

What does the Bible say about slavery?

Read 1 Peter 2:16-20

- There are two Greek words in this passage that are both translated slave. In verse 16 the Greek word is a derivative of the Greek word *Doulos*. This word refers to a person who has no rights, they are owned by their master. This word is often used to describe our relationship to God. In verse 18 we have an entirely different Greek word. Here the Greek word is *Oiketes* (*oy-key-ace*). This word comes from two root words meaning house and servant. This is simply someone who works for you in your house.
- This would mean if you pay someone to clean your house, cut your grass, or to fix or maintain something around the house. This passage would apply. So, in the next couple weeks we are going to talk about how to serve under the authority of your employer.
- **Often we overextend ourselves today and enslave ourselves to money and our career.**
- Today, I want to talk about what the Bible says about slavery to make sure we are on the same page. Because this verse and similar verses were misused to justify slavery in the past.
- **Let me begin by telling you my story.** Now, sometimes you will hear white people say, I have black friends. Sometimes they do and sometimes they just want you to know they are not a racist but they really have not had any black friends. I want to share my story in order to share my heart. I believe my background prepared me to lead a diverse church and to talk about race issues with at least some credibility.
 - K-2, JJ was my best friend, he was black
 - 3-4 grade my best friend was Chris, he was Mexican
 - 5th grade, most of my friends were black. We were one street over from the Riverside project and I got off the bus in the project most days and played basketball or football in park in the project. I can never remember having the thought I'm white and most of these guys are black.
 - 6th grade I never really made any friends, I was only at that school for one year.
 - 7-12 the grade, my friends were my teammates. In my free time I was working.
 - Through Highschool I sung in our Highschool gospel choir. I was the only white person in the choir and we sung probably 10 times a year in black churches.
 - In 5th grade I had a girl friend who was black and in 11th grade there was a girl I was trying to convince to be my girlfriend but she turned me down repeatedly and she was black.
 - In college I lived with a black man for three years who became my closest friend other than Tina. He was also my boss at Pizza Hut so it was like we were together night and day.
 - In my wedding I had a black guy and a Venezuelan guy and the other groomsmen were white family members.
 - I read about 20 books on race in the last two years just trying to learn.
 - Again, I do not know if any of that matters but I can say, all my life, I have been very close to black people and love black people. In fact, it was not until I moved to Greensboro and started pastoring such a white church that I started hanging around so many white people.

Slavery- Slavery has been practiced from the beginning of time and in every civilization in human history. Slavery is a big problem still today. Modern slavery is often known as human trafficking. Today, 167 countries still have slavery, affecting about 46 million people.

- **6 worst countries for slavery:**
 - o **India (18.4 Million)**
 - o **China (3.4 Million)**
 - o **Pakistan (2.1 Million)**
 - o **Bangladesh (1.5 Million)**
 - o **Uzbekistan (1.2 Million)**
 - o **North Korea (1.1 Million)**
- **58,000 in the US.** According to the GSI, some of the most common victims of slavery in America are homeless youth populations and undocumented workers, migrants, and refugees.
- Slavery was made illegal in the US on December 6, 1865 when the 13th amendment was passed. Then on June 19th or Juneteenth is when the black community celebrate the news of the 13th amendment reaching the state of Texas six months later.
- The Bible was used to support slavery. Once slaves learned to read the Bible was used to abolish slavery. Historically, Christianity eventually destroys slavery and racism

What does the Bible teach about slavery?

- **Our God is a God of freedom.**
- **Control is motivated by fear.**
 - o **Egypt-** fear, control
 - o Number one command, fear not! **2 Timothy 1:7**
 - o Love always produce freedom.
- In fact, this is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Christianity. Every other God wants to control you through fear. Our God does not want to control us at all. Our God came to set us free. In fact, when the Bible calls us slaves of God that is a voluntary choice in light of the goodness of God. I am not a slave to God because I have to be. I am a slave to God because I get to be. Our God came to free us through love! God does not want you to be enslaved to anyone or anything. That is the entire story of the Bible
 - o **Garden-** We were created and given freedom. We were invited to rule under God's authority. We chose to rebel against God and enslaved ourselves. Slavery is always the fruit of sin.
 - o **Exodus-** freedom from Egypt
 - o **Gideon-** freedom from Midian
 - o **David-** freedom from Philistines
 - o **Nehemiah/Ezra/Ester-** freedom Babylon
 - o **Jesus-** **Luke 4:18-19**
 - o **John 10:10,** "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."
 - The Roman empire had about 50 million people and 15%-25% were slaves. 13.5 million people.
 - Slavery in the NT was a political/economic issue not a racial issue. People were not enslaved because of the color of their skin but usually for economic issues.
 - **Golden Rule: Matthew 7:12**
 - o **Paul-** **Galatians 3:28,** "There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus."
 - Believing we are better than someone because of our skin color is historically and Biblically ridiculous.

- Believing you are better than someone for any reason is a rejection of the gospel
 - **Philippians 2:2-4**, “Make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”
 - **Jesus- Love, grace, faith, freedom**
 - **Devil- fear, control, slavery.**
- **What about all the verses in the Bible that appear to affirm slavery?** In an ideal world, any form of slavery would not be an option nor a necessity. Because of the socioeconomic situation of Old Testament Israel, God did allow slavery, but He allowed it for a simple purpose: to help the poor survive. A person could sell himself into slavery (akin to indentured servitude) in order to pay off debt or provide a basic subsistence.
 - **Leviticus 25:39-42**, “If your brother with you becomes so poor that he sells himself to you, you are not to make him serve like a bond slave. Instead, he is to serve with you like a hired servant or a traveler who lives with you, until the year of jubilee. Then he and his children with him may leave to return to his family and his ancestor’s inheritance. Since they’re my servants whom I’ve brought out of the land of Egypt, they are not to be sold as slaves.”
 - **Deuteronomy 15:11-14**, There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore, I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land. If any of your people—Hebrew men or women—sell themselves to you and serve you six years, in the seventh year you must let them go free. And when you release them, do not send them away empty-handed. Supply them liberally from your flock, your threshing floor and your winepress. Give to them as the LORD your God has blessed you.
 - **Deuteronomy 24:7**, If someone is caught kidnapping a fellow Israelite and treating or selling them as a slave, the kidnapper must die. You must purge the evil from among you.
 - **Exodus 21:16**, “Anyone who kidnaps someone is to be put to death, whether the victim has been sold or is still in the kidnapper’s possession.”
 - **Ephesians 6:5-9**, “And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.”