

Honoring Christ in Our Roles

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[0 : 00] A few more messages to go before we wrap up this time together in this book.

It's been a great reminder of the need for prayer and the need for thanks. Last month we kind of devoted some attention to prayer and had kind of our prayer month. And this month is going to be devoted to Thanksgiving, our month of thanks.

And as a way to kind of build into and grow in thanks, we want to just put a few of our missionaries before you. Not all of them, but just a few of the missionaries that we can.

One each week. And introduce you to them if you've not met them by way of video. And give you a chance to hear from them their word of thanks. And then some ways in which God is using them. But particularly as it relates to an initiative that we want to put before each of you. So that you can participate in their thanksgiving. Thanksgiving to God.

[1 : 00] How we're going to ask you to do that is to participate in thanksgiving by giving financially. A contribution of thanks to the Lord for our missionaries.

We're asking to raise \$40,000 in the next several weeks. And November 26th or November 30th will kind of be the final Sunday of our harvest offering.

And as you are making your gifts, just to designate them harvest offering. And they'll go to one of several different categories or initiatives that our missionaries are putting in front of us.

These strategic opportunities for us to partner with them in a way to demonstrate thanks. Of course, the foundation for giving financially and connected to thanks is the Lord Jesus himself.

2 Corinthians 9, verses 6-8 says this. The point is this. Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. And whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.

[2 : 01] Each one must give as he has decided in his heart. Not reluctantly or under compulsion. For God loves a cheerful giver.

And God is able to make all grace abound to you so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you might abound in every good work. So we put together this little booklet.

It has several of the ways in which that you can contribute to in a financial way to our missionaries. You can kind of understand the ways in which we're trying to raise money for them.

All of our giving extends to giving to God. To thanksgiving to God. That's what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 9, 11-12. He says, You will be enriched in every way.

To be generous in every way. Which through us produces, get this, thanksgivings to God. Don't you love that? For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing, again, in many thanksgivings to God.

[3 : 09] Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift. And so in our giving financially, it is an overflow of what we've received in terms of this indescribable gift of God, his grace to us.

And so this overflow of loving Jesus and thanking him spills out in thanksgivings to God through our gifts, but also it nurtures and cultivates thanksgiving in them as they're thanking God for the way that he's provided for their needs.

So here's the McGinnis family, and I'll let you hear their testimony. Hi, we are John and Johnny McGinnis with Triumph Global. And as we think through the Thanksgiving season and time, there are so many things that we can be thankful for, and we just want to highlight a few of them.

The first thing that we think of is our new granddaughter, who was just born this past Monday. So thankful for safe delivery and for health for the mom, as well as the addition to the other three that we have.

So this makes four for us, which is so exciting. So thankful for our children and now for our grandchildren that the Lord has blessed us with. The other thing that I am thankful for, and we are thankful for, is something I heard actually yesterday.

[4 : 20] I was reading a newsletter from a friend of mine who is serving in Belarus, and he's a national there, and he was talking about his ministry and what God has enabled him to do.

And he and other pastors were able to travel to Russia, of all places right now, into Moscow, and he'd go to a conference for pastors. And he talks about, at this conference, they were challenged in the area of church planting and how they continued to further the gospel.

One of the pastors that was with him was a guy by the name of Dennis. And Dennis is really wrestling with where and how and if God wants him to plant a church in Belarus. But the funny thing is, or the interesting part really is, Dennis is one of our students that we've had when we were in Ukraine.

And I know Dennis, I think, fairly well. And it's just encouraging for me and for us to hear about students of ours who are even in a time of war, a time of questioning, are being challenged to further the gospel and to plant churches in their home country.

So you can be praying for Dennis and for this decision that he is making. And we want to thank each of you for your prayers and for your support and for what God is doing in our lives and in your lives as the ministry is furthered through the training of pastors.

[5 : 32] So John and Johnny represent Tri-Am Ministry, and there are several different missionaries from Tri-Am that we support. And they essentially go around the world, and they are responsible to help train pastors and Christian leaders around the world.

So one of the initiatives that we're proposing is helping them with a module, so one of those training modules of pastors and Christian leaders. And we would invite you to participate in that as well.

Of course, the reason why we give and the reason why we're here today is because of the great gift that God has dispensed in our hearts. The gift of salvation, His Son, Jesus Christ.

And so we can give many thanks to God because of the saving work that Christ has done for us.

We've read a lot about that in the book of Colossians and what Christ has accomplished in terms of completing us because of Christ.

