



**TITUS:  
THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE GRACE OF GOD  
AND THE FUNCTION OF THE CHURCH**

**Paul's Instruction to Slaves:  
Making the Gospel Attractive in Difficult Circumstances  
Titus 2:9-10**

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**Overview:** Titus is commanded by Paul to speak the things that promote and lead to spiritual health within the local body of Christ. He is to teach the insights that are in line with true, authentic Biblical Christianity. As a result, Titus is given insight on how the older and younger men and women, and those who are slaves, are to live.

**New Testament Slavery vs. American Slavery**

<b>New Testament Slavery</b>	<b>American Slavery</b>
Racial factors played no role	Racial factor played a role
Not kidnapped from home	Kidnapped from home
Respected as human	Dehumanized
Education was encouraged	Education was not encouraged
The majority of slaves could legitimately anticipate being emancipated by the age of 30	No expectation of emancipation
Slaves' individual honor, social status, and economic opportunities were entirely dependent on the status of their respective owners, and they developed no recognizable consciousness of being a distinct group or of suffering a common plight	Recognized that because of their color they shared a common plight
The fact that the owner of slaves owned the bodies and not just the work of the persons in slavery meant that slaves were generally regarded as sexually available without restriction	Women used like animals to birth children for profitable work labor
Slaves were used for an enormous variety of functions in enormously different circumstances such as doctors, teachers, writers, accountants, agents, bailiffs, overseers, secretaries, and sea-captains	Forced into grueling labor, degraded in various ways

Provided slaves the security of room and board, and granted them the privileges of owning property (including their own slaves), of making contracts and, in some cases, of sharing in profits and receiving wages	Room and board, no ownership of anything
Could buy their way out	Indebted for life
Once freed could assimilate easy into society	If escaped, would find it difficult to assimilate into society. Laws created to perpetuate division and demoralization
Diversity of ethnicities	Primarily people of African descent

**I. The Perspectives a 1<sup>st</sup> Century Slave in Crete and a 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> Century American Slave may have had in regards to hearing Titus 2:9-10**

- A. The 1<sup>st</sup> Century Slave in Crete would have probably heard the words of Titus 2:9-10 in light of the insight that freedom was an opportunity (1 Corinthians 7:21) in due time.
- B. Conversely, the American Slave would have probably heard the words of Titus 2:9-10 with the understanding that freedom was not an opportunity any time soon this side of Heaven.
- C. Regardless of their personal experience and condition, the slave was to focus on obedience to Christ in difficult circumstances for the glory of God and in order to make Christianity attractive to their slave owner, while pursuing God-honoring opportunities of working their way out of the difficult circumstances.
- D. As they focused on obedience to Christ in difficult circumstances, they could embrace the fact that God would not leave nor forsake them and would give them what was needed to bear under the difficult circumstances and bring them through it according to His will and good pleasure. (Hebrews 13:5-6, 1 Corinthians 10:13, 1 Peter 2:13-25)
- E. Consider the words of Fredrick Douglas, the African American who escaped American slavery and became a social reformer, abolitionist, orator, and prominent activist of the 1800's:

*"I am filled with unutterable loathing when I contemplate the religious pomp and show, together with the horrible inconsistencies, which everywhere surround me. We have men-stealers for ministers, women-whippers for missionaries, and cradle-plunders for church members. The man who wields the blood-clotted cowskin during the week fills*

*the pulpit on Sunday, and claims to be a minister of the meek and lowly Jesus. The man who robs me of my earnings at the end of the week meets me as class-leader on Sunday morning, to show me the way of life, and the path of salvation. He who sells my sister, for the purposes of prostitution, stands forth as the pious advocate of purity. He who proclaims it a religious duty to read the Bible denies me the right of learning to read the name of God who made me. He who is the religious advocate of marriage robs whole millions of its sacred influence, and leaves them to ravages of wholesale pollution. The warm defender of the sacredness of the family relation is the same that scatters whole families sundering husbands and wives, parents and children, sisters and brothers, leaving the hut vacant, the heart desolate. We see the thief preaching against theft, and the adulterer against adultery. We have men sold to build churches, women sold to support the gospel, and babes sold to purchase Bibles for the poor heathen! All for the glory of God and the good of souls!"<sup>1</sup>*

- F. Imagine trying to apply this passage when the Christianity you see is dehumanizing another individual. When Christianity becomes cozy with the culture, it is no longer a Biblical Christianity-- it is a cultural Christianity.
- G. We must be careful to speak and live the things that are fitting for sound doctrine in relation to authentic Biblical Christianity or we will become cozy with culture, thereby reducing our Christianity to our class, color, country, or civics (political ideologies) instead of raising our class, color, country, or civics to the doctrines, disciplines, and duties of authentic Biblical Christian faith.
- H. If we do not promote and practice authentic Biblical Christianity, the world will see an image of itself wrapped in Christianity (cultural Christianity) instead of seeing the character of God and His mission demonstrated within the culture, presented to the culture, transforming lives within the culture and influencing the culture with God's order of operation for heaven and earth (Biblical Christianity).

