



fellowship
Love God. Love People. Develop Disciples.

Instead of disconnecting from culture, Christians are commanded to be IMPACTING CULTURE. This has happened before & today we will see how it can happen again, as followers of Jesus choose to serve God's purpose with their DASH.

* Check out CD's or podcast via our app to hear more.

Slaves?

Colossians 3:22 (NET)

²² **Slaves**, obey your earthly masters in every respect, not only when they are watching — like those who are strictly people-pleasers — but with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord.

The first part of this text is quite strange to the ears of Americans who have never known slavery other than from a historical textbook. The **ancient slaves** served in many capacities - from the salt mines (with short life expectancy), to those trusted to help run businesses & raise children.¹

This same Greek word for **slaves** (*doulos*) is used 126 times in the NT, often used of believers who are slaves/servants of Jesus.

There are at least 3 major differences to consider between ancient Greco-Roman slavery & slavery in America:

- 1) Slavery in the Roman Empire consisted of many different ethnicities, captured in war.
- 2) Some chose to sell themselves into slavery for food, housing, or to pay off a debt - as an indentured servant.² Slaves in the Greco-Roman world received a small amount of money as an inheritance, and could eventually be used to buy their freedom.³
- 3) While many slaves were considered property and brutally mistreated, others were considered to be persons with rights & privileges. Some slaves were allowed to marry.

☀ **Ben Witherington** *“By Paul’s day, slaves could refuse to commit a crime for their master (see Seneca, De Beneficiis 3.20), and they could also flee to a third party if mistreated*

¹ Douglas J. Moo, *The Letters to the Colossians and to Philemon*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 2008), 371.

² Ibid.

³ Ben Witherington III, *The Letters to Philemon, the Colossians, and the Ephesians : A Socio-Rhetorical Commentary on the Captivity Epistles* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2007), 194.

and have the third party adjudicate the matter.”⁴ In other words, slaves could legally protect themselves from being mistreated.

Why did Paul tell slaves to **obey your earthly masters in every respect** instead of instead of running for freedom? Paul didn't have a powerful army nor political authority to issue a Christian emancipation proclamation.

☀ **Kent Hughes** writes: "Ancient historians estimate that there were some 60,000,000 slaves in the Roman Empire, or about one-half the population."⁵

Christians are to work diligently & treat people fairly.

Slaves: Work Diligently

Colossians 3:22-24 (NET)

²² **Slaves, obey your earthly masters** in every respect, not only when they are watching—like those who are strictly people-pleasers—but **with a sincere heart, fearing the Lord**. ²³ Whatever you are doing, **work at it with enthusiasm, as to the Lord** and not for people,²⁴ because you know that you will receive your inheritance from the Lord as the reward. Serve the Lord Christ.

Imagine how the Christian slave who follows Paul's commands might impact his non-Christian master. It might lead the master to ask the question, "*What's different about you?*"

OUR ACTIONS & ATTITUDES
REVEAL
WHO WE'RE LIVING FOR

This applies to you too...**whatever you doing, work at it with enthusiasm, as to the Lord.**

The follower of Jesus lives for HIM and everyday we give him our best, **because you know that you will receive your inheritance from the Lord as the reward.**

Question: Can you lay your head down on the pillow & say, "*Lord, I gave YOU my best today*"?

Christians aren't exempt from discipline if we don't do what's right.

Colossians 3:25

²⁵ For the one who does wrong will be repaid for his wrong, and there are no exceptions.

Being a Christian doesn't mean we won't be mistreated. Jesus warned the apostles of that and they warned their disciples of that. Being a Christian who cuts corners with our job certainly doesn't mean God will protect us.

Masters: Treat Fairly

Colossians 3:22-4:1 (NET)

¹ Masters, **treat your slaves with justice and fairness**, because you know that you also have a master in heaven.

Christian **masters** are held accountable for how they treat those under their authority. The passage we are studying contains 4 references to Jesus as *kurios* (Greek) translated 3 times as **Lord** (3:22-24) & 1 as **Master** (4:1). The same word is used 2 times for **earthly masters**

⁴ Ibid., 189–190.

⁵ R. Kent Hughes, *Colossians and Philemon: The Supremacy of Christ, Preaching the Word* (Westchester, IL: Crossway Books, 1989), 128–129.

(3:22 & 4:1). So both the **earthly masters & slaves** recognize that **Jesus is the ultimate master over both!** He is the LORD of Lords or MASTER or masters.

The ancient application for slaves & masters should certainly be applied for Employees & Employers in our day. **Employees should work diligently & employers should treat employees fairly** because...

BIG TRUTH: Our Actions & Attitudes reveal who we're living for.

MISSION STATEMENT

Hodgdon Powder Company operates following Biblical principles to honor God. Our mission is to provide quality products and services in a manner which enhances the lives of our employees, families, customers, suppliers, and our communities. In doing so, we will deal with integrity and honesty, reflecting that people are more important than dollars and that our purpose is to bring credit to our Lord Jesus Christ.

What if every Christian in our culture had this kind of attitude? What if every Christian LIVED these words?

Gospel to the Culture

Colossians 4:2-6 (NET)

² Be devoted to prayer, keeping alert in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time pray for us too, that God may open a door for the message [*logos* - word] so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. ⁴ Pray that I may make it known as I should. ⁵ **Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders**, making the most of the opportunities. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you should answer everyone.

Believers are to be prayerful & thankful (v2); ever alert when God **opens a door** to share **the message** of Jesus with **outsiders** (non-Christians).

Believers, we are to **make the most of the opportunities** to communicate the good news of Jesus to our lost culture - family, friends, & acquaintances.

Our **speech** is to be **gracious, seasoned with salt** (kind & makes a difference like salt flavors food).

Peter uses similar language when he writes:

1 Peter 3:15 (ESV)

but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, **always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you**; yet do it with gentleness and respect,

Why would someone ASK you WHY you do WHAT you do in the first place?

Our Actions & Attitudes reveal who we're living for.



1. **Pray for opportunity & clarity.** PRAY that God will provide the opportunity to share about Jesus & clarity to say what you need to say.
2. **Invest & Invite.** Serve simply. Share why. Invite them to Fellowship.
Super Sunday Tailgate Party 9am-Noon

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These open-ended questions are designed to help you LIVE what you LEARN with your Family, Friends, or Small Group.

1. **Read Col. 3:22-4:1.** Without using names, share about a time when a Christian employer or employee lived this passage out OR a time when they didn't. What was the result?
2. How might giving our best daily, not just for our boss or clients, but for Jesus, change our actions, attitudes, & sense of purpose?
3. **Read Col. 4:2-6.** What stands out to you from this passage? Which of these practices do you need to grow in to better prepare to share your faith in Jesus with others?
4. Today's **BIG TRUTH: Our actions & attitudes reveal who we're living for.** What are some actions & attitudes that cause people to ask for the hope Christians have, versus those actions & attitudes that cause people to distance themselves from Christians?
5. **FEET2FAITH CHALLENGES.**
 - **Pray for opportunity & clarity.** This is what Paul asked the Colossians to pray for. Do you ever pray this way? If not, why not? If so, how has God answered?
 - **Invest & Invite.** Who are you investing in right now? Who are you planning to invite to church (remember the Super Sunday Tailgate Party!)?
6. Share prayer thanks & needs. Then pray for one another.