

How to Serve God as Someone Else's Slave – Part 1

Colossians 3:22

NKJ	Bondservants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh, not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but in sincerity of heart, fearing God.
BGT	Οἱ δούλοι, ὑπακούετε κατὰ πάντα τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις, μὴ ἐν ὀφθαλμοδουλίᾳ ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι, ἀλλ' ἐν ἀπλότῃ καρδίᾳ φοβούμενοι τὸν κύριον.

REVIEW

If then you were raised with Christ,

- **Be Seeking the Above Things (Col 3:1)**
- **Be Thinking the Above Things (Col 3:2)**
- **Put to Death Sinful Motivations (Col 3:5-7)**
- **Put Off Sinful Actions (Col 3:8-11)**
- **Clothe Yourself with Spiritual Clothing (Col 3:12-14)**
- **Let the Peace of Christ Rule Between You and Others (Col 3:15)**
- **Let the Word of Christ Dwell in You Richly (Col 3:16-17)**
- **As Wives, Be Subjecting Yourselves to Your Husbands (Col 3:18)**
- **As Husbands, Be Loving Your Wives, and Do Not Be Embittered Towards Them (Col 3:19)**
- **As Children, Be Obeying Your Parents in All Things (Col 3:20)**
- **As Fathers, Do Not Be Agitating Your Children (Col 3:21)**

The Group Addressed

What is a slave?

- Definition: Someone required to serve another, to do another's bidding
 - (FRI) one who serves in obedience to another's will;
 - (LN) becoming the property of an owner;
 - (EDNT) in contrast to the synonyms (e.g., διακονέω) the emphasis of the words with the δουλ- stem lies "on the service being that of a slave, i.e. on a repressive or at least dependent form of service under the complete control of a superior";
 - (WSNTDICT) a slave, a servant, spoken of involuntary service; metaphorically spoken of voluntary service, a servant, implying obedience, devotion;
 - (THAYER) metaphorically, one who gives himself up wholly to another's will.
- Derivation: Most think it comes from δέω (deo - "to tie, to bind").
- Used in contrast to:
 - (1) a master (Col 3:22);
 - (2) a freeman (Col 3:11);
 - (3) a son (Gal 4:7);
 - (4) a brother (Philemon 1:16) or
 - (5) a citizen

Who is a slave today?

- Those who are under the complete control of others
- In an extended way, those that work for others, under the partial control of them
- Not everyone can or will be self-sufficient – Not everyone will be "the boss"
- We are all under authority
- Our economic status is not the most eternal issue

1 Cor 7:21-23 Were you called *while* a slave? Do not be concerned about it; but if you can be made free, rather use *it*. For he who is called in the Lord *while* a slave is the Lord's freedman. Likewise he who is called *while* free is Christ's slave. You were bought at a price; do not become slaves of men.

★★ **God is more concerned about my conduct than my position** ★★

★★ **My goal is not to upgrade my situation (though it is certainly encouraged if possible). My goal is to please God in whatever situation I find myself.** ★★

δοῦλος ἐκλήθης, μή σοι μελέτω· ἀλλ' εἰ καὶ δύνασαι ἐλεύθερος γενέσθαι, μᾶλλον χρῆσαι. ὁ γὰρ ἐν κυρίῳ κληθεὶς δοῦλος ἀπελεύθερος κυρίου ἐστίν, ὁμοίως ὁ ἐλεύθερος κληθεὶς δοῦλός ἐστιν Χριστοῦ. τιμῆς ἠγοράσθητε· μὴ γίνεσθε δοῦλοι ἀνθρώπων.

- Those of any status are equal before God:

1 Cor 12:13 For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body -- whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free -- and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.

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

Eph 6:8 knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is* a slave or free.

Col 3:11 where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ *is* all and in all.

★★ **My value to God is not based upon my situation in life, but upon my standing in Christ. ★★**

★★ **My reward from God is not based upon my situation in life, but upon my response to God in whatever situation He chooses to place me. ★★**

The Command

What does it mean?

