

Bible Study 2017-18 (1 Timothy)

1 Timothy 6:1-2: The Bible's view of slavery

6:1: "Let as many bondservants [slaves] 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."

- The Bible neither condemns nor approves of slavery. 1 Cor. 7:20-22.
- The Bible condemns the kind of slavery practiced during the civil war.
- Paul speaks of how Christianity ought to impact slavery (without waging a war).
- Christian slaves must count their own masters worthy of all honor.
- "So that the name of God and His doctrine may not be blasphemed."

6:2: "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."

- What if your master is a Christian?
- “Teach and exhort these things.”
- What Paul says generally to every Christian who holds down a job.

Alan Strange: “Had Christ or Paul ordered the end of all slavery, it would have rendered the gospel revolutionary and made its central concern social, political and economic equity.... This would have obscured the true spiritual message of the gospel – salvation in Christ to all who believe in Him – and would have rendered the Christian faith another competing, indeed radical political agenda, especially in the Greco-Roman world, with so much of the population in slavery” (*MARS Journal 2014*, article on spirituality of the church, pp. 114-115)

Ryken: “Christians must be faithful in all working situations for God’s glory. First, “every boss deserves a full-day’s work from every Christian employee.” Second, “when it comes to honoring one’s boss, the Bible does not grant any exceptions for bad working situations [1 Peter 2:18].” Third, we need to show all honor to our bosses. “It does not say that workers need to show respect only when their bosses are in the office. It does not give employees the right to gossip about management as long as they are in the break room when they do it. It does not even allow Christians to complain about their jobs when they go back home.” Fourth, “Showing full respect is necessary to the missionary purpose of the church.... If Christians are poor workers, then God and his gospel will be brought into disrepute.... Anyone who calls himself a Christian represents Christ to the world.... A Christian who gives anything less than the very best effort puts Jesus Christ in a bad light.” Fifth, “Be sure that your employer and your fellow employees know that you are a Christian, so that your work will be evaluated in the context of your faith.... When people are talking about some current issue around the water cooler, give an answer from a biblical point of view.”

“People often treat their own family members worse than they treat guests. ‘It’s only my brother,’ they say, ‘he’ll get over it.’ Sometimes Christians face the same temptation in their work relationships with other believers – their brothers and sisters in Christ. Some Christian workers take advantage of Christian bosses. They assume they are entitled to special favors because they are brothers and sisters in Christ. They know their boss will be more forgiving (after all, he is a Christian!) so they take liberties they would never dream of taking in a secular workplace.”