 because the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and He chastens everyone He accepts as His son."* (Cruelty is not how God disciplines; nor should we...)

5) **V22: 22** Bondservants, 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. (No this verse does not give approval for chattel slavery once practiced in this nation. Paul isn't defending the practice of slavery. Scripture actually became the foundational basis for its eventual demise as an institution. The type of servanthood Paul addresses often led to adoption and an inheritance. These verses also apply to employer/employee relationships. God never intended for humans to own other humans as property and be treated like animals or machinery. Remember: Satan enslaves but God emancipates. The ultimate emancipation came at the cost of Jesus' blood shed on the cross!)

6) **V23-24: (Our crux-of-the-matter verses): 23** *Whatever 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.* (Lord help us please!)

E. *Whatever you do* implies doing something. So what are you doing in the name of the Lord that honors Him? Glorifies Him? How is your life-in-Christ prompting your doing? What is the Holy Spirit inspiring you to do? If the Word of Christ dwells in you richly, how is it changing your attitudes and motivating your actions? Do you

consider your faith active or passive? Are you driven by consumption or production? As a believer are you merely taking in and filling up or are you spilling over, going forth, serving, helping, giving, *doing*?

F. When someone repurposes a relic or an antique for something beautiful or uniquely useful, we can't help but be impressed. But God never intended our hands be repurposed into seat cushions. Feet constantly propped up will take us nowhere fast. So the question is, "*What are you doing?*" Or, "*What aren't you doing that you could be doing?*" It's hard to steer a parked car but that all changes when it starts moving. There's no sideline benches in God's Kingdom.

G. Repentance is turning away from sinful doing and turning with an intentional heart to Godly doing. Clearly our lives in Christ begin with "*Done.*" Jesus has accomplished on the cross what we could've never accomplished by strenuously trying to keep God's law and earning our own right-standing. But as we stand on and build on this foundation of *Done*, love-inspired and joy-driven thanksgiving should ignite fires in us for *doing*. **James 1:22-25 (ESV) takes us home:** *22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

* Close with Prayer...

[Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff](#)

[Ecclesiastes 9:10a \(NIV\)](#)

10 Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might...

[Colossians 3:17 \(ESV\)](#)

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.

[Colossians 3:18-24 & 4:1 \(ESV\)](#)

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. 22 Bondservants, 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 Whatever 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. 4:1 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

[James 1:22-25 \(ESV\)](#)

22 But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. 23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. 24 For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. 25 But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

[Film Clips & Article Links](#)

"You Bled" - by Rend Collective Experiment

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3N3h0BKV6gw>

"King of Hearts" - Randy Stonehill

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-FBNbP7InQ>

Why It's Wrong to Say the Bible Is Pro-Slavery - Article by Gavin Ortlund - The Gospel Coalition

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/why-wrong-say-bible-pro-slavery/>

Slavery and the Bible - Article by Thomas S. Kidd - Reformation 21

<http://www.reformation21.org/articles/slavery-and-the-bible.php>

Bonus Stuff

Ephesians 5:22-33 (ESV)

22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. **23** For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, His body, and is Himself its Savior. **24** Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. **25** Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, **26** that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, **27** so that He might present the church to Himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. **28** In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. **29** For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, **30** because we are members of His body. **31** "Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." **32** This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. **33** However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Ephesians 6:1-9 (ESV)

1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. **2** "Honor your father and mother" (this is the first commandment with a promise), **3** "that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land." **4** Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord. **5** Bondservants, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling, with a sincere heart, as you would Christ, **6** not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, **7** rendering service with a good will as to the Lord and not to man, **8** knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bondservant or is free. **9** Masters, do the same to them, and stop your threatening, knowing that He who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and that there is no partiality with Him.

Exodus 12:20 (ESV)

12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

Hebrews 12:5-6 (NIV)

5 And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses His son? It says, "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when He rebukes you, **6** because the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and He chastens everyone He accepts as His son."

Proverbs 3:11-12 (NIV)

11 My son, do not despise the LORD's discipline, and do not resent His rebuke, **12** because the LORD disciplines those He loves, as a father the son he delights in.

Quote by John MacArthur

When you think about terms used to describe Christians in the New Testament, we're called children of God, right? We're called heirs and joint-heirs. We're called members of the body of Christ. We're even designated as branches, sheep. And you don't want to mix all those metaphors because each of those gives you a facet of understanding and aspect of our relationship to Christ. But the dominating word inside of which our full understanding of salvation is best seen is this word "slave."

- John MacArthur, Grace To You, "Servant or Slave" <http://www.gty.org/resources/print/sermons/GTY129>

Quote by Bill Bright

"We've been bought with a price, the precious blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. So none of us really have any rights. I'm simply acknowledging that when I say, 'Lord I want to be your slave.' I know I'm a Son of God, an heir of God, and a joint heir of Christ. I'm seated with him in the heavenlies, but by choice; like Paul, Peter and others, I've chosen to be a slave."

- Bill Bright, Interview by Michael Little, CBN President,

http://www.cbn.com/SpiritualLife/churchandministry/Bill_Bright_A_Slave_For_Christ.aspx

Quote by C.S. Lewis

"A perfect man would never act from a sense of duty; he'd always want the right thing more than the wrong one. Duty is only a substitute for love (of God and of other people) like a crutch which is a substitute for a leg. Most of us need the crutch at times; but of course it is idiotic to use the crutch when our own legs (our own loves, tastes, habits etc.) can do the journey on their own."

