

There are portions of your life that you can and probably should compartmentalize. Where it's appropriate to separate this particular activity that you participate in from another section of your life. For example, an individual who leaves their workplace at 6pm and begins their journey home, has every right to stop thinking about work for the rest of the day so that they can enjoy the evening with their family. It is a good thing to focus on your work from 9 to 5 and then shift your focus and priorities for the rest of the day. In that scenario, it is more than OK to portion of a piece of your life.

But your life in Christ is never to be portioned off. It's never to be compartmentalized. Your focus on Christ, your pursuit of living for Jesus does not and cannot be something that is reserved for Sunday mornings. God has delivered us from the domain of darkness (Colossians 1:13) and has transferred the believer to the kingdom of his beloved Son, Jesus, in whom we have been granted redemption, in whom we have forgiveness of our sin. That changes everything! Our relationship with Jesus Christ doesn't just spill over into every area of our life, it completely overtakes every detail of our life.

Where before coming to salvation we completely lived for ourselves. But at the moment we placed our faith in Jesus as our Savior and Lord, we surrendered our entire lives to Him so that now, everything we do (everything we do) is done for our Lord. *(pause)* We no longer live for ourselves, we **Live for Our Lord**. We aim to please Him, we wake up each morning with the intent to serve Jesus with each moment that we have in that day. And so many of those opportunities that are presented to us are within our closest relationships as well as our regular responsibilities. This morning we are going to be looking at Colossians 3:20-4:1 and I want to challenge you Live for the Lord ¹in Your Home as well as ²in Your Work.

Paul begins with the home, so we will begin there as well. Before I read the passage, let me just say that if you missed last week we talked about a significant relationship with the home; we looked at God's design in the relationship between a husband and the wife. That relationship could have been talked about in this message, but I believed that it was necessary to spend an entire sermon talking exclusively about the marriage relationship. Since that relationship in the home has been focused on, we will turn our attentions to the other relationships that are present within a household, the parent and the child relationship.

READ COLOSSIANS 3:20-21

LIVE FOR THE LORD IN YOUR HOME. A phrase that we hear from time to time, is that *children are the future church*. And I agree with that statement to a point. And here's the point that I would agree with; there's coming a day when those who are in preschool or high school or somewhere in between will be the future pastor's and leaders and Sunday School teachers of the church. But Paul directly addresses children here as responsible people within the congregation.

Young people, kids, Paul doesn't talk down to you as if you're off to the side as if you're in an insignificant place. No, he doesn't do that. He talks to you directly and makes it known in this one sentence that you are in a very good spot. You are placed under the care of your parents where they are to be seeking to guide you, to shape you and give you instructions as to how to live.

I became a parent for the first time in February of 2005, I was 24 years old. And to be honest, I didn't know completely what I was doing and I don't have it completely figured out yet. I am attempting to grow in it and to be intentional with how I raise my kids. But the one thing that I was confident in from day one, was that I would do whatever it takes to protect my child.

A child is placed within the family where the mom and the dad protect their son or their daughter from the beginning of their life. Kids, your parents are a shield-of-protection from so many dangers that are within the world. When you are very young they protect you from physical threats. They made sure that you didn't wander too close to the stairs, they kept close watch on you when you were out in a public surrounded by strangers, they ran alongside of your bike when you were learning to keep upright. All of that was done for your physical protection. And they established rules and guidelines that you were to obey. That was for your good and they have your best interest in mind as they wanted to protect you as best they could.

But as you grow they have established other parameters that you are to obey as they seek to shape you into a responsible adult. They may give you responsibilities like keeping your room clean and doing work in the yard. And are those things fun? Probably not. I grew up in home with two brothers and each of us took turns doing the dishes (we didn't have a dishwasher). In fact, my dad would take the calendar that hangs on the wall and write in order M, L, J. Which stands for Matt, Luke, John. And he would write that out for the entire year! Did I enjoy? No. But did it teach me some responsibility and that I can contribute to the family? Yeah. Absolutely.

