

THE NEW LIFE AND SLAVERY

Colossians 3:22-4:1

^{3.22}Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord.²³Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.²⁴Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the Master you are serving is Christ.²⁵But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites.

^{4.1}Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven.

Last week we studied slavery from the perspective of the earthly master and how he should view those people entrusted to him in slavery, particularly when they become believers. Now we want to come back to Colossians and consider how the new life changes the way a slave approaches their work for an earthly master.

Slavery in the Roman empire varied greatly, but primarily the power was in the hands of the earthly master. All people were considered human beings, but the rights of a slave were possessed by their owner. In essence, the slave lost everything to the will of the earthly master.

A similar situation prevailed in the feudal system. While it was possible to own slaves, there was also a class of land-tied people known as *villeins* or *serfs*. They were tied to the lands owned by their lord and were obligated to serve him in his own personal holdings. These people were not free to move about and must have the permission of the lord.

Today, many people are employed by small businesses and their livelihood is tied to their work. Others work for large corporations who have the right to close locations and move employees they wish to keep from one place to another. These employees have certain rights, but they are not always free to do as they wish without paying an economic price for it.

As you read and study this week, think about how what Paul is commanding would apply in each situation.

What did Paul want Christians who were slaves to do (3:22)?

Did it matter whether or not their earthly masters were believers (1 Timothy 6:1-2)? Why or why not?

What else did Paul teach about Christians and slavery?

Galatians 3:28

1 Corinthians 7:20-24

Colossians 3:11

Titus 2:9-10

1 Peter 2:18

<i>Colossians 3:22-4:1</i>	<i>Ephesians 6:5-9</i>
<p>Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything you do. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. Serve them sincerely because of your reverent fear of the Lord. Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the</p> <p>Master you are serving is Christ. But if you do what is wrong, you will be paid back for the wrong you have done. For God has no favorites. Masters, be just and fair to your slaves. Remember that you also have a Master—in heaven.</p>	<p>Slaves, obey your earthly masters with deep respect and fear. Serve them sincerely as you would serve Christ. Try to please them all the time, not just when they are watching you. As slaves of Christ, do the will of God with all your heart. Work with enthusiasm, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people. Remember that the Lord will reward each one of us for the good we do, whether we are slaves or free.</p> <p>Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Don't threaten them; remember, you both have the same Master in heaven, and he has no favorites.</p>

What does this passage have in common with its parallel in Ephesians?

What is unique to Colossians?

How does “new life” thinking change the perspective of the slave?

How does “new life” thinking change the perspective of the earthly master?