

# Chapter 6

## Instructions To Slaves

**1TI 6:1 Let all [Christians] who are under the yoke as slaves regard their own [personal, earthly] masters as worthy [deserving] of all honor [full respect] so that the name of God and our doctrine [teaching, the gospel] may not be spoken against [slandered, defamed].**

- Gr. “doulos” [doo los] “slave, bond-servant”
  - “Zugos” [zoo gos]- “yoke”
  - “time” [tee may]- honor
  - “didaskalia” [dee das ka lee a]- “teaching, doctrine.”
  - “blasphemeo” - [blas fe meh o] - “speak against, blasphemy, defamed”
  - “despotes” [des po tace] - master, lord
1. Slavery was very common in the Roman empire.
    - a. There were literally millions of slaves.
      - 1) It is estimated the Roman empire had a population of 125 million.
      - 2) There were about 60 million slaves.
    - b. The institution of slavery was legal, and the master had the power of life and death over the slave.
  2. The gospel was preached to all men. (Mk. 16:15; Matt. 28:19; Acts 1:8).
    - a. The gospel offered men salvation from sin. (Heb. 2:9; Jn. 3:16; Acts 10:34, 35; Rom. 1:16; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9).
    - b. **It did not offer men freedom from slavery to a human master.**
    - c. If becoming a Christian led to freedom from slavery, one might accept Christ for the wrong reason.
    - d. Christians were to have full respect for their masters - “worthy of all honor.”
    - e. Christians were to obey their masters, not rebel against them.
    - f. Masters would forbid their slaves to be Christians if Christians rebelled against their masters once they became a Christian.
    - g. Masters and others outside would argue, “Does your newly espoused religion prompt you to rebel and violate the law of the empire?”

- h. God and Christianity would suffer blasphemy and persecution if slaves were rebellious.
3. Many slaves were converted to Christ, and some of their masters were converted.
    - a. Christ promised sweet rest. (Matt. 11:28-30), and promised eternal life to those who obey Him. (Jn. 3:36).
    - b. They wanted to be free from their sins and have a hope of heaven.
    - c. **Note:** Some slaves may have become Christians on their own. Some may have even been encouraged by their Christian masters to become believers. Evidently some unbelieving masters permitted their slaves to become Christians. Some became Christians at the displeasure of their masters and faced harsh treatment.
  4. Some were strongly tempted to rebel for a variety of reasons.
    - a. Some might rebel because freedom in Christ meant to them that they were free from earthly masters.
    - b. Some might rebel because of harsh treatment- some due of a wicked master and some due perhaps to their own conduct.
    - c. Some might rebel because of a misunderstanding of Galatians 3:27, 28.

**GAL 3:27 For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

**GAL 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

- 1). These verses did not mean there are no distinctions in this world or the church. The Jew does not cease to be a Jew nor does the Greek cease to be a Greek. The same is true in regard to gender and slavery.
- 2) The meaning is that “in Christ Christ” there are no distinctions. All are part of the one body and are saved by Jesus Christ. The master and slave were on an equality in the church. Both were saved and children of God.
- 3) They were free in Christ, and some thought this meant they were free from their masters, especially if they had a Christian master.

5. The New Testament teaches a slave could be a Christian.

**1CO 7:21 Were you called while a slave? Do not worry about it; but if you are able also to become free, rather do that.**

**1CO 7:22 For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord's freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ's slave.**

- a. God loved slaves, and they could be saved. (Jn. 3:16). “whosoever” literally includes “all” who accept Christ.
- b. Yes, if they could legally gain their freedom, they should certainly do so.
- c. They should know that being a slave did not preclude one from heaven
- d. All of us are Christ’s slaves. (1 Cor. 4:1; Jas. 1:1). We voluntarily submit to Christ in all things.

6. **The New Testament instructs slaves to obey their masters.**

TIT 2:9 Urge bondslaves to be subject to their own masters **in everything**, to be well-pleasing, not argumentative,

TIT 2:10 not pilfering [stealing], but showing all good faith that they may adorn [glorify] the doctrine [teaching] of God our Savior in every respect.

COL 3:22 Slaves, **in all things** obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord.

EPH 6:5 Slaves, **be obedient to those who are your masters** according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ; 6 not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart. 7 With good will render service, as to the Lord, and not to men, 8 knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.

1PE 2:18 Servants, **be submissive to your masters with all respect**, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.