His ministry to us. We were buried with Him in baptism. We were raised with Him into eternal life.

We have been forgiven because of Him. We enjoy triumph because of Him.

[6 : 42] All of the benefits that we experience because of the work of Christ on our behalf. And so because of the benefits of salvation, the forgiveness of sin that we enjoy, this union that we have in Christ, all of the theology that we have been learning about, now the Apostle Paul is going to begin to press in.

What will you do with the things that you know about God? How will that change your life? And not just change the things that you do, but now how will the things that you do now be accompanied by a picture?

The picture of Christ that is showing up in your life. And what does that picture look like? Well, this morning we're going to look at a passage in Colossians 3, beginning in verse 18.

And we're going to see that there is this portrait, this painting, this image that is being painted throughout this chapter, throughout these verses. And this portrait includes three primary and predominant features.

If you were to paint a picture of Christ, if you were to describe Christ, and you were to concentrate on three primary characteristics, what three characteristics would you choose?

[8 : 00] Well, maybe you would choose His holiness. That's important. And maybe you would focus on His grace, because that's obviously important. Maybe you would focus on His justice, or His patience, or His power.

And of course, all of those things are important, and they're significant pictures of God that we find throughout the Scripture. But the Apostle Paul is going to concentrate on three qualities that are going to help fill out this picture of Christ, His ministry.

And as we begin to embody those three characteristics, we're not only going to be able to do what God says, but we're going to show Christ through our life.

We're going to paint this beautiful portrait of Jesus by the way we live. Those three portraits, those three characteristics, those three features, we're going to look at this morning.

The first portrait, the first characteristic, is the characteristic of submission. That Christ, in His submission, helps us understand what submission looks like.

[9 : 08] We're going to look at that. And also, we're going to look at love. This feature, this primary characteristic of love, the love that husbands will have for their wives, paints this beautiful portrait of

Jesus, this gospel portrait of Jesus.

We're going to see obedience, and the significance that obedience has, again, in calling attention to the wonder of who God is through His Son, Jesus Christ. And these three characteristics are going to be the ones that will mark this study and help to mark the picture that God wants to paint through your life so that the gospel can be visible, can be clear, can be radiant, because you're picturing Christ.

Let me read these verses for us, and then we'll jump into our study. Colossians chapter 3, beginning in verse 18. If you're using the Pew Bible, it's on page 984.

It says this, Wives, submit to your own husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. Bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service, as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

[10 : 33] Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord, and not for men. Masters, treat your bond servants just and fairly, knowing that you also have a master in heaven.

As we draw our attention to verse 18, we see this picture, this portrait of submission, this faith-filled submission of wives. This picture that begins with you, women.

It's a picture that begins with you. This beautiful portrait of Christ. And I don't want to continue to set that in front of us. This is not just about doing what you're told.

This is about illustrating the wonder and the marvel of who God is through your submission. This word, to submit, is in the middle voice.

And it indicates a voluntary expression. This is something that women do as a gift. It's something that they offer. Something that they extend.

[11 : 34] And they do this to obey. To be under control. To be put in subjection. Submission. This is a word that's used throughout the New Testament. 38 times this word, submission, is used throughout the New Testament.

This is not a casual term. This is not a term that is to be thrown around. This is a term that God takes seriously. 23 times that Apostle Paul will address submission in his letters.

We all know that submission is culturally unacceptable. Right? Even the word submission, oh wow. And in the first service today, someone's like, I can't believe you talked about that.

And in our culture, the reason is because we have a misunderstanding, not only about what submission means, but what submission does. See, in our day and age, when we think about submission, we think about inequality.

We think about weakness. We think about the opportunity for abuse. We think about that it suppresses intelligence. We think that it means losing your freedom.

[12 : 40] It means that you're denying personal worth. That you're conveying, in some way, control or domination. But as early as our first parents, Adam and Eve, this was going to be what would put strain on relationships.

Sin would put strain on relationships. That which was natural in the garden becomes very unnatural, as God will show us in Genesis 3, verse 16.

The woman, because of her sin, he says this, To the woman, I will multiply your pain and childbearing. In pain you shall bring forth children. Your desire shall be contrary to your husband, but he shall rule over you.

You see, now in marriage, there is an element of striving. In marriage, there is this element of competition. There is this element of vying for power, of wanting your way, of fighting for your rights, as it were.

But as we come to understand submission in the Scripture, we come to understand that submission is not relegated to just a class of people. Rather, submission is meant to be a quality of spiritual life.

