



ADVANCING
THE
GOSPEL

Colossians 3:18-4:1

Introduction

- Paul transitions from laying out how Christians must act toward one another in the church as new humanity to how believers act within their family relationships.
- Paul calls each household member to serve others in the house well, knowing that everyone serves Christ as his or her true master.
- Then we will look at the concerns about social media. What about its influence? How should we respond to censorship?

Colossians 3:19-21

Family

- Paul has spent his focus on the theological truths for the community of faith.
- In chapter 3, he lays out how the Christian's theology affects his or her interpersonal interactions.
- In the close of chapter 3, Paul moves his focus to the family and how the “new man” lives within family borders.
- This is Paul's transition from spiritual family to physical family.

Family

- Paul starts in verse 18 writing to the wives.
- This same call for wives appears elsewhere in the NT in Ephesians 5:22; Titus 2:5; 1 Peter 3:1; and 1 Corinthians 7:2–5.
- This call for wives has come under great scrutiny.
- Each relationship listed by Paul grounds itself in the understanding that everyone is to be a servant of Christ.

Family

- The verb used here in verse 18 for submit is *hypotassō*, which, when separated is “order” (*tassō*) and “under” (*hypo*).
- When found in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, this word can refer to one submitting to God.
- This role of the wife is one of willingness and is done voluntarily.
- Paul explains the inner workings of the marital relationship is not limited to his day, as made clear by his writing concerning the order of creation (1 Timothy 2:13) and the order within the Godhead (1 Corinthians 11:3).

Family

- Paul includes the phrase “as is fitting to the Lord” because what Paul is not commanding here is blind obedience; obedience that would be counter to God’s commands.
- One of the key attributes of these commands is how all obedience falls under the greater obedience to the Lord.
- It kept all rule and authority in check as it was operated under the rule of Christ in all things.

Family

- One cannot take verse 18 apart from verse 19.
- The wife's submission to the husband is directly connected with the husband's call to love the wife and not be harsh with her.
- While Paul was keeping the structure of the family in line with the cultural norm, meaning that it was led by the male figure.
- What he was doing was creating a family reality that treated the spouses very differently and looked at each of their roles as a service unto the Lord, not for power or authority's sake.

Family

- The word used for love in verse 19 is *agapaō*, which is the Christian word for the kind of sacrificial love that reflects Christ Himself.
- Here's where Paul's teaching is unique. No other code in the ancient world commands husbands to love their wives. Paul shows that if love is not what leads these behaviors, then the leadership will turn harsh, domineering and selfish.
- One must keep in mind Paul's list of the new man qualities from the previous section. Those characteristics are still applied to these relationships.

Family

- Paul discusses the relationship between fathers and children in verses 20–21.
- Paul's aim is for the Gospel to be made known through these relationships.
- The parents are to love their children and care for their children in such a way that the children are reminded of Christ.
- The obedience of children to their parents pleases the Lord because this relationship keenly reflects the relationship of God's children with Him.

Family

- Just as it was with wives, children are to obey their parents when it is fitting and pleasing to the Lord, not when their parents command them to act in a way that is displeasing or dishonoring to the Lord.
- A key aspect to the father's role is leading his children well in the Lord.
- The Greek word translated "discouraged" in verse 21 is the verb *athymeō* and it means "without passion."
- Paul brings the authority of the father and husband under the umbrella of God's design.

