

Expanded Report: Instructions for Christian Households (Colossians 3:18-4:1)

Prologue: The Christian Household as a Picture of Christ's Love

As the family gathered around the table for their evening study, Ryan opened the Bible to Colossians 3:18-4:1. In this passage, Paul offers clear, practical instructions on how to live out Christian values within the household, encouraging families to reflect Christ's love, humility, and grace in their relationships. He addresses the roles of wives, husbands, children, fathers, servants, and masters, showing how each relationship is meant to reflect Christ's teachings.

"Tonight, we'll be talking about how our relationship with Christ should influence how we treat each other in the home," Ryan said. "Paul gives us practical guidance on how to live together in unity, love, and respect."

Ariel, always interested in learning, asked, "So, Paul is saying that the way we treat each other at home is important to God?"

"Yes," Ryan nodded. "Paul emphasizes that love, respect, and mutual care in our homes are essential. When we live in harmony with Christ's love, we show the world what it means to follow Him."

Alice, hugging Mr. Fluffernutter, chimed in, "So we should love each other at home, just like Jesus loves us?"

"That's right, Alice," Yaya said with a smile. "When we follow Jesus' example, our homes become places of love, peace, and encouragement."

Key Teachings: Guidance for Christian Households

1. Wives: Submit to Husbands as Fitting in the Lord

Colossians 3:18

"Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as it is fit in the Lord."

- **Submission as Reflecting Christ's Order:**

Ryan explained, "Paul's instruction for wives to submit to their husbands is not about inequality or inferiority. It's about recognizing the God-ordained order in marriage, where the husband is called to lead and the wife is called to support and respect his leadership. This submission should reflect the relationship between Christ and the Church."

Ariel asked, "Does this mean that wives have to do whatever their husbands say, even if they don't agree?"

"No," Ryan clarified. "Submission doesn't mean being controlled. It means respecting and supporting the leadership of the husband as a partner in marriage, just as Christ honored the Father's will."

- **Christ as the Model for Submission:**

Yaya added, “The submission Paul speaks of reflects the humility of Christ. Jesus willingly submitted to the Father’s plan, even though He was equal with God. Wives are called to model this humility and trust in God’s design for marriage.”

2. Husbands: Love and Do Not Be Harsh Toward Wives

Colossians 3:19

“Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them.”

- **Love as Christ Loves the Church:**

Ryan emphasized, “Husbands are commanded to love their wives sacrificially, just as Christ loves the Church. This love is unconditional, kind, and selfless. Paul warns husbands not to be harsh or resentful, but to treat their wives with gentleness and care.”

Ariel asked, “What does it mean to love like Christ?”

“Loving like Christ means putting your wife’s needs above your own, being patient, kind, and forgiving,” Ryan explained. “Christ’s love is gentle, compassionate, and never harsh, and that’s the model for husbands.”

- **Guarding Against Bitterness:**

Yaya added, “Paul warns against bitterness, which can arise from unmet expectations or unresolved conflict. Husbands are to show grace and understanding, allowing love and patience to guide their actions.”

3. Children: Obey Parents in Everything

Colossians 3:20

“Children, obey your parents in all things: for this is well pleasing unto the Lord.”

- **Obedience as Honor to God:**

Ryan explained, “Paul instructs children to obey their parents because it pleases God. Obedience to parents is part of honoring God’s authority and trusting that He works through parents to guide and protect us.”

Ariel asked, “So, when we obey our parents, we’re showing respect to God?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Obedience is a way to show that we trust God’s plan and are willing to follow the guidance He provides through our parents.”

- **Obedience with a Right Heart:**

Yaya added, “Obeying is not just about doing what we’re told, but doing it with a loving heart and a spirit of cooperation. God honors children who obey willingly, not grudgingly.”

4. Fathers: Do Not Provoke Children, Lest They Become Discouraged

Colossians 3:21

“Fathers, provoke not your children to anger, lest they be discouraged.”

- **Gentle and Encouraging Fatherhood:**

Ryan explained, “Paul cautions fathers not to provoke their children to anger. This means not being overly harsh, critical, or demanding. Fathers are to lead their children with understanding, patience, and encouragement.”

Ariel asked, “What does it mean to provoke children to anger?”

“It means treating children unfairly or with anger, which can lead to frustration and discouragement,” Ryan said. “Instead, fathers are called to help their children grow in confidence and respect.”