[13 : 54] It's all-encompassing. Not just for wives. It is something that every person that loves God is called to do. If you are a Christian, you are called to submit in some way.

Let me give you some examples. The Apostle Peter was writing this letter to the church that spread throughout Rome, and he says in 1 Peter 2.13, I'm just going to walk down through these because he kind of gives us a course study on submission.

He says, Be subject, for the Lord's sake, to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme or to governors. If you have a president, if you have a governor, if you have somebody who is over you in some way in government, you are called to submit.

I am called to submit. It is a call for all of us in this room who love Jesus to submit in this way. Peter will move on to servants in chapter 2, verse 18.

He says, Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, to the good and gentle, to the harsh. For to this you have been called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example to walk in his steps.

[15:02] And by the way, if you've ever been kind of fuzzy on the will of God, Peter will spell it out for you. Here is the will of God. Submit. Submit, servants. Submit, slaves, to your masters.

In chapter 3, verse 1 of 1 Peter, Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands. In 1 Peter 5, verse 5, Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders.

Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility towards one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Those who are younger are to submit to those who are the elders.

And I appreciate how the New King James translates this. He says, Yes, all of you, be submissive to one another. And be clothed with humility.

For God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. You fit in the category of all of you if you are a believer. You are called to submit. And so this is a universal command of submission for every one of us who belong to Jesus to submit in some way.

[16:09] First, to God and then to the other spheres that God has painted in our life. And so that Paul commands wives to be submissive is a way for God to demonstrate his desire for this portrait of beauty of Christ to shine through.

Women, you have a high calling. It is a high calling. You have been put in place to set the example of submission for the rest of us. It is a high calling to submit to your husbands so that you can show the rest of us what submission looks like.

To show the rest of us what faith in God looks like. To show us what it means to paint this portrait in faith. This faith-filled submission that points the beauty of who God is.

And so this gospel life can shine through you and help inform the rest of us what it looks like to trust God in submission. And so in this way a wife's submission reflects her confidence in God.

That God is dependable. That God is trustworthy. And by the way as we continue to look through this in Ephesians chapter 5 it talks about Ephesians 5.22 it says Wives, submit to your own husbands as to the Lord.

[17:32] For the husband is the head of his wife even as Christ is the head of the church his body and is himself its savior. Now as the church submits to Christ so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands.

If you belong to Christ's church you must submit yourself to Christ. And wives are the ones who set the example they set the course of trust in God and worship of him by painting this picture this beautiful portrait of submission to Christ and submission to their husbands.

What I love about this is Christ is over the church. So wives here's the confidence that you have. As you submit to your husband you're submitting to Christ and Christ is over your husband.

And since Christ is over your husband you can trust Christ to make sure that whatever is happening in your home that seems out of sync that Christ can put it back together and he can help to set your husband back in line.

You can trust your Savior as you are submitting to your husband. So what does our defiance say about God? So we've talked about submission but when we choose not to submit what does our defiance and not just defiance of wives but now generally our defiance to the submission command that God has given to us.

[19:02] What does defiance say about God? What message does it communicate? Well there's several here and I want to go through them quickly. First our defiance questions God's wisdom.

In defiance we question the wisdom of God. In a sense we are saying God's way is not best mine is. I don't trust you.

Whenever I disagree with you then obviously you're wrong and I'm right. And in our submission our insubordination we challenge God's sovereignty.

His right to declare what should be. Every structure of God's authority whether it's parents or marriage or government or spiritual leaders is a delegated rule that God has designated to various

spheres of life and to resist the clear commands of God is to resist God's authority. Saying I'll obey you only when I agree with you. Now our demand for rights diminishes also God's grace. You see the gospel is not entitlement.

[20 : 10] And for those who have experienced God's grace we should then be conduits of that grace. I love how the apostle Paul puts it in Romans 12 verse 1 when he says I beseech you by the mercies of God which is I beg you I plead with you on behalf of the mercy and the grace that you've experienced now something should be true of your life.

What is it? Well present your bodies a living sacrifice holy and acceptable to God which is your reasonable act of worship. Your obedience to God your submission to God your love for God it is flows out of the mercy that you've received.

You see these are not merely social issues these are theological issues. what you believe about God shows up in the way you respond to husbands and wives and other authorities in your life. Rebellion isn't just behavior it's belief on display. You show through your life what you worship what matters to you. So wives what does your response to authority say about your trust in God? Do you see your loss of control as an act of worship and dependence on him? Is he worthy? Is he capable to cover and to help when things seem to be out of control?