Family

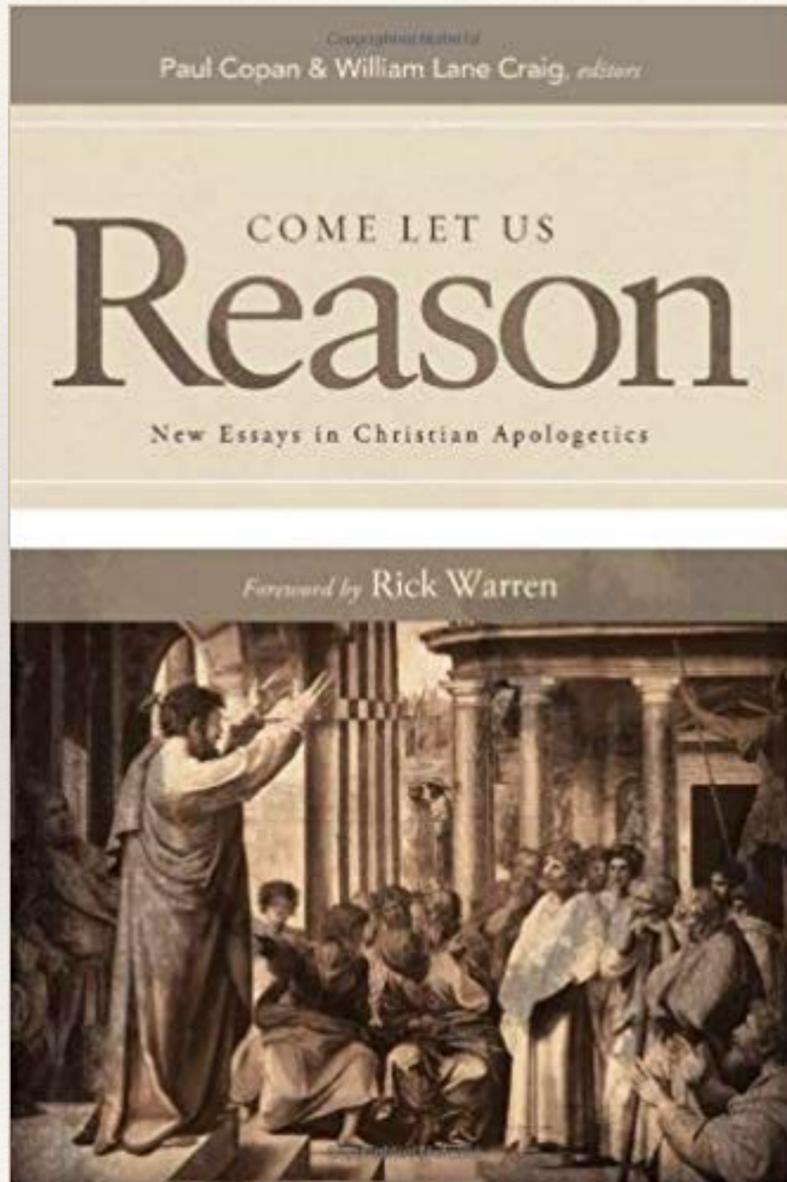
- The father's discipline should not be such that it causes the children to "lose heart and come to think that it is useless trying to please their parents."
- The father's authority should never render the children without passion and desire.
- The point is that parents must encourage and equip, not tear down and sideline.
- The obedience and authority that Paul puts forth in these verses is symbiotic in nature: obedience is willing because the authority is loving.

Colossians 3:22-25

Worker

- The next relationship Paul tackles is one between the master of the house and the household worker.
- The institution of slavery is in direct tension with the writings of the NT and the value that in God's created order there is equality of value between all His children (1 Timothy 1:10; Revelation 18:11–13).
- “As in any other city or village in the Roman world, there would have been many slaves at Colossae; Paul treats them with dignity and appeals to them directly to honor Christ in their hearts, work, and behavior.”

Slavery?



Worker

- Several key aspects of this passage show Paul's countercultural view on the issue of slavery. First, Paul addresses the slaves in verse 22.
- Moreover, Paul includes a reference to Christ in each of the verses concerning the bondservant's obedience and work in 22–24.
- Paul considers these slaves as fellow believers and brothers and sisters in Christ.
- But Paul's aim in exhorting them is to keep their minds focused on the Lord and the reward He has prepared for them.

Worker

- Paul isn't ignoring the reality of their harsh conditions.
- What he is doing is getting them to see that now in Christ, they are serving Him, and He sees their worth and value and He has prepared something for them for eternity.
- There was little if any hope that slaves would receive any inheritance this side of eternity.
- But Paul says they will be richly rewarded in God's kingdom.

