

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

Phil O. Waldo  
*Lead Pastor*



1224 Hancock Drive  
Boone, Iowa 50036

Phone: 515 432-3329

Website: [www.booneopenbible.com](http://www.booneopenbible.com)

E-mail: [office@booneopenbible.com](mailto:office@booneopenbible.com)  
[pastor@booneopenbible.com](mailto:pastor@booneopenbible.com)

## SERMON TITLE

**Living New Where It Matters Most**

## SERIES

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## KEY SCRIPTURE

**Colossians 3:18-4:1**

## SYNOPSIS

Jesus doesn't just change your heart; He changes how you treat the people closest to you.

## HIGHLIGHTS



## ☞ Living New Where It Matters Most

### Colossians 3:18–4:1

Over the last few weeks, we've been walking through Colossians and talking about what it means to have a fresh start in Christ. We've seen that in Jesus, we are already made new. Our old life has died, we've been raised with Him and given a new identity.

Last week, we focused especially on what that looks like on the inside, setting our minds on things above, putting *off* the old self, putting *on* the new self, and letting Christ rule in everything. In other words, we talked about heart change, mind change, and character change.

But that naturally leads to an important question: What does that look like in real life? What does it look like at home, in marriage, with our kids, and at work? Because it's one thing to feel close to God during worship. It's another thing to live like Jesus on Thursday afternoon when you're tired, stressed, and dealing with difficult people. That's exactly where Paul takes us next.

Beginning in Colossians 3:18, Paul moves from inner transformation to everyday relationships. He shows us what new life in Christ looks like where it matters most—not in theory, not just in church, but in real life.

Here is the central idea of this passage: **when Christ gives you a new life, He also gives you a new way to love, lead, serve, and work. Jesus doesn't just change your heart; He changes how you treat the people closest to you.** If your faith hasn't reached your home and your workplace, then it hasn't reached far enough yet.

### ☞ Christ Shapes Marriage *Colossians 3:18–19*

Paul begins with marriage. He writes, **"Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them."**

As soon as many of us hear that word "submit," we feel tension. Some of you tensed up just now. Some looked sideways at your spouse. And a few of you elbowed them. I see you. The truth is we bring baggage into this verse. We think about abuse, control, inequality, or painful experiences we've seen or lived through. That's why it's important to understand what Paul is—and is not—saying.

Notice first the phrase, "in the Lord." This is not submission to sin, manipulation, or abuse. It is willing, Christ-centered partnership under the authority of Jesus. And, biblical submission is not about inferiority. It is about order, trust, and honoring God within the relationship.



Then notice what Paul says to husbands. He doesn't tell them to dominate, control, or demand. He tells them to love. **"Husbands, love your wives and do not be harsh with them."** This is sacrificial love. It is self-giving, cross-shaped love that puts her needs before your own. It listens, protects, and serves.

When Paul says, "do not be harsh," he is warning against bitterness, coldness, and cruelty. He is saying, "Don't wound her with your words. Don't punish her with silence. Don't intimidate her with physical strength." Instead, reflect the gentle love of Christ.

☞ Paul is painting a picture of marriage shaped by Jesus: **a wife who honors and trusts, and a husband who sacrifices and cherishes.** This is not about power. It is about reflecting the gospel. **In fact, marriage becomes a living picture of Christ's love for His church,** and that only works when both husband and wife are first submitted to Him.

Let's talk about these dynamics a bit more. Biblical *submission* is not about weakness. It's about strength under control. And biblical *leadership* is not about a power-trip. It's about sacrifice. God calls wives to trust a man who is dying to himself. And He calls husbands to become the kind of man worthy of that trust. I've said before that wives thrive on love and husbands on respect. So, be *lovable* and be *respectable*.

Husbands and wives are called to love each other in the way that most deeply meets the other's God-given needs. When this dynamic is healthy, the wife feels secure, valued, and safe, and the ☞ husband feels respected, encouraged, and supported. Rather than competition or control, **the relationship is marked by cooperation, humility, and shared devotion to Christ.**

Marriage can be pictured like a tandem bicycle, where two people ride together on one frame toward one destination. The husband sits in the front seat, responsible for steering, setting direction, watching for danger, and bearing accountability for where the bike goes. If he steers carelessly or selfishly, both riders suffer. The wife sits in the back seat, contributing strength, endurance, and support, trusting the direction while also communicating concerns when needed. If she refuses to pedal, progress slows. If she constantly fights the steering, balance is lost. For the bike to move forward smoothly, both must work together with trust and cooperation. They share the same mission, the same vulnerability, and the same dependence on one another. And ultimately, Christ is the road they travel, the map that guides them, and the destination they are seeking. Christ shapes your marriage.

☞ **Christ Shapes Parenting**      *Colossians 3:20–21*

☞ Next, Paul turns to family life. He writes, **"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."** Now, parents, please resist the urge to screenshot that verse and post it on your kid's door. That's probably not the application Paul had in mind. But, with this simple sentence, Paul reminds us that obedience is not merely about household order or parental



convenience. It is first and foremost an act of worship. When children obey their parents with a sincere heart, they are not just responding to mom and dad—they are responding to God Himself.