- C. S. Lewis, (Letters of C.S. Lewis/1966, p. 277)

Quote by Charles Spurgeon

"MY brethren, what a contrast there is between the present and future estate of the child of God! The believer is here the brother to the worm; in heaven he shall be next of kin to the angels. Here he is covered with the sweat and dust which he acquired by Adam's fall; there his brow shall be bright with the immortality which is conferred upon him by the resurrection of Christ. Here the heir of heaven is unknown; he is in disguise, full often clad in the habiliments of poverty, but there his princely character shall be discerned and acknowledged, he shall be waited upon by angels, and shall share in the admiration which the universe shall pour upon the glorified Redeemer. Well said our poet just now, "It doth not yet appear, how great we must be made.""

- Charles Spurgeon, Sermon #339, "The Sons of God" delivered Sunday, October 7, 1860, Exeter Hall, The Stand, London, England.

Theological Notes on Colossians 3:22-25 & Colossians 4:1

The ESV Study Bible

18 Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. 22 Bondservants, 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 Whatever 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. 4:1 Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. - Col. 3:18-25 & 4:1 (ESV)

3:22-25 Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters. The relationships between husbands and wives and parents and children are ordained by God from creation. Hence, Paul's instructions on marriage represent the perfect will of God. On the other hand, the kind of servitude practiced in the first century was seldom in keeping with God's will; the Scriptures regulate the institution without commending it (see notes on 1 Cor. 7:21; Eph. 6:5; 1 Tim. 1:10), and the evil of trafficking in human beings is condemned in the NT (1 Tim. 1:10; cf. Rev. 18:11-13). As in any other city or village in the Roman world, there would have been many slaves (or bondservants) at Colosse; Paul treats them with dignity and appeals to them directly to honor Christ in their hearts, work, and behavior. Philemon (see book of Philemon) was a wealthy Colossian who benefited from the labors of his bondservant, Onesimus. Slaves (or bondservants) should **work heartily**, not primarily to please their earthly masters but as if they were working **for the Lord**. The principles of Col. 3:22-4:1 apply to employers and employees today.

4:1 treat your bondservants justly and fairly. Paul does not condone the Roman system of servitude but instead provides instructions to believing masters and slaves (or bondservants) regarding their relationship to each other in the Lord. Such instruction clearly sows the seeds for the eventual dismantling of this unjust socioeconomic structure (see note on Eph. 6:5). On the Greek word *doulos*, see ESV Preface, p. 21.

- Theological Notes on Colossians 3:22-25 & Colossians 4:1, *The ESV Study Bible*, Crossway, p. 2299.

Christian Slaves and Masters

Ligonier Ministries

<https://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/christian-slaves-and-masters/>

"Let all those who are under a yoke as slaves regard their own masters as worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and the teaching may not be reviled" (v. 1).

- [1 Timothy 6:1-2a](#)

Master-slave relationships are Paul's concern in today's passage, which might seem like an abrupt change in subject until we consider the placement of [1 Timothy 6:1-2a](#) within the letter, specifically within the section that begins with 5:1. This portion of the epistle deals with different problems that plagued the Ephesian church, including the proper behavior of widows, the treatment of one another within the church, and the support of elders. All these instructions address the Christian's relation to others in the covenant community, so it makes sense for Paul to teach on slaves and masters in this context.

Apparently, many Christian slaves in Ephesus were bringing shame on the gospel by disrespecting their masters ([1 Tim. 6:1](#)). Slavery was an intimate part of the social order back then, and any perceived threat to the practice was seen as a threat to society. Throughout the New Testament we find the apostles willing to live at peace with this order for the sake of the gospel insofar as doing so did not compromise the gospel (for example, [1 Peter 2:18](#)). For slaves this meant honoring their masters, as honor is owed to those God has placed in authority ([Rom. 13:1-7](#); [1 Peter 2:13-14](#)). Paul was not concerned with overturning slavery itself, and it should be noted that slavery in the ancient Roman Empire was closer to the modern-day employer-employee relationship, not the slavery of other eras based on kidnapping and

racism, which Scripture abhors ([Ex. 21:16](#); [Gal. 3:28](#)). In any case, to dishonor our supervisors today, as with a slave's dishonoring of his master in the first century, falsely depicts Christianity, "as if God, whom we worship, incited us to rebellion, and as if the gospel rendered obstinate and disobedient those who ought to be subject to others" (John Calvin).

Though the apostle did not argue against slavery, his teaching in [1 Timothy 6:2a](#) was unheard of in his day. In ancient Rome, slaves obviously had a lower social status. Yet Paul says a slave's work benefits his master, making him equal to him in the good he can do. Passages like this eventually led certain men in the West to fight for the abolition of slavery, and the gospel's absence in other parts of the world may help explain why some nations still practice slavery today.

Coram Deo

Dr. John MacArthur writes, "Displaying a proper attitude of submission and respect, and performing quality work, help make the gospel believable" (The MacArthur Bible Commentary, p. 1797). Those who profess Christ and yet are insubordinate to their employers or lazy are a poor witness to the unbelieving world. Jesus demands His people to aim for the highest standards, and so believers should be the most diligent and thoughtful workers of all.

Passages for Further Study

[Proverbs 6:6–11](#)

[Titus 2:9](#)