- **Building Up, Not Breaking Down:**

Yaya added, “The goal is to nurture and encourage. Fathers are called to help their children grow into strong, confident, and loving people by providing guidance and affection.”

5. Servants: Serve Wholeheartedly, as Unto the Lord

Colossians 3:22-24

“Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eye service, as men pleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God; And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.”

- **Serving Wholeheartedly with Integrity:**

Ryan emphasized, “Paul encourages servants to obey their masters, but he also teaches that their service should be done wholeheartedly and sincerely, as though they are serving the Lord Himself. This means that everything we do, whether at home, work, or school, should be done with excellence and integrity.”

Ariel asked, “So, when we do chores or homework, we should do it as if we are doing it for God?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “When we work with this mindset, it changes how we approach everything, knowing that we are ultimately serving God, not just people.”

- **Living for God’s Glory:**

Yaya added, “Paul teaches that our work is not just for human approval. It is done for God’s glory, and He sees all of our efforts, rewarding them according to His will.”

6. Masters: Treat Servants Justly and Fairly

Colossians 4:1

“Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.”

- **Fair and Just Treatment of Others:**

Ryan explained, “Paul tells masters to treat their servants fairly, remembering that they too have a Master in heaven. Whether in authority or submission, God holds everyone accountable for how we treat others, and we should treat people with justice, fairness, and respect.”

Ariel asked, “So, if we are in charge, we should always be fair and kind to those who work for us?”

“Yes,” Ryan said. “Leaders are called to treat those under their authority with fairness and respect, remembering that we all answer to God.”

- **Living with a Heavenly Perspective:**

Yaya added, “This passage reminds us that God sees all that we do. Whether we are serving or leading, we are ultimately serving Him, and we will be judged according to how we treat others.”

7. The Key Teaching: Christlike Love, Unity, and Respect in the Household

Key Teaching:

The key teaching in this passage is that Christ’s love and wisdom should guide every relationship in the household. Whether it’s the relationship between husbands and wives, parents and children, or masters and servants, the principles of love, respect, and mutual submission should reign. When each family member reflects Christ’s character—submitting to one another in love, serving one another with humility, and encouraging one another in grace—the family becomes a picture of the unity and love that exists in Christ.

Ryan summarized, “Paul is showing us that our homes should be a reflection of Christ’s love and unity. Whether we are leading or serving, obeying or encouraging, we should always do it in a way that honors God and reflects the way Christ loves us.”

Practical Applications: Living Out Christlike Relationships in the Household

The family discussed how they could apply these instructions in their own home:

1. **Wives and Husbands in Mutual Respect:**

Ariel suggested, “I can show respect to my parents by listening and supporting them, and my parents can show love and patience toward each other, just like Jesus does.”

Alice added, “I can help and love my brother, even when we argue, just like Jesus forgives us.”

2. Children Obeying with a Right Heart:

“We can obey with a happy heart, knowing it pleases God,” Ryan said. **Children Obeying with a Right Heart:**

“We can obey with a happy heart, knowing it pleases God,” Ryan said. “When we respect our parents, we’re showing God that we trust His plan for us.”

Ariel nodded thoughtfully. “So, even when I don’t always want to do what I’m asked, I can remember that it’s God’s way of helping me grow and learn?”

“Exactly,” Ryan smiled. “Obedience isn’t just about doing what we’re told; it’s about choosing to follow God’s will with a willing heart, even when it’s hard. And when we obey with a good attitude, it honors God.”

Yaya added, “Remember, children, that your parents are there to guide you in love. When you obey them, you’re also honoring the role God has given them as your leaders.”

Alice looked up from her stuffed bunny. “Does that mean when I help pick up my toys without being asked, I’m making God happy?”

Ryan chuckled, “Yes, Alice, that’s exactly right! God loves it when we choose to do what’s right, even without being told, because it shows we’re learning to love and serve Him.”

Ariel smiled at Alice, “I think I can do that more, too—obeying with a happy heart, even when it’s hard. It’s like what Jesus did when He obeyed God, even though it wasn’t easy.”

“Absolutely,” Ryan said. “When we look to Jesus as our example, we can see how He obeyed the Father perfectly—even to the point of the cross. And because of His obedience, we are forgiven and can live freely in Him. So, every time you obey, you’re following in Jesus’ footsteps.”

