

Instructions To Christian Masters

COL 4:1 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master [Lord] in heaven.

- Chapter 4:1 belongs to Paul's discussion of slaves found in Colossians 3:22-25.
 - The books of the New Testament and Old Testament were divided into chapters and verses by man except for the book of Psalms that was originally divided into chapters. (Acts 13:33).
1. "Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness" - The masters address here were Christian masters who Paul instructs how they must treat their slaves if they wish to stand approved by their Master.
 - a. "Masters" is the plural of "kurios" [**koo** ree ahs] meaning "lord, master," and used here in the sense of "master."
 - b. Greek has "the justice (just]" and "the equality (equitable)."
 - 1) "Justice" comes from "dikaios" [**dee** ki ahs] and means "just, righteous, fair."
 - 2) "Fairness" is from "isotes" [ee **sah** tays] meaning "equality, equal proportion, fairness, equity, what is equitable."
 - c. They were not to mistreat their slaves as heathen masters most often did.
 - 1) "do what is right and fair" - TCNT
 - 2) "just and equitable treatment" - Knox
 - 3) "deal rightly and justly with your bondsmen"
 - d. On several occasions Paul addressed Christian masters. (1 Tim. 6:2; Eph. 6:9). See Philemon who was the master of the runaway slave Onesimus. (Phile. 1:1, 10, 15).
- 1TI 6:2 And let those who have believers as their masters not be disrespectful to them because they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more, because those who partake of the benefit are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles.
- EPH 6:9 And, masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.
- PHM 1:1 Paul, a prisoner of Christ Jesus, and Timothy our brother, to Philemon our beloved brother and fellow worker,
PHM 1:10 I appeal to you for my child, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, Onesimus,
PHM 1:15 For perhaps he was for this reason parted from you for a while, that you should have him back forever,
2. "knowing that you too have a Master in heaven" - It was vital that these masters remember they had a "Master in heaven" who would hold them responsible for their conduct.

- a. Earthly masters should have the same consideration for their slaves as they desired to receive from their heavenly Master - Jesus Christ.
- b. It was legal to have slaves and slaves had no legal protection. Masters could do as they pleased to their slaves.
- c. This did not mean masters did not have accountability to God for the way they treated their slaves.
- d. They must treat their slaves with “justice and fairness.” This applied to all their slaves either believers or unbelievers.
- e. Some of their slaves were brothers and sisters in Christ.
- f. They were not to be threatening and overbearing with their slaves. (Eph. 6:9).

EPH 6:9 And, masters, do the same things to them, **and give up threatening**, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

- 1) It was the practice of most masters to constantly threaten their slaves with punishment, with separation from family, extra labor, death, etc.
- 2) The Egyptians treated their Hebrew slaves very harshly and with great cruelty. (Exod. 1:9-16; 5:1-19).
- 3) Most masters were overbearing with their slaves making life excessively hard and bitter for them.

Devotion To Prayer And Thanksgiving

COL 4:2 Devote yourselves to prayer, keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving;

1. Devote yourselves to prayer” - The believers are commanded to “devote” themselves “to prayer.”
 - a. Paul had given similar instructions elsewhere. (Rom. 12:12; Eph. 6:18).
 - b. The ASV renders this “continue steadfastly in.” The Greek has “proskartereo” [prahs kahr teh **reh** oh] meaning “to intently engage in, to constantly upon” and can be rendered “devote, continue, persevere.”
 - c. They were to persevere in prayer, and never grow weary in their prayer life.
 - d. God intends for us to devote ourselves to prayer.
 - 1) Prayer is not something that we do once in a while or when the mood strikes us.
 - 2) It is not something we do as a last resort, but it is the most powerful and important thing we can do.
 - e. Jesus taught we must be persistent in our prayers. (Lk. 11:5-10; 18:1).
2. “keeping alert in it with an attitude of thanksgiving” - Lit. “keeping alert [attentive] in it in thanksgiving”
 - a. The word “alert” comes from “gregoreo” [gray gah **reh** oh] rendered “watch” in the KJV.
 - b. It means “to be awake, to watch, be attentive, vigilant.”
 - c. Their prayers should always include “thanksgiving.” (Phil. 4:6; 1 Thess. 5:18).

