

The Study

The Gospel radically changes our relationships with everything, first with God, others, and creation. In these verses, Paul briefly unpacks the change in marriage, family, and the workplace. The central idea is the Authority-Submission dynamic broken by the Fall but restored In Christ.

Vs. 18-19 • Bucking the 1st Century status quo where all women were in general subjugation to all men, Paul intentionally narrows submission to something a wife owes her own (particular) husband – **NOT** men in general. He then wraps the husband's authority in agape-love, lifting it out of the abuse of authority so common in the world.

Vs. 20-21 • Children are to demonstrate submission by *obeying* parents. Parents (specifically, fathers) are to take an active-caring role in raising children.

Vs. 22-4:1 • Though addressed to slaves and masters, the principle of authority and submission applies equally to the workplace. Employees ought to work first and foremost for Jesus, rendering their labor for His glory. Those in authority at work must treat workers justly.

The Discussion

The potential for dispute and debate on this topic is great since we live when an increasing number of people believe the Bible is “out of date” in what it says about marriage roles.

Before diving into the specific relationships these verses deal with, a good opening discussion may be to consider how authority and submission were broken in The Fall and how The Gospel restores them.

Rather than looking at these three sections *separately*, note how Paul pairs each with one side being in submission and the other being in authority.

- Husband – Authority / Wife – Submission
- Parent – Authority / Child – Submission
- Master – Authority / Slave – Submission

Describe what he calls the submission side to *look and sound like* in each of these three spheres.

Describe what he calls the authority side to *look and sound like*.

If each side joyfully embraced their assignment in the authority-submission paradigm, how would it affect the *other* side and the relationship as a whole?

How does the relationship between God the Father and God the Son provide insight into the outworking of all this?

It's a fundamental doctrine of our Faith that the Son is in NO WAY “inferior” to the Father while the Father is equally not “superior” to the Son. They are both God but *different persons*. That “difference of person” means different roles. How does this truth re-shape our understanding of authority and submission?

What would happen **IF** the Father and Son got wonky on expressing their authority and submission? How thankful we are they won't! Their perfect expression of Authority and Submission means Heaven is eternally safe.

Fold all that back into why we **MUST NOT** fiddle with God's design for authority and submission in our relationships.