[21 : 41] Wives you have a high calling. You have the calling of putting Jesus on display through your submission and you can set the example for the rest of us what that looks like.

Will you live up to your calling? Will you show Jesus that he's worth it? Submit like Christ have faith filled submission that puts Jesus on display.

Husbands we come to you next. We see this gospel shaped love of husbands in verse 19 it says husbands love your wives and do not be harsh with them.

Of course this word for love is a common word it's a familiar word to Bible students it's the word agape it's the word that talks about this unconditional love this covenant love this unending love but really particularly this divine love that we get to enjoy because of the love of Christ.

What does this love look like? How does this love show up? The apostle Paul throughout this letter to the Colossians has used this word a number of times and we get a sense of what he means as we read through this epistle Colossians 1 4 he says since we heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and the love that you have for all the saints I think we're seeing here the selfless love we're seeing this love that reaches out this love that's indiscriminate this love that affects all the saints whoever they are the selfless laying down kind of love that's described this love for all the saints we also see a spirit empowered love Colossians 1 verse 8 says and has made known to us your love in the spirit the only way we can love this way is by being empowered by the spirit of God because the fruit of the spirit is love joy peace we love because

[23 : 45] God loves he first loved us he set the example of what that love looks like and he doesn't just call us to love he has enabled us to love he doesn't just give us a command and he doesn't also give us the ability to perform it's also a unifying love Colossians chapter 2 verse 2 says that in their hearts or that their hearts may be encouraged being knit together in love they're joined they're stitched together love I love how the apostle Paul puts this in Ephesians he says endeavoring to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace this unifying spirit of love and then it's also a harmonious love we see that in Colossians chapter 3 verse 14 above all these put on love which binds everything together in perfect harmony this harmonious peace pursuing perfecting kind of love it makes us who we're not on our own it's sanctifying kind of love purifies us as we come to know the love of Christ and follow his example in Ephesians chapter 5 verses 25 to 27 the apostle

Paul develops this thought some more describes it for us he says husbands love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her here we see self sacrificing kind of love that Jesus spent himself to the end every drop every ounce of blood and life was poured out for the sake of the church not just to save them but we see that his purpose was also to sanctify them notice that he might sanctify her having himself excuse me having cleansed her by the washing of the water with the word so that he might present the church to himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish you see this picture again this picture of this bride this picture of this church that's what Christ has in mind for his church that's what husbands should have in mind for their brides for their wives beauty beauty the beauty of Christ in drawing out her beauty so she looks more like Jesus men do you love do you love your wife like Christ loved the church is your love the laying down kind of love the self sacrificing kind of love that you see in

Christ is your love the beautifying kind of love that you look for how you might make her more beautiful more spotless more blemish free it's not a love that tears down but a love that builds up it's not a love that makes demands but delights to serve it's not one that takes but a love that gives it's not a love that wounds with words but washes with the truth it's not a love that controls but a love that cares it's not a love that belittles but a love that blesses or not a love that pulls away but a love that draws near there's greater intimacy it's not a love that competes but a love that completes not a love that protects his pride but pursues peace it's not a love that reflects the culture but a love that reflects the cross. Do you have a gospel-shaped love? Husbands, what a high calling to continue to fill out this picture of Christ. Three dimensions that we get to see about Christ, the submission of wives, which fills out that part of the picture, the love of Christ that fills out that picture in husbands. And now finally, we see the wholehearted obedience of children that kind of fills out that picture of Christ, this wholehearted obedience of children and servants from Colossians chapter 3 verses 20 and 24. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. Now verse 22, bond servants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. Fearing the Lord. Worship is at the center of this command. In these verses, we come to see this portrait of obedience. And the apostle Paul now transitions from submission and he moves to obedience. Children, obey your parents. Servants, obey your parents. Servants, obey your masters in everything, the totality of this command. This word for to obey is a compound word. It's to listen under. It's the word that carries the idea of listening that results in action, not just hearing, but hearing with a responsive heart to follow instructions, to not be mechanical, but to one who is willing and ready to do. It's this picture of a heart kind of leaning in, interested in, and listening to what is, what they're being told.

[29 : 30] In ancient culture, a servant would stand at the edge of the courtyard to listen intently to his master's voice. If the master called, the master had something to say, instructions to give. He was there to hear. It reminds me a little about growing up for me in Cedarville. And I was allowed to play in the neighborhood. I was allowed to wander wherever I wanted. But there was one condition. When my dad whistled, and he could whistle pretty loudly, when my dad whistled, that meant that I needed to say, coming, at the top of my voice. And I needed to run as fast as my little legs could carry me to make sure I was obeying the instruction, the call to come as fast as I could. Now, there were those couple of occasions I can remember where my dad was with a friend, and he would kind of nudge, nudge a guy that was his friend next to him and say, hey, watch this. And he would whistle, and I would come. He's like, oh, hey, good, just checking. It was a good experience.