PHI 4:6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

1TH 5:18 in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

- 1) In fact their prayers should be filled with “thanksgiving.”
- 2) Christians have so many reasons to be thankful.
- 3) Having an attitude of thanksgiving does not mean that everything is right in one’s life.

COL 4:3 praying at the same time for us as well, that God may open up to us a door [of opportunity] for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ, for which I have also been imprisoned;

1. “praying at the same time for us as well” - Paul urges them to remember him and those with him in their prayers.
2. “ that God may open up to us a door for the word” - “Door” is reference to a door of opportunity for the “word” [the gospel].
 - a. There are times when a door of opportunity opens for the gospel to be proclaimed.
 - 1) Ephesus - 1 Cor. 16:9

1CO 16:9 for a wide door for effective service has opened to me, and there are many adversaries.

- 2) Troas - 2 Cor. 2:12

2CO 2:12 Now when I came to Troas for the gospel of Christ and when a door was opened for me in the Lord,

- 3) Roman prison - Acts 28:30, 31

ACT 28:30 And he stayed two full years in his own rented quarters, and was welcoming all who came to him,
ACT 28:31 preaching the kingdom of God, and teaching concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with all openness, unhindered.

- b. It is vital that we take advantage of these opportunities while the door is open because open doors can also be shut.
 3. “so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ” - “The mystery of Christ” refers to the gospel and the fact that both Jews and Gentiles can be united in Christ’s body.
 4. “for which I have also been imprisoned” - Paul had been imprisoned because he proclaimed the gospel of Christ.
 - a. He was in prison in Rome. This was his 1st Roman imprisonment. - A.D. 60-62.
 - b. He was chained to a Roman soldier 24 hours a day. (Acts 28:16, 20).

ACT 28:16 And when we entered Rome, Paul was allowed to stay by himself, with the soldier who was guarding him.

ACT 28:20 "For this reason therefore, I requested to see you and to speak with you, for I am wearing this chain for the sake of the hope of Israel."

COL 4:4 in order that I may make it clear in the way I ought [is necessary] to speak.

1. “Manifest” found in KJV and ASV comes from “phaneroo” [fah neh **rah** oh] meaning to “declare, make known, manifest, to bring to light.”
2. They should pray that Paul would make known the whole council or purpose of God. (Acts 20:27).

ACT 20:27 "For I did not shrink from declaring to you the whole purpose of God.

- a. NIV has “the whole will of God.”
 - b. The Greek is “boule” [boo **lay**] - “council, purpose, decree.”
3. They should also pray that Paul would clearly [plainly] set forth [make known] the message of truth, and men would hear, understand and obey the gospel.
 - a. Lit. “in order that I may declare it as it is necessary me to speak”
 - b. NIV - “pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should”

Conduct And Making The Most Of Opportunities

COL 4:5 Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders [unbelievers], making the most of the opportunity.

1. “Conduct yourselves with wisdom toward outsiders” - Lit. “In wisdom walk you toward the ones outside.”
 - a. This means they were to live godly lives and should let their light shine. (Matt. 5:14-16; Eph. 5:8).
 - b. They had been translated into the kingdom of light and they should live that way. (Col. 1:13).
 - c. “Show tact in your behaviour to the outside world” - TCNT
 - d. “Let Christian wisdom rule your behaviour to” Mof.
 - e. “Outsiders” (1 Cor. 5:12, 13; 1 Thess. 4:12 ; 1 Tim. 3:7).
2. “making the most of the opportunity” - Lit. “redeeming the time.”
 - a. “make the very most of your time” - Mof.
 - b. “Make the most of your chances to tell others the Good News” - Tay
 - c. Paul gave similar instructions in book of Ephesians. (Eph. 5:15,16).

EPH 5:15 Therefore be careful how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise,

EPH 5:16 making the most of your time, because the days are evil.

- d. It is imperative that soldiers of the cross use their time wisely, and not waste so much of their time on things that are trivial and have no eternal value.
- e. God has given us a very important mission of proclaiming the soul-saving gospel to the whole world. (Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:19).

- f. Most believers waste an enormous amount of time that could be used to lead others to Christ and make this world a better place to live.

Speech

COL 4:6 Let your speech [Lit. word] always be with grace, seasoned, as it were, with salt, so that you may know how you should respond to each person.