1PE 2:19 For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a man bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly.

1PE 2:20 For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God.

1PE 2:21 For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps,

a. Loyalty to the heavenly Master did not relieve one of faithfulness to his earthly master. **See Matt. 6:24. This verse means we cannot make God our God and riches our god. It does not mean one could not serve an earthly master and God. Many were faithful to God and their earthly masters.**

b.. They were to serve their earthly masters with wholehearted service - not just when they were looking. (Col. 3:22; Eph. 6:5-8).

c. **Christians did not have the power to overthrow slavery.** They had no weapons, no army and would have failed without the miraculous intervention of God.

d. Any attempt to overthrow slavery would cause men to speak evil against God and Christianity.

e. It would lead to persecution, and annihilation of most or all Christians.

5. **The New Testament does not condemn slavery, but regulates it.**

a. Instructions are given to both Christian masters and Christian slaves.

b. There are no instructions given to non-Christian masters and slaves, but this does not mean they are not accountable to God for their actions. (Rom. 1:18-31; 14:12; 2 Cor. 5:10).

6. It teaches principles that full lead to the abandonment of slavery. (Matt. 22:39; 7:12; 13:34, 35; Eph. 4:32).

7. In places where the gospel is preached and widely accepted slavery slowly disappears.

### **Instructions To Christian Slaves With Christian Masters**

**1TI 6:2 And let those who have believers [Christians] as their masters not be disrespectful to them because [on the ground] they are brethren, but let them serve them all the more [even better], because those who partake of the benefit [from their service] are believers and beloved. Teach and preach these principles [things, duties].**

- “pistos” - [pee stos] believing

- “since those who benefit by their service are believers and beloved.” RSV
1. Christians slaves are not resent their Christian masters., but they are to obey them.
  2. They would be tempted to say, “If my master were really a Christian, he would not keep me a slave.”
  3. They should serve them even **“all the more,“because those who partake of the benefit are believers.”**
    - a. They should be grateful they had a kind, Christian master to serve rather than a tyrant.
    - b. Their labors would benefit a Christian master who would in turn benefit Christianity.
  4. “Teach and preach these principles” -
    - a. Timothy is commanded to “keep on teaching and preaching” these things. “parakaleo” [pa ra ke leh o] has the idea of “exhort, encourage.” KJV has “exhort.”
    - b. He nor we must never grow weary of preaching the truth.
    - c. Truth is often slowly accepted, but it must be preached.

### **Book of Philemon**

8 Therefore, though I have enough confidence in Christ to order you [Philemon] to do that which is proper, 9 yet for love's sake I rather appeal to you-- since I am such a person as Paul, the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus--

- Paul was in prison at Rome when he penned this letter - about 62 A.D.
- He commands the slave Onesimus to return to Philemon his master.

### **Runaway Onesimus Was Converted By Paul Formerly A Worthless Slave**

10 I appeal to you for my child, whom I have begotten in my imprisonment, Onesimus,  
11 who formerly was useless to you, but now is useful both to you and to me.

### **Onesimus Sent Back To Philemon**

12 And I have sent him back to you in person, that is, sending my very heart, 13 whom I wished to keep with me, that in your behalf he might minister to me in my imprisonment for the gospel; 14 but without your consent I did not want to do anything, that your goodness should not be as it were by compulsion, but of your own free will.

### **Onesimus Would Be His Slave Forever (Until death or release)**

15 For perhaps he was for this reason parted from you for a while, that you should have him back forever,  
16 no longer as a slave, but more than a slave, a beloved brother, especially to me, but how much more to you, both in the flesh [as a servantg] and in the Lord [as a fellow Christian].

### **Philemon Urged To Accept Onesimus As He Would Paul**

17 If then you regard me a partner [as a Christian brother], accept him as you would me. 18 But if he has wronged you in any way, or owes you anything, charge that to my account; 19 I, Paul, am writing this with my own hand, I will repay it (lest I should mention to you that you owe to me even your own self as well). 20 Yes, brother, let me benefit from you in the Lord; refresh my heart in Christ.

- “yes, brother, do me this favour for the Lord’s sake.”

### **Optimistic Philemon Would Do More Than He Was Urged To Do**

21 Having confidence in your obedience [that you will do what I desire], I write to you, since I know that you will do even more than what I say. 22 And at the same time also prepare me a lodging; for I hope that through your prayers I shall be given to you.