Experiment to see if obedience was on my heart. But there was never a time where I could have an excuse to say, well, I didn't hear you. I didn't hear you whistle. I didn't hear you call. Because that was my responsibility. As one who would respond, I was responsible not only to hear when the whistle came, but to not to wander so far that I could not hear when it was sent. See, that's what obedience looks like. Obedience is not waiting to be dragged back to the place where you're supposed to be.

It is staying close enough to hear the voice or the whistle of God. Disobedience doesn't just happen when we say no. Disobedience happens when we wander so far from God that we cannot hear his voice.

He's calling. He's whistling. We don't respond. Maybe because you're not hearing. Maybe because your heart is not attentive. Whatever it is, it's not just when you say no. It's when you have wandered so far you can't hear the call or the whistle of God. Children, you are to obey your parents in everything.

Our obedience is to God first. And he is the object of our concern. Our devotion to him leads to obedience to our parents. And of course, this obedience models itself after our Savior. We see in Philippians chapter 2 verse 8. It says, and being found in human form, speaking of Jesus, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Notice humility of Christ. Notice obedience of Christ. And of course, we know about the love of Christ. All of these bound together. It's interesting that Paul tells children to obey parents. And I think this is really crucial for us to understand. Parents, that's moms and dads. Moms and dads. It helps us to understand the dignity that is inherent in women, okay? That children obey parents. Moms and dads.

[32 : 49] Even when, kids, you think you know better. Even when you think they're wrong. Even when you think they don't understand. Even when you think their commands are self-serving. Even when you're tired.

Even when you don't feel like they practice what they preach. Obey your parents in everything as to the Lord. You make God, the gospel, look beautiful through your obedience to your parents. Obey in everything. Does our obedience resemble our Savior? Is every yes to your parents mimic and resemble the yes of Jesus to his Father? That's what we should be aiming at. How does our yes to our parents resemble and mimic the yes of Jesus? Every time. Yes, yes, yes. The yes of Jesus to his Father? Paul transitions to fathers in verse 21. He says, fathers, do not provoke your children lest they become discouraged.

And I'm inclined to think that this is not just, it's not a separate command. It's not stand alone kind of command. I think that this command goes, it's sandwiched between obedience, the obedience of children, and obedience of servants to masters. I think that's by design to help us understand this is not a separate stand alone kind of command, but it's meant to accompany the previous command. So how are children to be readily and willingly obedient to parents? Well, they do that because parents, and fathers in particular, are removing whatever obstacles are in the way to provoke, to embitter, to set the kids on edge. They are doing whatever they can to create this nurturing environment so obedience comes easy or more easily. Fathers, do you stimulate obedience by the way you treat your children?

You make it easier for them to obey. Do you keep from provoking them? Do you keep from frustrating them? Do you keep from embittering them? Instead, setting the environment to help stimulate and encourage and support and to make them want to obey the Lord and to obey you. This word to provoke is to make resentful. And in the Greco-Roman world, fathers held absolute authority. But God forbids that that kind of harshness would stir up rebellion and resentment because of a heavy-handed approach. Fathers, don't provoke your kids by being heavy-handed. But the opposite is also true. We can overcompensate for being too harsh by being too lax. And that will frustrate your children as well. We find in Scripture a model of perfect discipline and love from God Himself. Hebrews 12, 5 and 6 says this,

And have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons? My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, or be weary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves and chastises every son whom He receives. Dads, discipline your children. Do it in love. Help to set the guidelines, the parameters for how they can enjoy and experience the best that God has to offer them through their obedience. This past week, I had a chance to invite my kids. Every single week, we've been working through the study guide together, and there's a section that we put conversation starters for kids. And this was my turn to listen. As we're working through this passage, and I'm asking questions. Okay, kids, how do you answer this question? The question was this, The Bible warns fathers not to discourage their children. What are some ways that dads, and this particular dad, reassure his kids of his love for them? It was a good opportunity to listen.