Your parents may ask/tell you to do a bunch different things that you don't enjoy, but many of the things that they are asking of you are in an effort to shape you into who will be as you enter adulthood. Paul, doesn't leave any wiggle room here in this sentence for you to question whether or not you should follow through with the commands that are given. Unless you are being told to commit an act of sin, you are to follow through with their instruction If you're asked to work harder in school; if you're told to be home at a certain time; if it's explained that you're not allowed to go to a certain event... and you could name a hundred other scenarios.

Whatever it may be, when you are told to do something by your parent who has been placed over you by God, you are to be obedient to your dad and to your mom. For in your complete obedience, when you gladly do what your parent has asked of you, you acknowledge Christ as Lord.

It is important that we acknowledge Christ with our mouth, that we confess that He is the Lord of our life. But that acknowledgement with our words is supported by how we live. Students, when you live in obedience to our parents, you're living in such a way that puts God on display and that pleases Him. Young people be faithful with the responsibility that God has give you right now. The home that you live in is a significant place for you to grow spiritually. Take advantage of it.

Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Paul then moves on to other side of the parent child relationship and says,

Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

He continues that theme of talking about Living for the Lord in your Home by talking to the parents, and more specifically, to dads. Parenting is one of the greatest responsibilities that I have ever picked up. I don't consider parenting a secondary responsibility. A couple of weeks ago, several ladies from our church stood up here telling about how their women's retreat went. Laura Koch, took me off guard when she asked if I babysat my kids that day... I responded by saying, "No, I don't babysit my kids."

Meaning that, "I'm their dad." I watch them, I hang out with them, I lead them regardless of whether or not my wife is home. So I'm never their babysitter, because I'm 100%, all the time, their dad. And I have a responsibility to parent them. A responsibility, now let's be honest, that can be so challenging!

And why is it so hard? Because it is a flawed person who is commissioned to give direction and guidance and help to another flawed person. Now don't let that discourage you because it doesn't end there. You are not alone in this, you have the help of a faithful God.

Parenting continues to be hard because it is a sinner that is seeking to guide another sinner. And what is at the core of sin? It's a desire to live for ourselves. It's selfishness. Where I don't want to be disagreed with. I don't want to be challenged. I don't want somebody to make my day difficult. I want children who say, "*Yes, father, I will forthwith go and obey you because you, sir, are wise.*" But do you know what I don't get 100% of the time? I don't get that.

So it's the selfishness of my child that brings to the surface my own selfishness. It is important to understand that there is a reason why it is a struggle. Fathers are told not to provoke their children where they're led to discouragement, because without us dads being intentional with how we treat our kids, it's very easy to head down a road where we do provoke our kids and push them too far. We are not to place such a heavy demand on them that they cannot carry.

Do we discipline them? Yes, absolutely. Do we correct them when their wrong? Yes, we don't just push their sin under the carpet as if it didn't happen. But it's to be done in a constructive way; not in a way that's nagging, or belittling, or shaming, or an overly harsh punishment.

Keep in mind that you are shaping and influencing another human being. Remind yourself, if you're a parent, that the greatest responsibility that you have is to lead your kids toward a greater love for Jesus Christ! Dads, take responsibility for being the spiritual compass of your family. If anybody's wondering where true north is, I hope they will automatically look in your direction. I hope they know from experience that you, as their Dad, has a grip on what the Bible says about current life situations- that you keep a "God-ward" view of things.

That sure, they know what bothers you, and they know what they shouldn't do to press your buttons, but they are far more aware of what drives you. They are far more aware of what you're passionate about. It's not your work, it's not your hobbies, and it's not your favorite sports team. It's your love for Jesus Christ! That it is your desire to live for Him. It is your greatest aim to please Him.

When you set out to live for your Christ in your home... you're kids don't leave your home discouraged. They grow up in an environment that fosters encouragement. They grow up with dad, they grow up with a mom, that does not push them away from the gospel, but draws them towards it as it's put on display in a very real way.