- “be permitted to come to you” - Paul wanted to come to Philemon if it was the Lord’s will.

### **Scriptures To Christian Masters**

**EPH 6:9 And, [Christian] masters, do the same things to them [slaves], and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.**

**COL 4:1 Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven**

1. Paul instructs Christians masters not to abuse or threaten their slaves. (Eph. 6:9).
2. They are to treat slaves with “justice and fairness.”
  - a. Note Eph. 6:9 “and give up threatening”
  - b. Masters would threaten slaves with beatings, imprisonment, death, selling loved ones, etc.
3. They are accountable to God who will not show “partiality” to these masters.
4. They must never forget they have a Master in heaven who will judge their conduct.

### **Slavery Today**

1. Slavery is repulsive to freedom loving people.
2. There is still slavery in the world today.
3. There are more people in slavery today than in the first century.
4. We should use our freedom and voting power to oppose slavery in any form.
5. We should encourage our government to use its influence to oppose slavery here and in other places.
6. Those who are slaves and those who are masters are amenable to these teachings found in the New Testament.
7. We should vigorously proclaim the gospel that will eradicate slavery **from sin** and **from men**.
8. It is worse to be a slave to sin than to be a literal slave with a human master, though both are bad.

9. It is certain Paul would advise slaves to obey Acts 5:29 if their masters would forbid to obey Christ or force them to denounce Christ.
  - a. Under the Roman system this would mean certain death for the slave if the master so desired.
  - b. Those who died for “righteousness sake” had a home in heaven. (Matt. 5:10-12).

### **“A Different Doctrine”**

**1TI 6:3 If anyone advocates [teaches] a different [false] doctrine [teaching], and does not agree with sound [healthy, wholesome] words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ, and with the doctrine [teaching] conforming to godliness,**

- “heterodidaskaleo” [he te ro dee das ka le o] - “teach a different doctrine”
  - “the doctrine [teaching] conforming to godliness” McCord “with godly teaching”
1. **“A different doctrine”** is “doctrine” [teaching] that differs from what Christ and the apostles taught.
    - a. See 1 Tim.1:3-9; 4:1-5; 2 Tim. 3:2-9; Tit. 1:10-16.
    - b. See Galatians 1:6-9; 1 Pet. 4:11
  2. **“does not agree with sound [healthy] words”** -
    - a. One who opposes the teachings of Christ and the apostles may think he is full of knowledge and very wise, but this is far from the truth.
    - b. The church then and now must feed on “healthy doctrine.”
    - c. Only healthy, sound, wholesome doctrine produces health, sound, wholesome Christians.

### **Description Of Those Advocating A Different Doctrine (Teaching)**

**1TI 6:4 he is conceited [puffed up with pride] and understands nothing; but he has a morbid [unhealthy] interest in controversial questions and disputes about words [word-battles], out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language [malicious, hurtful talk], evil suspicions [surmisings],**

1. **“he is conceited”** - He is puffed up with pride and lack the humility Jesus requires. He thinks he knows more than God and His Son.
2. **“and understands nothing”** - He does not have a true knowledge of God, and His will.
3. **“he has a morbid [unhealthy, sick] interest in controversial questions and disputes about words”**
  - a. See 1 Tim. 1:3,4
  - b. Some were sick or diseased about questions or false issues.
  - c. The Gr. “noseo” [no seh o] means “sick, a diseased appetite.”

4. “out of which arise envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions”

- a. These things are all the consequent or product of the ignorant, conceited mind.
- b. This produced the evils listed here.

**1TI 6:5 and constant friction [wrangling] between men of depraved [corrupt] mind and deprived [robbed] of the truth, who suppose that godliness [religion, service to God] is a means of [financial] gain.**

- “the truth” - God’s word, gospel
  - “deprived” is from “apostereo” [a po ste reh o] - “deprive, despoil, defraud”
1. Some believed “godliness” is a money making business, and do not care what they do to get it.
  2. There have been some both past and present “who suppose that godliness is a means of gain.”
    - a. Some serve God thinking this will make them rich.
    - b. Corrupt men often exploit Christians for gain.
    - c. Some lose faith if they are poor because they falsely believe that true believers will all be rich.
    - d. Some are duped into doing wrong because false teachers affirmed they [the false teachers] are prosperous because they are doing and teaching the right thing. They embrace the false teaching hopeful they too will become rich.

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