- “To hear under” – to respond to – to be listening and obeying (same as children in Col 3:20)
- Present tense – “continually be hearing under”
- Usage:

Acts 12:13 And as Peter knocked at the door of the gate, a girl named Rhoda came to answer.

Rom 6:12 Therefore do not let sin reign in your mortal body, that you should obey it in its lusts. (εἰς τὸ ὑπακούειν ταῖς ἐπιθυμίαις αὐτοῦ)

Rom 10:16 But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, "Lord, who has believed our report?"

2 Thes 1:8 in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thes 3:14 And if anyone does not obey our word in this epistle, note that person and do not keep company with him, that he may be ashamed.

Heb 11:8 By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to the place which he would receive as an inheritance. ...

1 Pet 3:6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

To what extent?

- In every area (same assignment/wording as children to parents)
★★ **Am I listening to what my boss says, and am I doing what I am told to do? ★★**

The Direction of the Command

Whom are slaves commanded to respond to?

- Lit. “to the lords according to flesh”
- God acknowledges temporary, earthly realms and relationships.
★★ **Am I living the temporary in light of eternity? ★★**
★★ **Do I fight against what is just part of life now? ★★**

The Description of the Command

Negatively – How are slaves NOT to “obey” their fleshly lords?

- Prohibited Action: You are not to be obeying in an “eye-slaving” way.
★★ **Do I work only when people are watching? ★★**
- Prohibited Motivation: You are not to be obeying to please men.
★★ **Do I work to please people? ★★**

Positively – How ARE slaves to “obey” their fleshly lords?

- Commanded Action: Obeying with singleness of heart (possibly “untwisted” or “not braided”)
★★ **Am I fully committed to doing what God wants as a “slave”? ★★**
- Commanded Motivation: Obeying because you are fearing the Lord.
★★ **Is my motivation to obey God in everything that I do? ★★**

Parallel Passages (this is a big deal to God!): Eph 6:5-9; 1 Tim 6:1-2; Titus 2:9-10; 1 Pet 2:18-25

Parallel Passages:

Eph 6:5-9 ⁵ Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; ⁶ not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, ⁷ with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸ knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether *he is a slave or free*. ⁹ And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

⁵ Οἱ δοῦλοι, ὑπακούετε τοῖς κατὰ σάρκα κυρίοις μετὰ φόβου καὶ τρόμου ἐν ἀπλότῃ τῆς καρδίας ὑμῶν ὡς τῷ Χριστῷ, ⁶ μὴ κατ' ὀφθαλμοδοσίαν ὡς ἀνθρωπάρεσκοι ἀλλ' ὡς δοῦλοι Χριστοῦ ποιῶντες τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ ἐκ ψυχῆς, ⁷ μετ' εὐνοίας δουλεύοντες ὡς τῷ κυρίῳ καὶ οὐκ ἀνθρώποις, ⁸ εἰδότες ὅτι ἕκαστος ἐάν τι ποιῆσῃ ἀγαθόν, τοῦτο κομίζεται παρὰ κυρίου εἴτε δοῦλος εἴτε ἐλεύθερος. ⁹ Καὶ οἱ κύριοι, τὰ αὐτὰ ποιεῖτε πρὸς αὐτούς, ἀνιέντες τὴν ἀπειλήν, εἰδότες ὅτι καὶ αὐτῶν καὶ ὑμῶν ὁ κύριός ἐστιν ἐν οὐρανοῖς καὶ προσωποληψία οὐκ ἔστιν παρ' αὐτῷ.