Serving Wholeheartedly:

Yaya turned to the family. “Now, what about serving? What does it look like for us to serve wholeheartedly, whether at home or out in the world?”

Ryan said, “Paul tells us that whatever we do, we should do it for the Lord. That means we don’t just serve when someone’s watching or when it’s convenient. We serve with all our heart, even in the little things—like doing chores or helping someone without being asked.”

Ariel thought about that. “So, when I do the dishes or clean my room, I should do it like I’m doing it for God, not just to avoid a consequence?”

“Exactly,” Ryan said. “When we serve in this way, it changes how we approach tasks. It’s not about just finishing quickly to get it over with; it’s about honoring God in everything we do. It’s doing the task with a cheerful attitude, even if no one notices.”

Yaya added, “And we do this not to earn praise or rewards from people, but to honor God with our actions. Even when no one is looking, God sees our hearts.”

Alice raised her hand, “So, when I help mommy in the kitchen or share my toys with Mr. Fluffernutter, I’m showing God I love Him?”

“Yes, Alice!” Yaya smiled. “Exactly. Every time you serve others, no matter how big or small the task, you’re showing love for God by putting others’ needs before your own.”

Living for God’s Glory:

Ryan continued, “When we live for God’s glory, it changes how we think about everything. We don’t live for applause or recognition; we live to honor Him.”

Ariel asked, “How do we make sure everything we do is for God’s glory?”

“That’s a great question, Ariel,” Ryan said. “Every time we do something—whether it’s cleaning our room, doing homework, or helping someone—we can ask ourselves, ‘Am I doing this to make God happy?’ When we keep God’s glory in mind, it helps us do our best in everything.”

Yaya smiled, “Even the smallest tasks can be done for God’s glory. Whether we’re working hard or taking care of others, when we do it with love and a heart for God, it becomes an act of worship.”

The Family’s Commitment to Living in Christlike Love:

Ryan looked around the room, “Let’s take a moment to reflect on how we can live out these truths in our own home. How can we make our home a place where love, respect, and service are reflected in everything we do?”

Ariel raised her hand thoughtfully. “I can start by being more patient with my little sister when she wants to play with my toys. I can share them without getting upset.”

Alice nodded, “I’ll try to pick up my toys without being told, and I’ll say please and thank you more often, like mommy and daddy teach me.”

Yaya added, “I think we can all help each other remember to serve with a joyful heart. It’s easy to forget when we get busy or distracted, but if we encourage each other, we’ll be better at putting Christ’s love into action.”

Ryan smiled at everyone. “Great ideas! Let’s all work together to create an atmosphere of love and grace in our home, one where we reflect Christ’s character in every part of our lives. Whether it’s in the way we serve each other, the way we show respect, or the way we forgive, let’s make sure everything we do honors God.”

Takeaway: Living Out Christlike Relationships in the Household

As the family reflected, Yaya shared a personal story from her own life. “There was a time when I was frustrated with a situation, and I was tempted to be harsh with my children. But I remembered that my

words and actions could either build them up or tear them down. So, I took a deep breath, prayed for God's help, and chose to respond with kindness and patience instead. And it made all the difference."

Ryan nodded in agreement. "That's the power of living in Christ's love. It changes our reactions and transforms our hearts. And as we live this out at home, we are a testimony of Christ's love to the world."

Ariel smiled, "So, when we show love and respect at home, we're showing everyone what it looks like to follow Jesus?"

"Yes," Ryan said, "and that's the goal—to reflect Christ in everything we do, especially in our relationships with each other."

Key Points Summary

1. Obeying with a Right Heart:

- Children are called to obey their parents, not just out of duty, but with a loving, willing heart, trusting God's guidance through their parents.

2. Serving Wholeheartedly:

- Every task, whether big or small, is an opportunity to serve God and others with excellence, knowing that our work is for His glory.

3. Living for God's Glory:

- All actions—at home, at school, or at work—should be done to honor God, reflecting Christ's love and humility in everything we do.

4. Creating a Christlike Home:

- As families, we are called to reflect Christ's love in our relationships, encouraging each other, serving one another, and living in unity and grace.
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Key Verse:

"And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him." (Colossians 3:17)

This passage teaches that everything we do—whether in our actions, words, or attitudes—should be done with a heart that honors Christ. Our home should reflect Christ's love and unity, and in all we do, we should aim to please Him and serve others with a joyful heart.