

(b) Paul also asks for prayer for certain things for himself and those who minister with him. What are his prayer requests? (Colossians 4:3,4)

Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how to answer every man (Colossians 4:6). (Bible notes) Our actions, our thought patterns, must reflect Christ's character being formed in us. We can know whether or not our speech is like Jesus by reading His word. As we read the words of Christ in the Gospels, we quickly notice how every syllable is full of grace. He proclaimed mercy, healing, deliverance, and salvation to all who would believe. Although He sternly confronted the sin and hypocrisy of the religious leaders, who opposed Him, He never spake selfishly and the heart of His message never changed. Even in the days leading up to His crucifixion, Jesus took time to minister comfort and final instructions to His disciples. When going through difficult times we're tempted to wallow in self-pity and verbally lash out at our family members. As Jesus faced the cross, His focus was on others. When we allow grace to work in our hearts, our words can continue to reflect His character despite the situation.

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES (Colossians 3:22-4:1)

The subject of slavery is included here, probably due to the fact that Onesimus, Philemon's runaway slave who was returning as a Christian, carried a letter from the sensitive apostle to the Colossians. ¹

Role of the Servant (Slave) (3:22-25) - *Obey their masters in all things according to the flesh; not with eye-service, as menpleasers; but in singleness (sincerity) of heart, fearing God.*

A slave in Paul's day was a piece of property to be owned, but a Christian slave was a person to be received as a brother (Philem. 16). Here the apostle does not seek to upset immediately the existing social order by any violent action. But he does doom it's evil structure by injecting Christian principles into civil society. These principles will work as leaven in the dough, eventually to penetrate the whole of society and to transform it after Christ's way. Therefore **servants** (22) should still, as Christians, **obey** their **masters** (Rom. 13:1 ff). Paul nowhere suggests disobedience to civil authority, though his fellow apostles support the principle under some circumstances (Acts 5:29). Paul counsels respect for law and order as the will of God. He advises obedience to civil law, but wherever there are evils, to transform them by orderly means

1. Beacon Bible Commentary, Vol. 9, p. 420.

(4:1). The reward (24) is not so much in terms of material things as in terms of God's approval.

Christ is their **Lord** (Master), for they really **serve** Him when they live according to this teaching (17). Verse 25 indicates the law of divine retribution. Wrongdoing is punished uniformly--without **respect of persons**, slave and master alike.¹

Role of the Master (4:1). Obey their **Master** in heaven. **Give** to their **servants** (slaves) **that which is just and equal**: which advises them to free their slaves, and receive them as brothers (Philemon 16).

It is Christ, not rules (Gal. 3:21-28). Christ is the *Means*, the *Motive*, the *Measure*, and the *Object* of all ethics.¹

EVANGELISTIC RESPONSIBILITIES (Colossians 4:2-18)

In the last part of this Epistle to the Colossians, Paul passed on some closing personal greetings, exhortations, instructions, and prayer requests (Colossians 4:2-18).

1. (a) See how many of the greetings, instructions and exhortations you can list. (Colossians 4:2-18)

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____

(6) _____

(7) _____

(8) _____

(9) _____

(10) _____

(11) _____

(12) _____

(13) _____

(14) _____

(15) _____

(16) _____

(17) _____

1. Beacon Bible Commentary, Vol. 9, pp. 420,421.