1 Tim 6:1-10 Let as many bondservants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, so that the name of God and *His* doctrine may not be blasphemed. ² And those who have believing masters, let them not despise *them* because they are brethren, but rather serve *them* because those who are benefited are believers and beloved. Teach and exhort these things. ³ If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, *even* the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, ⁴ he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, ⁵ useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a *means of gain*. From such withdraw yourself. ⁶ Now godliness with contentment is great gain. ⁷ For we brought nothing into *this* world, and *it is* certain we can carry nothing out. ⁸ And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. ⁹ But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and *into* many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. ¹⁰ For the love of money is a root of all *kinds of evil*, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

Ἵσοι εἰσὶν ὑπὸ ζυγῶν δοῦλοι, τοὺς ἰδίους δεσπότας πάσης τιμῆς ἀξίους ἡγείσθωσαν, ἵνα μὴ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ διδασκαλία βλασφημηθῇ. ² οἱ δὲ πιστοὺς ἔχοντες δεσπότας μὴ καταφρονεῖτωσαν, ὅτι ἀδελφοὶ εἰσιν, ἀλλὰ μάλλον δουλεύετωσαν, ὅτι πιστοὶ εἰσιν καὶ ἀγαπητοὶ οἱ τῆς εὐεργεσίας ἀντιλαμβανόμενοι. Ταῦτα δίδασκε καὶ παρακάλει.

Titus 2:9-10 ⁹ Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all *things*, not answering back, ¹⁰ not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things.

⁹ Δούλους ἰδίους δεσπόταις ὑποτάσσεσθαι ἐν πᾶσιν, εὐαρέστους εἶναι, μὴ ἀντιλέγοντας, ¹⁰ μὴ νοσφιζομένους, ἀλλὰ πᾶσαν πίστιν ἐνδεικνυμένους ἀγαθῆν, ἵνα τὴν διδασκαλίαν τὴν τοῦ σωτῆρος ἡμῶν θεοῦ κοσμῶσιν ἐν πᾶσιν.

1 Pet 2:18-25 ¹⁸ Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. ¹⁹ For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. ²⁰ For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is* commendable before God. ²¹ For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: ²² "Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth"; ²³ who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴ who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness -- by whose stripes you were healed. ²⁵ For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

¹⁸ Οἱ οἰκέται ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ τοῖς δεσπόταις, οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπιεικέσιν ἀλλὰ καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς. ¹⁹ τοῦτο γὰρ χάρις εἰ διὰ συνείδησιν θεοῦ ὑποφέρει τις λύπας πάσχων ἀδίκως. ²⁰ ποῖον γὰρ κλέος εἰ ἀμαρτάνοντες καὶ κολαφιζόμενοι ὑπομενεῖτε; ἀλλ' εἰ ἀγαθοποιῶντες καὶ πάσχοντες ὑπομενεῖτε, τοῦτο χάρις παρὰ θεοῦ. ²¹ εἰς τοῦτο γὰρ ἐκλήθητε, ὅτι καὶ Χριστὸς ἔπαθεν ὑπὲρ ὑμῶν ὑμῖν ὑπολιμπάνων ὑπογραμμὸν ἵνα ἐπακολουθήσητε τοῖς ἵχνεσιν αὐτοῦ, ²² ὃς ἀμαρτίαν οὐκ ἐποίησεν οὐδὲ εὗρεθῆ δόλος ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ, ²³ ὃς λοιδορούμενος οὐκ ἀντελοιδορεῖ, πάσχων οὐκ ἠπέλει, παρεδίδου δὲ τῷ κρίνοντι δικαίως. ²⁴ ὃς τὰς ἀμαρτίας ἡμῶν αὐτὸς ἀνήνεγκεν ἐν τῷ σώματι αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον, ἵνα ταῖς ἀμαρτίαις ἀπογενόμενοι τῇ δικαιοσύνῃ ζήσωμεν, οὐ τῷ μάλωπι ἰάθητε. ²⁵ ἦτε γὰρ ὡς πρόβατα πλανώμενοι, ἀλλὰ ἐπεστράφητε νῦν ἐπὶ τὸν ποιμένα καὶ ἐπίσκοπον τῶν ψυχῶν ὑμῶν.