Colossians 4:1

Masters

- Verse 1 in chapter 4 demonstrates Paul's countercultural instructions.
- He challenges earthly masters to be fair and just in their dealings with their servants, because the masters themselves are servants as well.
- But more importantly, charging the masters to be fair and just was countercultural because Paul didn't give them the authority to treat their workers however they wanted.
- Paul didn't give them a pass to abuse their authority.

Masters

- Paul gives status to the servants as humans deserving of fair treatment.
- Paul wants the masters to keep in mind the treatment all should have received from God.
- Humanity deserved punishment and separation from God.
- Instead, Christ took the punishment humanity deserved and as a result, welcomes them as sons and daughters of God.

Masters

- Paul gives an exhortation that just as Christ has shown mercy and grace to all, so, too, must earthly masters show the same care and concern for those under their authority.
- Humility is key for the Christian in a role of authority. Keeping Christ in mind and the reality that all work for the Lord.
- This is how the reality of the new man should instill humility in everyone covered by Christ's sacrifice.

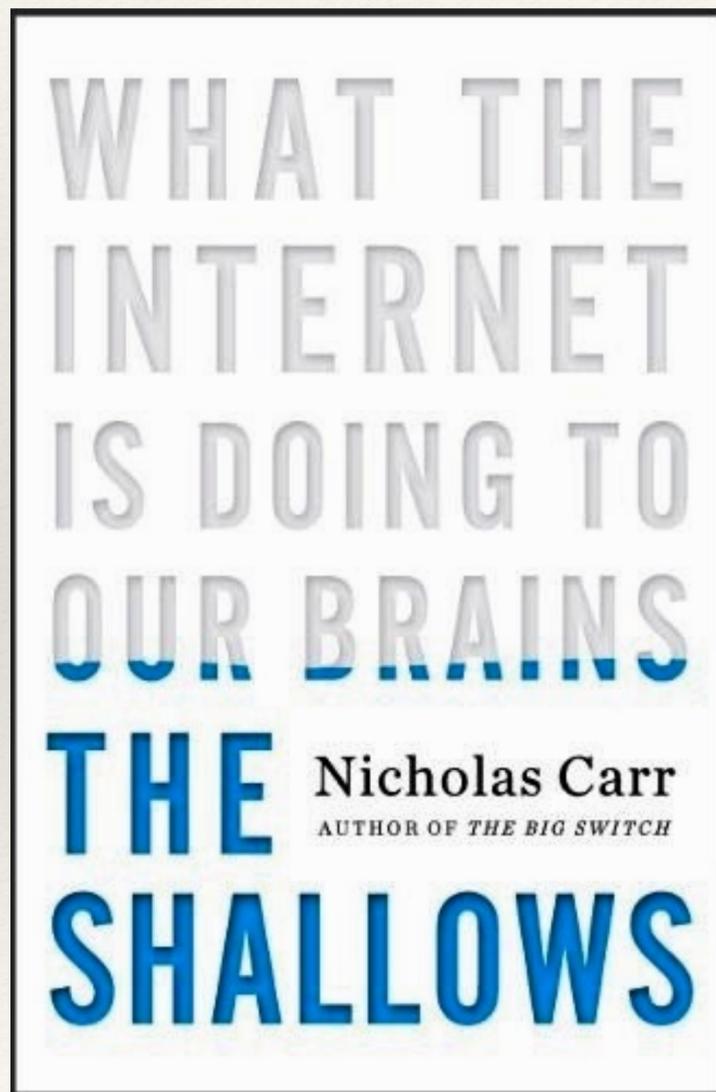
Ask Kerby

Social Media

Social Media

- More than a decade ago, social scientists and social commentators expressed concern about how the Internet in general and social media in particular was influencing us.
- Nicholas Carr raised this question in an *Atlantic* article entitled “Is Google Making Us Stupid?” He observed that, “Over the past few years I’ve had an uncomfortable sense that someone, or something, has been tinkering with my brain, remapping the neural circuitry, reprogramming the memory.”
- He believed this came from using the Internet and Google.

Brain Research



- He later went on to write *The Shallows: What the Internet Is Doing to Our Brains*.
- He surveyed brain research that helped to explain why we don't read as much and why it is so hard to concentrate. The Internet and social media are retraining our brains.
- “Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski.”

