

CRACKING THE CODE PART 1

—CHRISTUS VICTOR WEEK 22—

Colossians 3:18-4:1 (NIV)

I. WIVES AND HUSBANDS

¹⁸ Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands,
as is fitting in the Lord.

¹⁹ Husbands, love your wives
and do not be harsh with them.

II. CHILDREN AND PARENTS

²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything,
for this pleases the Lord.

²¹ Fathers, do not embitter your children,
or they will become discouraged.

III. _____ AND _____

²² Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything;
and do it, not only when their eye is on you
and to curry their favor,
but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord.

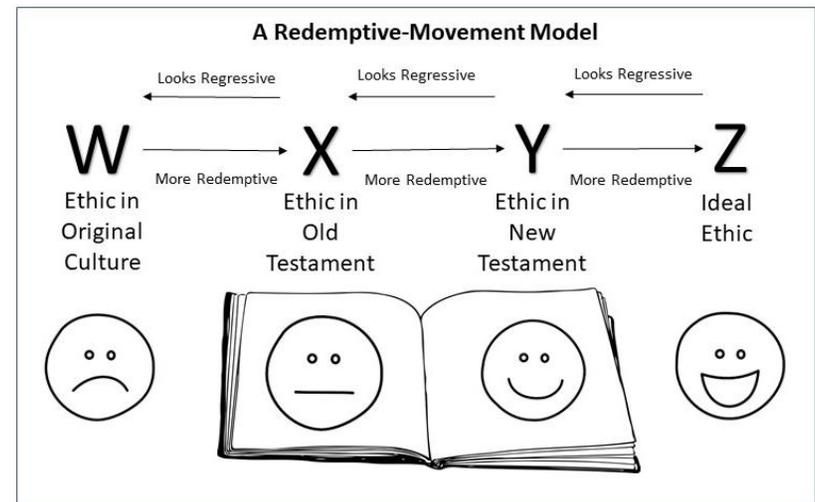
²³ Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for human masters,

²⁴ since you know that you will receive an inheritance
from the Lord as a reward.

It is the Lord Christ you are serving.

²⁵ Anyone who does wrong will be repaid for their wrongs,
and there is no favoritism.

^{4:1} Masters, provide your slaves with what is right and fair,
because you know that you also have a Master in heaven.



X passages referenced: Exod 20:17; Deut 22:23-24; Lev 19:20;
Exod 21:1-10, 20, 28-32; 21:26; Deut 15:12-15; Exod 21:16; 23:12, 15-16

Y passages referenced: Col 3:22; 3:11; Philem 12-21; 1 Tim 6:1

THE BOTTOM LINE

_____ the _____ is not as _____ as it appears once we
realize God was _____ his _____ toward an _____.
_____ breaks _____!

On Christianity and the Abolishment of Slavery

The most practical, nonviolent way to abolish slavery in a society more permeated by slavery than nearly any other society in history was to change the way the people in power looked at slaves.

Christianity, as a classless religion in which slaves became prominent church leaders and heroes of the faith, was well equipped to ultimately abolish slavery by this long-term route. In the meantime, it had the moral power to give slaves self-esteem and strength for their task until slavery had been abolished....

Not everyone caught the liberating message present in the gospel; some church leaders like Augustine wanted to maintain the structures of society, including slavery, while arguing that slaves must be treated well...It was this element of social conservatism rather than the liberating power of the gospel that came to predominate in the centuries following Paul, and it is for this reason that Christianity did not become the decisive force of abolitionism that it could have been in late antiquity.

But other Christian leaders, like John Chrysostom, had the insight to perceive the radical equality proclaimed in the Christian gospel; he argued that free Christians should buy, empower with skills, and then free slaves. This strain of Christian pietism continued in the modern period through figures like Wesley and Wilberforce into the strongly evangelical abolitionism movements of Britain and the United States (Craig Keener, *Paul, Women, and Wives*, 204).