

Introduction: The Bible & Slavery

Some Initial Observations

- * Nearly everyone today agrees that slavery is an evil institution.
- * Nearly every human society throughout all of history has, until very recently, included some form of slavery.

Slavery in the World of the NT

- * Slavery in the ancient world was not based on race or ethnicity, but was instead the result primarily of conquest (captives were sold into slavery) or economic hardship (people sold themselves or their children into slavery to alleviate poverty).
- * Slaves were also not a social class (they came from various classes and educational backgrounds). Although it wasn't a particularly desirable position in society, it wasn't actually the bottom of the socioeconomic pyramid (that was impoverished free persons).
- * To be enslaved was not necessarily a permanent position. Slaves were able to save money and own property (many aspired to own their own slaves one day). They also had the opportunity to purchase their own freedom and many even acquired Roman citizenship.

Slavery and the Teachings of Scripture

- * While the Bible does not explicitly condemn the institution of slavery, it does provide the theological and philosophical framework by which it can be rightly condemned and purged from human society.

⇒ *All men are _____ in God's image*

Gen. 1:26-27—²⁶ Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.” ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

⇒ *Believers are _____ in Christ's image*

Col. 3:11—Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.

Key Point: When we consider the NT references to slavery, we see that although God is not unconcerned with systems of oppression, He is primarily concerned with the quality of His people's _____ to the truth of the Gospel message, even in the midst of oppression.

Sound Doctrine & Godly Living - Titus 2:1-15

Instructions to Bondservants

Titus 2:9-10—⁹ Bondservants are to be submissive to their own masters in everything; they are to be well-pleasing, not argumentative, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good faith, so that in everything they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior.

- Although his prior instructions would have applied to bondservants, he specifically addresses them because of the *unique opportunities* to share the Gospel afforded to them by their position in society.

⇒ We know from early _____ of Christianity that it was not uncommon for slaves to come to faith in Christ.

“Far from us, say the Christians, be any man possessed of any culture or wisdom or judgment; their aim is to convince only worthless and contemptible people, idiots, slaves, poor women, and children... These are the only ones they manage to turn into believers.”

—Celsus, quoted by Origen in *Against Celsus* (3rd Century)

- Bondservants are to be characterized by a certain *attitude* or *disposition* towards those in authority over them.

“be submissive”—ὑποτάσσω (*hypotassō*)—To arrange under or to subordinate; to recognize an established order or structure.

⇒ This term (used in the infinitive tense) describes the relationship of bondservants to their own _____.

⇒ They were to exhibit this attitude _____ (*“in all things”*).

- A series of contrasts is used to describe the *conduct* that should be characteristic of bondservants.

(+) They must be _____ - _____ —εὐάρεστος (*euairestos*)—Fully agreeable:—acceptable(-ted); to perform well.

⇒ This term is used as a measurement of acceptable _____. It is used most often in the NT of pleasing God.

Rom. 12:1—I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

2 Cor. 5:9—So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.

For Additional Study

Article:
*“Why It's Wrong to Say
the Bible Supports Slavery”*
By Gavin Ortland

Lecture:
“Does the Bible Support Slavery?”
By Peter Williams

*These resources are both from
The Gospel Coalition and can be
accessed by searching the above
title and the letters “TGC.”*

(-) **They must not be** _____—ἀντιλέγω (*antilegō*)—To speak against, gainsay, contradict; to refuse to obey or follow instructions.

⇒ Bondservants must not be _____ or _____ towards those that they serve.

(-) **They must not** _____—νοσφίζω (*nosphizō*)—To set apart or separate for one's self; to steal or embezzle.

⇒ Bondservants must not give in to the temptation to pursue _____ gain. “pilfering for themselves”)

(+) **They must show themselves** _____

⇒ The phrase “showing all good faith” is intended to emphasize the importance of outward _____ for those who claim the name of Christ. (“showing forth for themselves”)

⇒ This phrase also probably serves to set the _____ for obedience to one’s earthly master.
“...but showing complete faithfulness with respect to what is good.”

- **It is important for bondservants to conduct themselves in a godly manner in order that they might effectively witness to the truth of the Gospel.**

“adorn”—κοσμέω (*kosmeō*)— to put in proper order, i.e. decorate (literally); to gain honor for something (figuratively).

⇒ The godly conduct of bondservants would speak well of the Christian faith to those who interacted with them.

“the doctrine of God our Savior”

⇒ This is a reference to the “sound doctrine” mentioned in 2:1 and emphasizes the _____ purpose of godly character displayed in the lives of Christians.

⇒ The emphasis here is on the _____ work of God in the lives of His people and its outward demonstration.

Key Point: Godly character is a tangible demonstration of the _____, _____, and _____ of the Gospel message and its implications for daily living.

Applying the Instructions to Bondservants

- These instructions are best applied in our lives in the context of our _____.

Questions to Consider: 1.

2.

3.

Col. 3:23-24—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.

Concluding Thoughts

1. **Slave/servant imagery is used in the NT to emphasize the _____ of the Son of God which was necessary in order to secure the salvation of His people.**

Phil. 2:7-8—⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant [*bondservant* or *slave*], being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

2. **Slave/servant imagery was appropriated by the authors of the NT to illustrate their understanding of the cost and privilege of _____.**

Titus 1:1a—Paul, a servant [*bondservant* or *slave*] of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ, for the sake of the faith of God's elect...

Jude 1a—Jude, a servant [*bondservant* or *slave*] of Jesus Christ...

3. **The NT instructions to slaves demonstrate that God calls all people to live faithfully as His _____.**

1 Cor. 1:26-28—²⁶ For consider your calling, brothers: not many of you were wise according to worldly standards, not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. ²⁷ But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; ²⁸ God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are...