

Colossians

The Spiritual Walk: Outer Life [3:18-4:6]

Family Life [3:18-21]

- Wives, subject yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.
Αἱ γυναῖκες, ὑποτάσσεσθε τοῖς ἀνδράσιν ὡς ἀνῆκεν ἐν κυρίῳ.
 - The word “wives” is from γυνή (gunē) which means “woman” or “wife”.
 - In context, this is clearly a reference to married women.
 - The verb “be subject” is from ὑποτάσσω (hupotassō) which means “submit”, “subordinate” or “subject oneself”.
 - This involves recognition of an ordered structure.
 - The word “husbands” is from ἀνὴρ (anēr) which means “man” or “husband”.
 - As with γυνή (gunē), the context shows that this is clearly a reference to married men.
 - The word “fitting” is from ἀνήκω (anēkō) which means “proper” or “fitting”.
 - The root meaning of this word is that something is connected or belongs – it is appropriate.
 - The phrase “as is fitting in the Lord” is two-fold.
 - The submission is done as to the Lord [Eph 5:22].
 - The submission is not unlimited as it only applies to things which are fitting to honor the Lord.
- Husbands, love your wives and stop being embittered against them.
Οἱ ἄνδρες, ἀγαπᾶτε τὰς γυναῖκας καὶ μὴ πικραίνεσθε πρὸς αὐτάς,
 - The word “love” is from ἀγαπάω (agapaō) which means “love” or “cherish”.
 - This is the sacrificial, integrity-based love that only God can manifest in us.
 - The verb “embittered” is from πικραίνω (pikrainō) which means “make bitter” or “embitter”.
 - This is the heart attitude that results from anger and resentment that is allowed to fester.
 - The phrase “do not be embittered” is μὴ (mē) plus a present tense imperative which means to stop doing an activity.
 - The word “against” is πρὸς (pros) which means “to” or “toward”.
 - This word can carry the meaning “against” as we saw in Col 3:13.
- Children, follow all instructions given by your parents, for this is well-pleasing to the Lord.
Τὰ τέκνα, ὑπακούετε τοῖς γονεῦσιν κατὰ πάντα, τοῦτο γὰρ εὐάρεστόν ἐστιν ἐν κυρίῳ.
 - The word “children” is from τέκνον (teknon) which means “child”, “offspring” or “descendant”.
 - The meaning here is offspring (males and/or females) that have not yet reached adulthood.
 - The verb “be obedient” is from ὑπακούω (hupakouō) which means “obey”, “follow” or “be subject to”.
 - The basic idea is to follow instructions.
 - The phrase “in all things” is literally “in relation to everything”.
 - This encompasses all instructions given to the children by the parents.
 - The phrase “well-pleasing” is from εὐάρεστος (euarestos) which means “pleasing”, “well-pleasing” or “acceptable”.
 - This is an important word which tells us how we might please God by meeting His righteous standards [Rom 12:1-2; 14:18; 2 Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; Phil 4:18; Titus 2:9; Heb 13:21].

- Fathers, stop exasperating your children, so that they will not become discouraged.
Οἱ πατέρες, μὴ ἐρεθίζετε τὰ τέκνα ὑμῶν, ἵνα μὴ ἀθυμῶσιν.
 - The verb “exasperate” is from ἐρεθίζω (erethizō) which means “provoke” or “stir up”.
 - This word can have a positive meaning [2 Cor 9:2], but clearly here is used in a negative sense.
 - The phrase “do not exasperate” is μὴ (mē) plus a present tense imperative which means to stop doing an activity.
 - The verb “lose heart” is from ἀθυμέω (athumeō) which means “become disheartened” or “become discouraged”.
 - This discouragement causes a loss of motivation.

Work Life [3:22-4:1]

- Slaves, follow all instructions given by your earthly masters,
Οἱ δούλοι, ὑπακούετε κατὰ πάντα τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις,
 - The word “slaves” is from δούλος (doulos) which means “slave” or “subject”.
 - This word is used of slaves in the N.T. whereas διάκονος (diakonos) is used of servants.
 - The phrase “in all things obey” is ὑπακούετε κατὰ πάντα (hupakouete kata panta) which is the exact same phrase we saw for the children in Col 3:20.
 - The word “masters” is from κύριος (kurios) which means “master”, “owner” or “Lord”.
 - In this context this refers to a slave owner who has charge over someone by means of possession.
 - The phrase “on earth” is κατὰ σάρκα (kata sarka) which means “according to the flesh”.
 - This describes an earthly master in contrast with the Lordship of Jesus Christ in our lives.
- not only when they are watching, as mere people-pleasers,
μὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοδουλίᾳ ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι,
 - The phrase “external service” is ὀφθαλμοδουλία (ophthalmoudoulia) which means “eye-service”.
 - This describes work that is done only to make an impression in the master’s presence [Eph 6:6].
 - The phrase “those who merely please men” is from ἀνθρωπάρεσκος (anthrōpareskos) which means “fawner” or “men-pleaser”.
 - This describes someone who is trying to please people [Eph 6:6].
- but instead wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord.
ἀλλ’ ἐν ἀπλότῃ καρδίας φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον.
 - The word “but” is ἀλλά (alla) which means “but”, “yet” or “rather”.
 - This Greek word is used to present a strong contrast between the clause that comes before and the one that comes after.
 - The word “sincerity” is from ἀπλότης (haplotēs) which means “sincerity” or “uprightness”.
 - The idea is singleness of purpose as opposed to someone who is double-minded or has a hidden agenda.
 - The word “fearing” is the participle φοβούμενοι (phoboumenoi) which means “fearing”, “revering” or “respecting”.
 - In this context it is describing our humility before the Lord and reverence/awe for who He is.