1. “Let your speech always be with grace” - This calls for kindly, pleasant speech.
 - a. The word “always” is significant.
 - b. This is not something occasionally or rarely done, but is “always” true of the Christian’s speech.
2. “seasoned, as it were, with salt” - “salt” preserves, give taste, and creates thirst.
 - a. It is not certain the exact meaning of this exhortation to be “seasoned, as it were, with salt.”
 - 1) It likely has the idea of their speech being properly seasoned with just the right amount of words of grace and edification.
 - 2) It likely has the idea of their speech being just right to influence others for good.
 - b. Paul addressed Christian speed in the letter to the Ephesians. (Eph. 4:29).

EPH 4:29 Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth, but only such a word as is good for edification according to the need of the moment, that it may give grace to those who hear.

3. “so that you may know how you should respond to each person” -
 - a. It was important that they learn to answer the questions put to them.
 - b. They must answer questions with truth, love, kindness and just the right amount of forthrightness to lead others to the Lord.
 - c. Peter gave Christians this admonition. (1 Pet. 3:15).

1PE 3:15 but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence;

- d. Jesus gave this promise of success to His apostles. (Lk. 21:15).

LUK 21:15 for I will give you utterance and wisdom which none of your opponents will be able to resist or refute.

- e. The Lord also blessed Stephen with wisdom of speech. (Acts 6:10).

ACT 6:10 And yet they were unable to cope with the wisdom and the Spirit with which he was speaking.

- f. They could not resist the wisdom of speech given to Stephen; so they became enraged and stoned him. (Acts 7:59.60).

Tychicus

COL 4:7 As to all my affairs, Tychicus, our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information.

1. “As to all my affairs, Tychicus” - “Tychicus” was the bearer of the letter to the Ephesians (Eph. 6:21,22).
 - a. He appears to be the bearer of this letter to the brethren at Colossae. See Col. 4:8.
 - b. He was a trusted servant of the Lord. (Acts 20:4; 2 Tim. 4:12; Tit. 3:12).

ACT 20:4 And he was accompanied by Sopater of Berea, the son of Pyrrhus; and by Aristarchus and Secundus of the Thessalonians; and Gaius of Derbe, and Timothy; and Tychicus and Trophimus of Asia.

2TI 4:12 But Tychicus I have sent to Ephesus.

TIT 3:12 When I send Artemas or Tychicus to you, make every effort to come to me at Nicopolis, for I have decided to spend the winter there.

- c. They would learn how things were going with Paul from Tychicus.
2. “our beloved brother and faithful servant and fellow bond-servant in the Lord, will bring you information”
 - a. This brother was much loved, a faithful fellow-servant and servant in the Lord.
 - b. He “will bring you information” about my circumstances.

COL 4:8 For I have sent him to you for this very purpose, that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage [comfort] your hearts;

1. “For I have sent him to you for this very purpose” - This is an epistolary aorist where something that was about to happen is spoken of as though it had already occurred.
 - a. It is best translated “I am sending him to you.”
 - b. Paul is about to send Tychicus and Onesimus to them.
2. “that you may know about our circumstances and that he may encourage your hearts” - He desires that they know their circumstances and encourage them.
 - a. Paul was in prison, but he was alive and well.
 - b. During his 1st imprisonment in Rome he wrote four epistles - Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.
 - c. He had also been able to have a number of visits from preachers and others.
 - 1) They came to encourage Paul and aid him in any way permitted.
 - 2) These visits meant much to Paul.
 - 3) These visits also permitted Paul to encourage and teach others.
 - d. Tychicus would make them all aware of the progress of the gospel.

COL 4:9 and with him Onesimus, our faithful and beloved brother, who is one of your number. They will inform you about the whole situation here.

1. “and with him Onesimus” - The epistle to Philemon was sent by Onesimus and Tychicus.
 - a. It appears that two letters were sent with Tychicus and Onesimus.
 - b. One was especially intended for the church at Colossae and the other was intended for Philemon.
2. “our faithful and beloved brother” - The runaway slave was now a Christian brother apparently converted by Paul. (Phile. 1:10).
 - a. Onesimus was now a very faithful and useful Christian.
 - b. Paul is sending him back to his Christian master - Philemon. Read book of Philemon.
3. “Who is one of your number” - Onesimus was one of their number. Lit. “who is of you”
4. “They will inform you about the whole situation here” - Both men would update [make known to] them about his condition and activities.

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