



JESUS IS GREATER

March 9, 2025 Sermon Study Guide
Brian Bales - Jesus is Greater: *Sacrifice*

Colossians 3:17-4:6 (ESV) *And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. ¹⁸ Wives, submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. ¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. ²¹ Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged. ²² Bondservants, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters,^[a] not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. ²³ Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, ²⁴ knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ. ²⁵ For the wrongdoer will be paid back for the wrong he has done, and there is no partiality. ⁴ Masters, treat your bondservants^[b] justly and fairly, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven. ² Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving. ³ At the same time, pray also for us, that God may open to us a door for the word, to declare the mystery of Christ, on account of which I am in prison— ⁴ that I may make it clear, which is how I ought to speak. ⁵ Walk in wisdom toward outsiders, making the best use of the time. ⁶ Let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.*

Philippians 2:5-7 (ESV) ⁵ *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,^[a] ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,^[b] ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,^[c] being born in the likeness of men*

COMMENTARY

d. *Husbands, love your wives: Paul's words to husbands safeguards his words to wives. Though wives are to submit to their husbands, it never excuses husbands acting as tyrants over their wives. Instead, a husband must love his wife, and the ancient Greek word translated love here is agape.*

i. Significantly, this puts an obligation upon the husbands. In the ancient world – under Jewish, Greek, and Roman customs, all power and privileges belonged to husbands in regard to wives, to

fathers in regard to children, and to masters in regard to slaves. There were no complimentary powers or privileges on the part of wives, children, or slaves.

ii. “Agapao does not denote affection or romantic attachment; it rather denotes caring love, a deliberate attitude of mind that concerns itself with the well-being of the one loved.” (Vaughan)

iii. Strictly speaking, agape can’t be defined as “God’s love,” because men are said to agape sin and the world ([John 3:19](#), [1 John 2:15](#)). But it can be defined as a sacrificial, giving, absorbing, love. The word has little to do with emotion; it has much to do with self-denial for the sake of another.

· It is a love that loves without changing.

· It is a self-giving love that gives without demanding or expecting re-payment.

· It is love so great that it can be given to the unlovable or unappealing.

· It is love that loves even when it is rejected.

· Agape love gives and loves because it wants to; it does not demand or expect repayment from the love given. It gives because it loves, it does not love in order to receive.

iv. We can read this passage and think that Paul means, “Husband, be kind to your wife.” Or “Husband, be nice to your wife.” There is no doubt that for many marriages, this would be a huge improvement. But that isn’t what Paul writes about. What he really means is, “Husband, continually practice self-denial for the sake of your wife.”

v. Of course, this agape love is the kind of love Jesus has for His people and this is the love husbands should imitate towards their wives ([Ephesians 5:25](#)).

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God’s word.

QUESTIONS to CONSIDER

If you were doing everything in the *name of Jesus* how might your choices be altered in some way?

What would others think about you?

Read Colossians 3:18-4:1

1. What verses in this passage jump out at you and make you wonder what was Paul thinking?

2. What questions would you ask Paul if he were sitting here with you?

3. When have you seen this section of scripture applied out of context?

4. How is Paul challenging us to look beyond the social structures of his day and our own?

Why Context Matters

1. Brian mentions that the three most important things for understanding scripture are context, context, and context. Why is scripture sometimes taken out of context?

2. When have you experienced a misunderstanding in real life because you missed the context surrounding what you thought you heard or read and how did you respond?
3. What did you do to seek clarity and a better understanding of the message?
4. Why is it important to seek clarity in those moments in life where relationships are likely impacted by our behavior?

The Context of Roman Rule and Life

1. What differences do you see in the ancient Roman way of life Brian described, and life here in NOVA? What are the similarities?
2. How and when are you challenged to live your life in a way that is contrary to the prevailing world view around you?

Paul's Purpose in writing to the Colossians

1. In what ways does your own life reveal that "*Jesus is greater*" to the people who know you or may be influenced by you?
2. How are Paul's instructions the foundation for living in the true freedom of following Christ rather than a call to submit to wrongful treatment?

The Context of Today

Paul wrote, "*For though I am free from all, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win more of them. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews. To those under the law I became as one under the law (though not being myself under the law) that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law (not being outside the law of God but under the law of Christ) that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.*" (1 Corin 9:19-23)

1. How can you make the most of every opportunity to show others that you choose to live in a way that places them first because *Jesus is greater*?

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2. If Jesus is our true North how does the Philippians passage serve as our GPS?