**II. Since the legal form of slavery as seen in the 1<sup>st</sup> century as well as in American history is no longer legally allowed, we can evaluate these passages in light of:**

- A. Being stuck in an unjust employment situation as a Christian and you are bound by contract to complete your part because the consequences of quitting are worse than completing the job and would lead you to dishonor God if you left *at that time*.

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<sup>1</sup> Fredrick Douglass, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself (Boston: Anti-Slavery Office, 1845; electronic ed., Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1999), <https://docsouth.unc.edu/neh/douglass/douglass.html>.

- B. Suffering unjustly because of the poor decisions of your employer, resulting in you having to do work that is overwhelming and unfair. There is no other option or opportunity to leave *at that time* which would be beneficial and God-honoring. Leaving *at that time* would only make matters worse for you and or your family.
- C. Working a job you don't want with a boss that sees you as inferior but you have to work because there are no other options or opportunities available *at the time* and your family is in need of your income, therefore, leaving *at that time* would not be God-honoring.
- D. Being limited by the choices of other people and the reality of circumstances beyond your control to work in conditions with an employer who is unfair and unjust. There are no other options or opportunities available *at the time* and leaving *at that time* would not be God-honoring.
- E. The company or area you work in has being taken over by another company or area unexpectedly and you are now having to work for someone that does not have your best interest at heart and is asking you to do what is unreasonable but within the scope of your roles and responsibilities. There are no other options or opportunities available *at the time* and leaving *at that time* would not be God-honoring.
- F. Working as an employee for someone.

**III. Therefore, in order to make authentic Biblical Christianity known and attractive to your employer you must:**

- A. Be subject to your own master in everything – to willingly submit yourself under the authority of the master and follow his/her orders in everything pertaining to your roles and responsibilities unless it violates God's will.
- B. Be well-pleasing to your master – to do all you can to be satisfying and acceptable in your roles and responsibilities to your master as it aligns with God's will.
- C. Not be argumentative – not to be antagonistic and contradictory; not to display an attitude of opposition in matters.
- D. Not be pilfering – not to steal from your master.
- E. Show all good faith – demonstrate that you are reliable, dependable, committed to doing things right in your roles and responsibilities with excellence.
- F. Be willing to do this in order to adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in every respect – demonstrating godly attitudes and actions towards your master to attract your master to consider and embrace Christianity.

#### IV. Questions to Consider:

- A. Are you willingly submitting yourself to follow the directives of your boss in everything as it relates to your roles and responsibilities so long as it does not violate the will of God?
- B. Are you doing all you can to be satisfying and acceptable in your roles and responsibilities to your boss as it aligns with God's will.
- C. Are you antagonistic or complementary to your boss in matters that arise?
- D. Are you adding to the organization or are you taking from organization?
- E. Are you reliable, dependable and committed to doing your job well?
- F. Are you making Christianity attractive or unattractive by your manner and mouth on your job?

#### At the end of the day are you being:

**Faithful** – consistent in following through as you carry out your roles, responsibilities and service in relation to God, family, church, work and others

**Available** – consistently around to receive insight, training and wisdom in order to be and do all that pertains to your roles, responsibilities and service in relation to God, family, church, work and others

**Teachable** – willing to learn, willing to receive instructions, and accepting of instruction in order to carry out your roles, responsibilities and service in relation to God, family, church, work and others according to God's will and ways

#### For those interested in reading additional background information on the subject, please see the following resources:

- "The Roman Empire in the First Century: Slaves & Freeman," PBS, accessed August 24, 2020, [https://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/slaves\\_freemen.html](https://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/slaves_freemen.html).
- S. Scott Bartchy, "Slavery: New Testament," in *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary*, ed. David Noel Freedman (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 65-73.
- J. Warner Wallace, "Four Differences Between New Testament Servitude and New World Slavery," *Cold Case Christianity*, August 5, 2014, <https://coldcasechristianity.com/writings/four-differences-between-new-testament-servitude-and-new-world-slavery/>