- Whatever you do, do your work from the heart, as unto the Lord rather than people,
ὁ ἐὰν ποιῆτε, ἐκ ψυχῆς ἐργάζεσθε ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις,
 - The word “heartily” is ἐκ ψυχῆς (ek psuchēs) which is literally “from the soul”.
 - The idea is that the external work of service is a result of positive volition in the soul.
 - The phrase “for the Lord” is τῷ κυρίῳ (tō kuriō) which means “unto the Lord”.
 - The focus of our work of service is supposed to be toward the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - The phrase “rather than for” is καὶ οὐκ (kai ouk) which is literally “and not”.
 - The translation “rather than” is a good way to express this.
 - The word “men” is ἀνθρώποις (anthrōpois) which means “men” or “people”.
 - This is not talking about males in particular, but people in general.
- recognizing that from the Lord you will receive the reward portion of the inheritance.
ὁ ἐὰν ποιῆτε, ἐκ ψυχῆς ἐργάζεσθε ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις,
 - The word “knowing” is a participle of οἶδα (oida) which means to have a true grasp of something.
 - This is a perfect tense which means knowing now based on what has been learned in the past.
 - The word “receive” is from ἀπολαμβάνω (apolambanō) which means “receive from”.
 - This word does not in any way indicate that what is received is a form of compensation.
 - The word “reward” is from ἀνταπόδοσις (antapodosis) which means “payday” or “reward”.
 - This is describing a portion of our inheritance that is based upon doing the works of Eph 2:10.
 - The fact that this reward is a portion of the inheritance we have in Christ tells us that this cannot be earned or deserved – it is a promise from God as part of His grace toward the believer.
- Serve the Lord Christ.
τῷ κυρίῳ Χριστῷ δουλεύετε·
 - The word “serve” is from δουλεύω (douleuō) which means “serve”, “be a slave” or “be subject to”.
 - This could be an indicative as it is translated here, or it could be an imperative.
 - The context seems to favor the imperative.
 - The only other occurrence of the phrase “Lord Christ” is found in Rom 16:18 which also contains the verb δουλεύω (douleuō).
 - This phrase emphasizes Jesus as the Anointed One and our Master (Lord).
- For he who does wrong will receive the consequences of his wrongdoing,
ὁ γὰρ ἀδικῶν κομίζεται ὃ ἠδίκησεν,
 - The phrase “receive the consequences” is from κομίζω (komizō) which means “get back” or “receive as recompense”.
 - This is a very different meaning from the word “receive” we saw in Col 3:24.
 - The phrases “he who does wrong” and “the wrong which he has done” are both from ἀδικέω (adikeō) which means “do wrong” or “injure”.
 - The second phrase would be better translated “his wrongdoing”.
- and there is no favoritism.
καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν προσωποληψία.
 - The phrase “that without” is from οὐκ ἔστιν (ouk estin) which means “there is no”.
 - The message is that the recompense given for the wrongdoing stems from a judgment handed down by an impartial Judge [2 Cor 5:10].

- The word “partiality” is προσωπολημψία (prosōpolēmpsia) which means “partiality” or “favoritism”.
- This means that God will discipline His children in accordance with their deeds without showing any kind of favoritism.
- Masters, treat your slaves with justice and fairness,
Οἱ κύριοι, τὸ δίκαιον καὶ τὴν ἰσότητα τοῖς δούλοις παρέχεσθε,
 - The word “grant” is from παρέχω (parechō) which means “offer”, “show” or “grant”.
 - The essence of this is how those who are your servants should be treated.
 - The word “justice” is from δίκαιος (dikaios) which means “upright” or “just”.
 - The word “fairness” is from ἰσότης (isotēs) which means “equality” or “fairness”.
- recognizing that you too have a Master in heaven.
Οἱ εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ ὑμεῖς ἔχετε κύριον ἐν οὐρανῷ.
 - The word “knowing” is a participle of οἶδα (oida) which is the same word we saw in Col 3:24.
 - This also is a perfect tense which means knowing now based on what has been learned in the past.
 - The word “Master” is from κύριος (kurios) which is the same word this verse begins with.
 - In context this is clearly a reference to Jesus as our Master (Lord) in heaven.

