

Titus

Lesson #15, Chapter 2:9-10

Before we look at the verses on slaves in this chapter, read what John MacArthur wrote about slaves in his commentary on the book of Titus.

“The Roman Empire depended on bondslaves for most of its labor, and they were an essential part of society and the economy. Many, if not most, slaves were abused and often brutalized. For even minor infractions, or simply for displeasing their owners in some way, they could be severely beaten or killed. Many of them, however, were given great responsibility and authority in running a household and sometimes a family farm or other business. Some of them – frequently those who were captured in war – were highly educated and cultured, in many cases having superior education to that of their owners. Slaves were allowed to marry and raise their own families, their children becoming slaves like their parents. A slave sometimes was given a small parcel of land on which to grow crops to feed his family and perhaps earn a small income.

But Paul does not address the condition of slavery. He offers no judgment about its basic fairness or morality. He simply recognizes that it exists and deals with the attitude that Christian bondslaves should have toward their own masters, whether those masters were believers or unbelievers.

Although slavery was carefully regulated under Mosaic law, neither the Old nor New Testaments condemns slavery as such. Social strata are recognized and even designed by God for man’s good. Some people will be served and some will serve others. That is the nature of human society. *How they treat each other is what concerns God* [emphasis added].”

1. What instruction is given to Christian bondslaves? What attitudes they are to possess? Are there any parameters given? Any commands? Any motivators for service given? Read Titus 2:9-10; see also Eph. 6:5-8; Col. 3:22-25; 1 Tim. 6:1-2; 1 Pet. 2:18-20.
2. Technically, slaves are already subject to their masters by nature of their position, so what kind of submission is meant by the command in verse 9?

3. How might a person's service change if they consider themselves working *as for the Lord rather than for men*?

4. God says that slaves are to be subject to their masters *in everything*. As with a wife's submission (Col. 3:18), what exception is given? See verse 10; Col. 3:18; and the verses from #1 to form your answer.
 - a. What kinds of things would not be permissible to submit to?

5. Our nation fought a war over slavery. Yet, what possibly surprising omission do you find in these verses on slaves?

6. Though slavery is no longer a practice of the United States there are still places where slavery is practiced. No matter what the social status of another person, how are we as Christians to respond to one another? See Rom. 3:22-23; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; Gal. 3:25-28; Col. 3:10-11.

7. Slaves are urged to be *well-pleasing*. With the exception of this verse, that term in the New Testament is always used of being acceptable and well-pleasing *to God*. Look up the following verses to note how we are to please God, then comment on how a slave is to exhibit that same attitude toward his master (Rom. 12:1-2; 14:18-19; 2 Cor. 5:9; Eph. 5:8-10; Phil. 4:18).

8. The application for this is obvious, whether you work in or outside of your home, what kinds of attitudes should accompany your work?

9. What is the next area addressed to slaves in verse 9? What does the Bible say about this? See Phil. 2:14-15.

10. What are some words that describe the *opposite* of being argumentative?

11. What's the difference between arguing a point and pointing out an error or oversight?

12. Slaves are urged not to *pilfer*. What does that word mean? Why would slaves need to guard against that?

13. What do you learn about *pilfering* from the examples in the following verses? See 2 Kings 5:20-24; Jn. 12:6; Acts 5:2-3.

14. What does the Bible say about stealing (Ex. 20:15; Eph. 4:28)? Is there a difference between stealing and pilfering?

15. Of course, you would never steal, but is there anything in your possession that you need to return? Have you borrowed something and kept it longer than you should have? What about pilfering? Maybe you have a right to use or take something, but do you take more than your share or take it without asking? Do not put off dealing with these issues.

16. *Showing all good faith* could be rendered *show forth all good faithfulness*. Look up the following verses to see the importance of being faithful: Num. 12:7; Prov. 25:13; Matt. 25:21; 1 Cor. 4:17; Heb. 3:2, 5-6.

17. Are you trustworthy, faithful to follow through on the tasks you've been given, whether by boss, husband, or God? Generally, can others rely upon you? Name one specific way you can grow more in this area.

18. Finally, we arrive at the purpose behind a slave's exemplary behavior. What is it (verse 10)?

19. Define *adorn*.

20. What's the purpose behind the purpose? Or why adorn the doctrine of God? See Titus 2:11-14; 1 Pet. 2:9-10.

21. It is amazing that God did not tell Christian masters to free their slaves or that Christian slaves were to get their freedom, but rather they were to live within the confines of that relationship and to be an influence and a light *in the midst of*, rather than *out of*. Think about times when God taught you in the midst of something, rather than taking you *out of it*. How has that been used for good in your life?