[37 : 15] It was a good opportunity to interact and to hear. We had conversations about clear communication, setting realistic expectations, of asking good questions, and providing the answer why. Why is that so important? Not just stating or stating what you want to happen, but helping to lead, especially your older children, to understand the whys behind things. Providing loving instruction, serving together, affirming the things that you see God doing in their life. All of these ways that dads can help to create this environment where obedience becomes easier. That's the goal. If we want our kids to paint this portrait of the gospel by obedience to parents, then we help make it as easy as we can.

Slaves, in Colossians 3, verse 22, bond servants obey in everything those who are your earthly masters, not by way of eye service as people pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, pleasing the Lord, or fearing the Lord.

Paul addresses these bond servants. It's really the word *doulos*. It's the word slave. In the New Testament culture. And the Apostle Paul will address these bond servants again in Ephesians chapter 6, verses 5 to 8. But I want to just draw your attention to the concluding statement back there in verse 8. It says, Knowing that whatever good anyone does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether he is a bond servant or free.

So this isn't, you're not off the hook, just because you're not a slave. You're free. And so as one who is serving under a master, serving under an employer, serving under a boss or a manager, you

have this responsibility to carry out obedience in this way.

And Paul gives several reasons. But the predominant one here is, first, you are serving the Lord. Your service is as to Him. Your work is as to Him.

[39 : 23] And while your boss may be the immediate individual that you are trying to appease, really your primary minister, your primary work is to the Lord, to God.

Maybe the objection would be, well, my boss doesn't notice my work. And God, or the Apostle Paul will say, well, you're not working to be noticed.

You're not working, as he says in Colossians 3.22, not with eye service as people pleasers. Do your work to the Lord. And to work heartily as to the Lord and not to men.

Again, the Apostle Paul directs attention to the will of God. The will of God. Ephesians 6.6, not with eye service as men pleasers, but as bond servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.

Do you want to know what God's will is? This is one of the many instances where it's very clear, crystal clear. Do your work with all your heart. Well, what does it mean to do your work with all your heart?

[40 : 31] It's to understand that the work that we do is a work to Christ. It's a work that he will inevitably and ultimately reward.

It's serving with joy, not with duty. It's giving your full attention, not half-hearted in your labors. It's bringing energy and excellence and faithfulness to every task.

It's doing your best when no one is watching. It's recognizing that your work is worship. In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word for work is also the word for worship.

We'll talk about that a little bit more next year, the beginning of the year. Your work is a way that you worship God. God cares about your work because God cares about your worship.

And how we work reflects what we believe about God. You see, we have this promise. It's also built in. 1 Corinthians 15, 58 says, Your labor is not in vain in the Lord.

[41 : 37] And that's the promise. When we're working for the Lord, our labors will not be expended in vanity. That the Lord himself will ensure that your labors are spent well.

His purposes are accomplished. Finally, we see Christ-honoring leadership of masters.

Christ-honoring leadership of masters in Colossians 4, 4, it says this, Masters, treat your bondservants justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a master in heaven.

Masters, employers, bosses, you are not off the hook. Because there's accountability for you by the supreme master, God himself.

And the work that we do is under the accountability, under the microscope, as it were, of God himself, who evaluates and who will reward accordingly.

Those who are bosses have masters too. And so masters are not to use their position to threaten. They're not to intimidate.

[42 : 42] They're not to bully. They're not to set unrealistic, unreasonable expectations. Because God will ultimately judge every master. Peter provides a really helpful picture.

And I'm just going to close with this. This picture of leadership and accountability underneath the great leader, God himself, who does promise to reward.

We see this in 1 Peter 5, verses 1-4. It says this, So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is to be revealed, shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you, not for shameful gain, but eagerly, not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock.

And when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. You hear it? Godly leadership. Godly kind of accountability.

Understanding that they are under the great shepherd. Understanding that there is a reward for those who lead well. What a picture God has offered to us in these verses.

[44 : 12] This picture of submission and the gospel of Christ shining through wives. This picture of love that is shining through husbands and pointing people to the beauty of Christ.

This picture of obedience. Gospel picture of kids and teens who are following after and obeying the directions of their parents. Spotighting and drawing attention to the wonder of Christ in his gospel. For leaders, we need to ask ourselves the question, if Jesus evaluated our leadership, what would he say? Are we leading with eternity in view or are we only thinking about the bottom line?

So may our work be worship. May our labor be love and may our reward be Christ. Let's pray. Oh God, we thank you for your word.

Thank you for the example that you set in Christ. The example of submission. The example of love. The preeminent example of obedience. God, may that gospel picture shine through our lives.

[45 : 27] And may trust in God and worship of you lead our heart to do this faithfully. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you. Have a great week. Amen.