Obedience trains the heart long before it shapes behavior. It teaches children humility by reminding them that they are not the center of the universe. It teaches trust by calling them to rely on wisdom that is greater than their own. It teaches respect by helping them honor authority, even when it is inconvenient. In a culture that often celebrates independence and self-expression above all else, Scripture teaches that **learning to obey is one of God's primary tools for forming godly character**. Children who learn to listen, respond, and submit in love are being prepared to one day listen to God, follow His Word, and walk faithfully with Him.

But Paul doesn't stop there. He immediately speaks to parents, especially fathers, as the head of the household. **"Fathers, do not embitter your children, or they will become discouraged."** In other words, don't crush their spirit. Don't parent with constant criticism. Don't lead with anger. Don't withhold affection. Don't make your love feel conditional on performance. When children grow up feeling like they can never measure up, they don't become strong; they become discouraged and lose heart.

**Christian parenting is not about control. It is about formation. It is about shaping hearts, not just managing behavior.** And, parents are called to reflect the heart of God—a Father who is firm yet gentle, who corrects yet encourages, who disciplines yet never abandons.

This kind of parenting requires humility. None of us does this perfectly. Every parent speaks too harshly at times, reacts too quickly, or misses important moments. That is why our children don't need perfect parents. They need parents who are willing to say, "I was wrong," "Please forgive me," and "I need God's grace too." When children see their parents confess sin and seek forgiveness, they learn what the gospel looks like in real life. Through obedience and instruction, correction and compassion, discipline and grace, families become small training grounds for life with Christ. Christ shapes families.

**Christ Shapes Our Work**      *Colossians 3:22–4:1*

Paul then moves to the workplace. In his day, he speaks to slaves and masters. In our context, this applies to employees and employers, workers and leaders. He says, **"Obey... not only when their eye is on you... but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord."** In other words, don't work hard only when someone is watching. Don't do the minimum. Don't focus on image management. Work with integrity and excellence, because ultimately, you are not working for people.

Verse 23 says, **"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters."** This is life-changing. **Your real boss is Jesus.** Now, that doesn't mean



you go into your next performance review and say 'Well, Jesus seemed fine with how I handled that.' But it does mean that while your paycheck may come from your employer, your purpose comes from Christ. That means your work matters. Whether you are in an office, a classroom, a hospital, a shop, a home, or in retirement, **your work becomes worship when it is done for Him.** Paul says, **"It is the Lord Christ you are serving."** That changes how you handle pressure, frustration, disappointment, and even unfairness. You keep working faithfully because you are serving Him.

☞ Then Paul speaks to those in leadership: **"Masters, provide what is right and fair." Leaders are reminded that they also answer to God.** Authority in God's kingdom is never about exploitation. It is about stewardship. It is about **using influence to bless, protect, and serve.**

Instead of asking, "How can these people help me succeed?" they ask, "How can I help these people flourish?" Instead of leading with fear and pressure, they lead with trust and by example. When leaders live this way, they reflect the character of Christ. Jesus washed feet, welcomed the overlooked, and laid down His life. He showed that the highest form of leadership is sacrificial love. Christian leadership follows that same pattern: strong but humble, decisive but gentle, confident but compassionate. Whether you're the employee or the boss, Christ shapes your work.

Finally, throughout this entire passage, Paul keeps pointing us back to the same truth. He repeatedly mentions "the Lord." "In the Lord. Pleasing the Lord. From the Lord. The Lord Christ. Master in heaven."

Marriage, parenting, work, and leadership are all placed under one authority: Jesus. He is not just Lord of Sunday. He is Lord of Monday through Saturday, too. Which means Jesus was in the car with you on the way here this morning. Some of you had a very peaceful, worshipful drive. And some of you might need to apologize to your family before we continue. Everything comes under the authority of Christ. He is Lord of your home, your job, your schedule, and your relationships. That is what it means to **live new where it matters most.**

Think about what happens when someone puts on a team jersey or company uniform. When you wear that, you represent more than yourself. Your words, your attitude, and your behavior reflect on the name on your chest. If you act poorly, people don't just think badly of you; they think badly of the ones you represent. Paul is reminding us that we are wearing Christ's name now. We belong to Him. Our lives represent Him. So, let your character reflect who you belong to.



Now, let's make this practical. **Where do you need a fresh start in your relationships?** Is it in your marriage, your parenting, your workplace, or your leadership? Ask God to show you honestly and help you align with his purpose for you.

**Where have you been compartmentalizing your faith?** Maybe Jesus has your Sundays but not your Mondays. Maybe He has your worship but not your work. Invite Him into *every* part of your life.

**Who do you need to reflect Christ to this week?** Who needs patience, grace, kindness, or integrity from you? Remember, **you may be the clearest picture of Jesus that person ever sees.**

Let's come back to where we started in this series. In Christ, you have a fresh start. You are forgiven. You are raised. You are loved. You are new. That is your identity. But that identity is meant to shape your influence. It is meant to show up in how you speak to your spouse, how you guide your children, how you treat your coworkers, how you do your job, and how you lead others.

Jesus did not save you only to prepare you for heaven. He saved you to transform your life right now. So, **don't settle for a faith that stays in church. Let it reach your home. Let it reach your workplace. Let it reach your relationships.** That is living new where it matters most.

And the good news is that you are not doing this alone. The same Jesus who gave you new life is walking with you. He is patient, faithful, and at work in you. So trust Him. Follow Him. **Let Him shape every part of your life, so that you can live new where it matters most.**