Brain Research

- A developmental psychologist at Tufts University put it this way. “We are not only what we read. We are how we read.” The style of reading on the Internet puts “efficiency” and “immediacy” above other factors.
- A neuroscientist at George Mason University says: “The brain has the ability to reprogram itself on the fly, altering the way it functions.”
- Steven Kotler argues that Twitter was reducing the time of concentration to 140 words. He showed how Twitter was constantly tuning “the brain to reading and comprehending information 140 characters at a time.”

Brain Research

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How the 'Plastic' Brain Rewires Itself

Italian researchers determine how juvenile and adult brains respond to environmental change

By Nikhil Swaminathan | February 28, 2007

By exposing mice that had been closeted in complete darkness for days to light, Italian researchers have determined why adult brains lose the plasticity of younger brains. Their findings, published in this week's issue of *Neuron*, provide further evidence that a certain class of drugs may one day be used to successfully treat degenerative nerve diseases like Alzheimer's and Huntington's.

The researchers primarily focused on the plasticity of the visual cortex, because there is a wealth of evidence that this part of the brain can be rewired more easily in children than in adults. For example, it is known that children—but not adults—can develop amblyopia or lazy eye (which makes it difficult to read closely spaced letters) when deprived of light or the full range normal visual stimulation.



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This Is How The Internet Is Rewiring Your Brain

The Huffington Post

Posted: 10/30/2013 5:18 pm EDT | Updated: 10/31/2013 10:25 am EDT



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SUGGESTED FOR YOU

Photos Capture Devastating Refugee Crisis On Greek Islands



Networking For Introverts

Brain Research

- Concentration
 - Distraction overload - leaves user with the: “Where was I”? brain lock.
 - Continuous Partial Attention - not multitasking, rapid-fire switching of attention.
- Creativity
 - No “think time” or daydreaming

Biblical Response

- These new media platforms present a challenge to us. They can easily conform us to the world (Romans 12:2). We should make sure that we are not taken captive (Colossians 2:8) by false philosophies.
- Christians should strive to apply the principle set forth in Philippians 4:8:
“Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.”

Censorship



- Big Tech companies have been censoring content for many years.
- Many years ago, the National Religious Broadcasters began monitoring censorship on these social media platforms through their John Milton Project for Religious Free Speech.
- Even back then, their report concluded that: “The free speech liberty of citizens who use the Internet is nearing a crisis point.”

Censorship



- Senator Marsha Blackburn asked why her pro-life ad was pulled during the 2018 campaign.
- Senator Ted Cruz pointed to a Susan B. Anthony List ad that was banned. It had a picture of Mother Teresa with her quote: “Abortion is profoundly anti-woman.”

Censorship

- One option: make the case that “platform access is a civil right.”
- The argument is that private companies are actually violating the civil rights of Americans in the same way that preventing someone to speak in a public park would be a violation.
- They argue that the big tech companies are a monopoly.
- They call for federal and state regulation of these social media platforms arguing that the Supreme Court has argued in the past that government cannot restrict your access to the public square.

Censorship

- First, these big tech companies are private companies not the government. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube platforms are private property and not the public square.
- Second, these companies are protected by a section of the 1996 Communications Decency Act that keeps them from being exposed to potentially crippling liability for something posted on their platform.
- Some politicians have called for changing that legal protection, but Congress seems unlikely to do anything like that in the near future.

Censorship

- Another option: government involvement.
- Senator Ted Cruz noted that these big tech companies “are larger and more powerful than Standard Oil was when it was broken up” and “larger and more powerful than AT&T when it was broken up.”
- Many are wary of having the government get involved in patrolling social media platforms. They remind us of the 1949 FCC Fairness Doctrine.
- Even if that happens, the Big Tech companies would probably have a place at the table.

Censorship

- Another option: create a new platform or close social media accounts.
- There are alternatives developed each week you can consider. There is no reason you couldn't provide another platform.
- If you don't like the way the *New York Times* or the *Washington Post* reports stories, you don't have to subscribe to those newspapers. If you don't like how MSNBC or Fox News covers stories, you don't have to tune to that TV network.

Social Media