Prayer Life [4:2-4]

- Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with *an attitude of gratitude*;
Τῇ προσευχῇ προσκατερεῖτε, γρηγοροῦντες ἐν αὐτῇ ἐν εὐχαριστίᾳ,
 - The phrase “Devote yourselves to” is from προσκατερέω (proskartereō) which means “stay with” or “be devoted to”.
 - The idea is to be fully engaged in something.
 - The phrase “keeping alert” is from γρηγορέω (grēgoreō) which means “be on the alert”.
 - This is a present participle which could be translated “continuously being on the alert”.
 - The phrase “an attitude of” is not in the Greek.
 - However, the phrase “with thanksgiving” is clearly talking about a mental attitude, so it makes sense that the NASB translators added it.
 - The word “thanksgiving” is from εὐχαριστία (eucharistia) which means “thankfulness” or “gratitude”.
 - The basic meaning is to be grateful.
- praying at the same time for us as well, that God might open up to us a door for the word,
προσευχόμενοι ἅμα καὶ περὶ ἡμῶν, ἵνα ὁ θεὸς ἀνοίξῃ ἡμῖν θύραν τοῦ λόγου
 - The phrase “at the same time” is ἅμα (hama) which means “simultaneously” or “together”.
 - This is a marker of association in time or place.
 - The phrase “for us” refers to Paul and Timothy.
 - The phrase “as well” means that along with their gratitude, their prayers should be include petitions made on behalf of Paul and Timothy.
 - The phrase “will open up” is from ἀνοίγω (anoigō) which means “open”.
 - This verb is in the subjunctive mood which means the outcome is not certain.
 - The phrase “a door for the word” is an expression meaning “an opportunity for the word to be spoken” as the phrase which follows will show.

- so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned; λαλήσαι τὸ μυστήριον τοῦ Χριστοῦ, δι’ ὃ καὶ δέδεμαι,
 - The phrase “so that we may speak forth” is from λαλέω (laleō) which means “talk” or “speak”.
 - This verb is in the infinitive mood which is used here as a purpose clause.
 - The word “mystery” is μυστήριον (mysterion) which means “unmanifested information”.
 - This once unknown information has now been revealed.
 - The “mystery” being referred to in this case is the mystery of Christ.
 - This is a reference to the Church which includes Gentiles as heirs along with the Jews [Eph 3:4-6].
 - The word “imprisoned” is from δέω (deō) which means “bind” or “tie”.
 - This is a verb sometimes used to describe imprisonment [Mark 15:7; Acts 24:27].
- and pray that I might make it known boldly as I ought to speak. ἵνα φανερώσω αὐτὸ ὡς δεῖ με λαλήσαι.
 - The phrase “I may make...clear” is from φανερόω (phaneroō) which means “show” or “make known”.
 - This verb is in the subjunctive mood which connects it back to the prayer asked for in verse 4.
 - The word “it” is the neuter pronoun αὐτὸ (auto) which refers back to the neuter noun “mystery”.
 - The phrase “in the way” is ὡς (hōs) which means “as” or “like”.
 - The Greek phrase ὡς δεῖ με λαλήσαι (hōs dei me lalēsai) is also found in Eph 6:20 where it refers to Paul’s boldness of speech.

Public Life [4:5-6]

- Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders, making the most of the opportunity. Ἐν σοφίᾳ περιπατεῖτε πρὸς τοὺς ἔξω τὸν καιρὸν ἐξαγοραζόμενοι.
 - The phrase “Conduct yourselves” is from περιπατέω (peripateō) which means “walk”.
 - We have seen many times that this word is used of a manner of living.
 - The word “outsiders” is τοὺς ἔξω (youx exō) which means “those outside”.
 - This is referring to people outside the Church [1 Cor 5:12; 1 Thess 4:12; 1 Tim 3:17].
 - The phrase “making the most of” is from ἐξαγοράζω (exagorazō) which means “buy up” or “redeem” which shows that every opportunity we have to interact with unbelievers is valuable.
 - The word “opportunity” is from καιρός (kairos) which means “season” or “opportune time”.
 - The message is that we can be a witness during the time we spend with unbelievers.
- Let your speech always be with grace, yet seasoned with salt, ὁ λόγος ὑμῶν πάντοτε ἐν χάριτι, ἄλατι ἡρτυμένος,
 - The phrase “Let your speech always be with grace” is literally “Your words always with grace”.
 - It is completely appropriate in this context to add the being verb and turn this into a sentence.
 - The phrase “seasoned with salt” means that the gracious speech still contains pure truth.
 - The translators added the phrase “as though”, but they should have added the word “yet”.
- so that you will know in what way you should respond to each person. εἶδέναι πῶς δεῖ ὑμᾶς ἐνὶ ἐκάστῳ ἀποκρίνεσθαι.
 - The phrase “so that you will know” is an infinitive of οἶδα (oida) which means “know”.
 - An infinitive can be used as a purpose clause as we saw in Col 4:3.
 - The word “how” is πῶς (pōs) which means “in what way” or “how”.

- In this context the more verbose translation will communicate better.
- The word “respond” is from ἀποκρίνομαι (apokrinomai) which means “answer” or “reply”.
- This implies that there is an active conversation ongoing with an unbeliever.
- The phrase “each person” is ἐνὶ ἑκάστῳ (heni hekastō) which means “each one”.
- Our responses should be personal, worded specifically for each individual.