

Easy As 1-2-3



Colossians 3:18 to 4:18 ¹

It's As Easy As 1-2-3

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Overall Understanding

Colossians 3:18 to 4:18 ²

¹⁸ Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.

Submission is always voluntary. We submit to the Lord from our hearts, and marriage is similar. Nowhere does Paul instruct men to subjugate their wives.

Notice it says to your “own” husband. No other man may dominate another’s wife within the Body of Christ.

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.

In Ephesians, Paul writes to love their wives as Christ loved the church. This is significant sacrificial love.

²⁰ Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.

This is written to children who are still under their parents’ care. Adult children are to honor their parents, but can decide for themselves.

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²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

Fathers are to lovingly care for their children, not goad them along. They should be encouraged, not discouraged.

²² Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.

Bondservants do not exist in the USA culture, so the closest comparison would be employees. Work as if working for the Lord. Be honest and sincere and not phoney.

²³ And whatever you do, do it heartily, as to the Lord and not to men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. ²⁵ But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality.

All of us should do everything wholeheartedly as if the Lord. Even though we might be serving people, we behave as if serving the Lord Himself. God does not hold one person in higher esteem than another. You may be the boss of a business, but in God's eyes, you are the same as those who work for you.

¹ Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.

You may be the boss of a business, but in God's eyes, you are the same as those who work for you.

² Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving;

Many versions say, "watching over it (your prayer) with thanksgiving. One way to continue in prayer concerning something is to simply thank God for the answer that is to come.

³ meanwhile praying also for us, that God would open to us a door for the word, to speak the mystery of Christ, for which I am also in chains, ⁴ that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak.

This is quite lovely. Paul, who taught the disciples how to live, was humble enough to ask for their prayers for success in ministry. Wouldn't God answer his own prayers for success? Yes, and yet he asks them to join with him in agreement concerning this matter.

⁵Walk in wisdom toward those *who are* outside, redeeming the time. ⁶Let your speech always *be* with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

It is important how we behave toward and in the presence of unbelievers, as it is a reflection of our faith. Behavior that might go unnoticed in the life of an unbeliever will be cause for cries of hypocrisy in the life of a believer. We are held to a higher standard by the world.

Be gracious in your speech.

1 Peter 3:15

But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear. 16 having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. 17 For it is better, if it is the will of God, to suffer for doing good than for doing evil.

⁷Tychicus, a beloved brother, faithful minister, and fellow servant in the Lord, will tell you all the news about me. ⁸I am sending him to you for this very purpose, that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts, ⁹with Onesimus, a faithful and beloved brother, who is *one* of you. They will make known to you all things which *are happening* here.

Tychicus was an inmate friend of Paul's from the Asian province who accompanied Paul on his third missionary journey. He is likely the one who delivered this letter and communicated with them about how Paul was doing. Paul considered him:

- a. Beloved brother
- b. Faithful servant
- c. Fellow bond-servant
- d. Able to encourage

Onesimus was the runaway slave of Philemon and most likely accompanied this letter and Tychicus, along with the letter to his master. Paul was sending him back to be reconciled to Philemon as a faithful and beloved brother

Notice how Paul gives them equal status to Tychicus and Onesimus in saying, "They will inform you..."

¹⁰ Aristarchus my fellow prisoner greets you, with Mark the cousin of Barnabas (about whom you received instructions: if he comes to you, welcome him),

Aristarchus was a Jew from Thessalonica. He had traveled with Paul since the riot that occurred in Ephesus on his third missionary journey. He was likely with Paul or at least visited Paul in prison at the time of the writing of this letter. He was a fellow-prisoner

Mark deserted Paul on his first missionary journey, so he refused to take him with him on the second. Barnabas, Mark's cousin, took him under his wing and stopped traveling with Saul because of this sharp argument as to whether Mark should go with them. He wrote the book of Mark. Later, Paul reconciles with John Mark and sees him as someone who is faithful.

Barnabas was John Mark's cousin who was with Paul on his first missionary journey. He is known as a comforter and encourager.

¹¹ and Jesus, who is called Justus.

We don't know much about Jesus who was called Justis, only that he was a Jewish believer whom Paul considered a fellow-worker in the gospel and an encouragement to Paul.

These *are my* only fellow workers for the kingdom of God who are of the circumcision; they have proved to be a comfort to me.

Our form of thinking sees hierarchy, but Paul calls these people "fellow workers" for the kingdom of God. They had comforted Paul.

¹² Epaphras, who is *one* of you, a bondservant of Christ, greets you, always laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God. ¹³ For I bear him witness that he has a great zeal for you, and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

Epaphras was most likely a convert from Paul's ministry and a fellow prisoner. He most likely is the one who started the church in his hometown of Colosse. He writes of him:

- a. Our dear fellow servant
- b. Faithful minister of Christ on behalf of the Colossians
- c. Declared to us your love in the Spirit

- d. “He is one of you” means that he was from Colosse, likely a Gentile.
- e. Bondservant of Christ
- f. Laboring fervently for you in prayers, that you may stand perfect and complete in all the will of God
- g. He has a great zeal for you and those who are in Laodicea, and those in Hierapolis.

Epaphras prayed for the Colossian believers. The purpose of praying for others is so that they will stand perfect, complete, and fully assured in all the will of God.

⁴ Luke the beloved physician and Demas greet you.

Luke accompanied Paul on his missionary journeys. He was therefore an eyewitness to what he wrote about in the book of Acts. He also wrote the Gospel of Luke.

Demas was with Paul at this time, but would later abandon his ministry with Paul (2 Tim. 4:9).

¹⁵ Greet the brethren who are in Laodicea, and Nymphas and the church that is in his (her) house.

Nympha was a woman, not a man (some translations, including this one, read “Nymphas and the church that is in his house”). There might have been a deliberate attempt by translators in the church to change female leaders’ names to male.

Another example was Junias, who was actually Junia, a woman referred to as an apostle (Romans 16:7)!

The fact that the church was in Nympha’s house is curious. Obviously, she was the owner of the house. It might have also meant that she was an overseer/pastor of those who met there. Or, it is possible that the believers met in her house because it was larger and could accommodate more people?

¹⁶ Now when this epistle is read among you, see that it is read also in the church of the Laodiceans, and that you likewise read the *epistle* from Laodicea.

This is a great passage to show that copies of Paul's letters were passed between churches

¹⁷And say to Archippus, "Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it."

Archippus was probably the son of Philemon or maybe an elder of the Colossian church. The letter to Philemon was addressed to him, along with others, in which Paul referred to him as "our fellow soldier."

Apparently, God had given a specific ministry to Archippus. Paul encourages him to fulfill it.

¹⁸This salutation by my own hand—Paul. Remember my chains. Grace *be* with you. Amen.

Paul began the letter with, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father," and he ends it with, "Grace be with you."

Even though the grace of God is upon all of His children, it is appropriate to speak this blessing upon each other.