Children... parents... **LIVE FOR THE LORD IN YOUR HOME.** Jesus is never to be portioned off. He's never to be compartmentalized. Your focus is to be on Christ, right now, but also in your home. We're going to look back down at our Bibles and I would like to read this next section where Paul explains another area of life where we have an opportunity to **LIVE FOR THE LORD.** Living for the Lord touches every section and that also includes our work.

Let's read verses 22-4:1 as Paul calls us to Live for the Lord in our Work.

READ COLOSSIANS 3:22-4:1

Now, there is a big difference between slaves of Paul's days and being an employee in 2017. When Paul wrote this letter, there were more than likely indentured slaves who were part of the church in Colossae. And in no way does Paul endorse slavery, but on the contrary he undermines slavery but talking directly to those individuals when most people of that culture regarded their servants as little more than the equipment of the house. Something to get the job done.

Paul encourages the master to treat them justly, to treat their slaves fairly. These people are your equals, so give them what is due to them rather than overburdening those within your household.

So there is a big difference between slaves from then and workers today... but I do believe that the responsibility that was given to them is very applicable to us. For when you work, you have an opportunity to live for the Lord. Christians look at work differently than everyone else does. We're not living just for the weekends. We're not simply working to afford our hobbies. Work is actually an opportunity for worship; for when you work, you are not working for merely an earthly master, you are working for the Lord.

Read Colossians 3:22-23

There ought to be a commitment to excellence in our work, "not by the way of eye-service, as people-pleasers." You don't just do the bare minimum to get by, which so many people do.

When Laura and I first got married I worked at a large warehouse for Walmart. I had a guy tell me one time, while we were standing around talking (something we shouldn't be doing), he told me that whenever a supervisor came around the corner and saw you talking, that what you need to do is simply point at something while you're talking... from a distance, it makes you look like you're being productive. That's wrong!

You don't do the bare minimum to just please the person you're working for. Even if your boss is horrible and treats you like garbage and gives you the worst jobs. You still work with your whole heart. You may say, "Luke, you don't know my boss! He treats me like he owns me." It doesn't matter. You look at this passage and realize that some of the people Paul is talking to are literally owned by another person, and Paul tells them, *obey your masters in everything*.

Because ultimately, you're not working for your employer, you're working for the Lord. Even if your boss never sees the work you do or acknowledges how hard you've been working, that's OK. You're not working his or her approval, you're working for the approval of your Lord. He's your first audience. In every assignment, he's the real boss behind your earthly boss. Do your work for Him.

And do you sincerely. The way the Christian approaches work is vastly different than the rest of the world. The world sees work as a necessary evil to get money. The idea is that when you get enough money, you stop working. Christians see work as a way of serving. Serving God as well their fellow man. We recognize that God put us in an earth filled with raw materials that we are to develop for the benefit of other people. So we fulfill our responsibilities with sincerity and even delight as we come to the understanding that within our work we are Living for the Lord.

Conclusion:

In closing, I want to encourage you to evaluate how you're doing in Living for the Lord. I've heard it said that you can measure the progress of your Christian life by how well you relate to your spouse, your parents, and your employer. Probably the truest measure of your Christianity is how you are at home and how you live at work. So, I ask you that question: If you based your spiritual progress solely on how well you lived it out at home and how you conduct yourself at work, how do you think you are doing?

If the relationship that you have horizontally (between your spouse, your parents, your coworkers) is characterized with chaos, fighting and disunity; that's an indication that there has been a disruption in your vertical relationship, which is your relationship with the Lord. And so, before you can start to build the bridges back to those you're surrounded by, you need to turn to Christ. You need to confess your shortcomings to Him, and commit to living for Him and seek Him.

Because the good news is that when you get this vertical relationship right, He'll take over and enable you to live faithfully within these horizontal relationships that you're constantly immersed in.