

LOVE
Without Hypocrisy
 (in the book of Romans)

10 – Serving the Lord (1)

TODAY'S THEME VERSE...

Never be lacking in zeal,
 but keep your spiritual fervor,
 serving the Lord.
Romans 12:11 (NIV)

- What does it mean to **"SERVE THE LORD"**? 

First of all, we must realize that
THIS IS "SLAVE TERMINOLOGY"!

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Romans 12:11 (NIV)

 **THESE ARE "MASTER-SLAVE" WORDS!** 

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 serving the Lord.
Romans 12:11 (NIV)

- **"SERVING"** (Greek: δουλεύω) = **"TO SERVE,"** to do the work of a slave.
- **"LORD"** (Greek: κύριος) = **"MASTER,"** one who has authority over others.

This New Testament Greek word can be translated as either "master" or "lord." (Translators must decide which to use; and they normally choose "Lord," when referring to Jesus.) People seem to have forgotten that "Lord" means "Master"!

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- This verse describes our relationship to Jesus as that of a *slave* to a *master*.

Scripture uses a variety of terms to describe us. They all point to different aspects of our relationship to our Creator and Savior. (Other examples: brother, friend, image of God, free, etc.)

A SLAVE
OF JESUS!

"SERVING the MASTER, Jesus Christ"

Today, people often have difficulty accepting this concept.

- Some just don't want to give up the "rights" they think they have to sin.
 - ✓ In reality, NOBODY has a "right" to sin. *Not even atheists.*
- Many don't think that "serving" is mandatory.
 - ✓ The Bible tells us that God's people – those truly saved – will want to obey and serve him.
 - ✓ The "false gospel" that many preach tends to ignore repentance (and obedience), and deceives people into thinking they can remain in sin and consider themselves saved.

- Still others think that the "master-slave" concept implies things they are unwilling to accept.

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THE LIE: 1) there is only ONE kind of slavery, 2) it is ALWAYS EVIL and 3) should be avoided.

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- ✓ They believe the world's lie about what "slavery" is; so they consider it offensive to apply the concept to Jesus!

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SLAVERY

If you listen to the WORLD, you will probably conclude that there is only ONE kind of slavery.

The world's lie:
Slavery is always evil...

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cruel, brutal, inhumane, abusive ...

↓

and something to be avoided.

If you listen to the BIBLE, you will realize that there are MANY kinds of slavery.

RANGING FROM...

☹ **EVIL** situations, where those causing it deserve the severest of punishments ...

Kidnappers *must be killed*, whether they are caught in possession of their victims or have already sold them as slaves.

Exodus 21:16 (NLT)

ALL THE WAY TO...

😊 **GOOD** situations that even the slave desired to be in.

But if your slave says to you, *'I don't want to leave you,'* because he loves you and your family, and is well off with you, ...

Deut. 15:16 (HCSB)

The issue is not the EXISTENCE of slavery, but the CONDUCT of those involved.

YOU MAY ASK (and it's a good question):

WHAT DOES ALL THIS HAVE TO DO WITH ME?

There are MANY types of "master-slave" relationships

– situations in which one person does work for another.

(Most of us are involved in one or more such relationships (hopefully good ones) – though we use other words to describe it.)

But there is ONE "master-slave" relationship that affects everyone ...

Including YOU.

There is one matter in which the Bible guarantees 100% that:

YOU ARE A SLAVE.

This is A FACT worth repeating:

In this matter, **YOU ARE A SLAVE.**

Only ONE QUESTION remains:

IN THIS SITUATION,

WHO

IS YOUR MASTER?

This is also worth repeating:

WHO is your master?

Is it **SIN?** or **OBEDIENCE (to God)?**

Don't you realize that whatever you choose to obey becomes your master?

You can choose sin, which leads to death, or **you can choose to obey God** and receive his approval.

Romans 6:16 (NLT)

GOD'S PEOPLE have been set free from their old master, to serve a new one!

Thank God!

Once you were slaves of sin, but **now you have obeyed** with all your heart the new teaching God has given you.

Now you are free from **sin, your old master**, and you have become slaves to your **new master, righteousness.**

Romans 6:17-18 (NLT)

If GOD is your NEW Master, you have a NEW OBLIGATION!

Before, *you let yourselves be slaves* of impurity and lawlessness.


Now *you must choose to be slaves* of righteousness so that you will become holy.

Romans 6:19b (NLT)

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[It doesn't say, "Do it if you want; otherwise, ignore this verse."]

After all, JESUS BOUGHT YOU. That's "master-slave" terminology!



★ See 1 Corinthians 6:20; also Acts 20:28. ★

Each master offers REWARDS ... but the nature of those REWARDS is quite different!



YOU'VE DONE A GOOD JOB... HERE'S WHAT YOU GET!

The REWARDS that SIN offers you:

(YOUR MASTER!) →

YOU GET: FREEDOM! BENEFITS!

When you were *slaves to sin*, you were **free** from the control of *righteousness*. What **benefit** did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in *death*!

Romans 6:20-21 (NIV)

The REWARDS that OBEDIENCE offers you:

(YOUR MASTER!) →

YOU GET: FREEDOM! BENEFITS!

But now that you have been set **free from sin** and have become **slaves to God**, the **benefit** you reap leads to *holiness*, and the result is *eternal life*.

Romans 6:22 (NIV)

Here's another difference in the REWARDS:

- When **SIN** is your master ... your rewards are **EARNED**.
- When **OBEDIENCE TO GOD** is your master ... your rewards are **GIFTED**.

For the **wages of sin** is death, but the **gift of God** is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Romans 6:23 (NIV)

**In ROMANS 7 & 8:
We learn about our "possibilities"
and our "impossibilities"**

- 1) Our obedience is **possible** only through Jesus Christ, by the power of God.
(The *salvation* that makes obedience possible is also a GIFT! – Ephesians 2:8.)
- 2) It is **impossible** to choose sin as your master and also be saved.
(It's "either-or.")

**THE BIBLE HAS A LOT TO SAY ABOUT
MASTER-SLAVE RELATIONSHIPS.**

For today, we will conclude with this:

**BEING JESUS' SLAVE
WASN'T A PROBLEM FOR THE EARLY CHRISTIANS!**

"This letter is from Paul, **Jesus Christ's slave**"...
Romans 1:1 (NLT)

IT SHOULDN'T BE A PROBLEM FOR US!

* Some translations use the word "servant"; but the word means "slave." In most other passages, the word is translated as "slave."

Your Mission...

Jesus offers you **FREEDOM** from sin,
so that you can **SERVE him**, instead of sin.

**THERE IS NO GREATER PRIVILEGE IN ALL OF
CREATION!**

**DON'T THROW AWAY YOUR
OPPORTUNITY!**

Credits (1)

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Your Mission...

**"Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor,
serving the Lord."**

Romans 12:11

WHO IS YOUR MASTER?

"SERVING" (Greek: δουλεύω) = "TO SERVE," to do the work of a slave.

"LORD" (Greek: κύριος) = "MASTER," one who has authority over others.

The phrase "serving the Lord" focuses on the master-slave relationship we have with the "King of Kings and Lord of Lords" (1 Timothy 6:15; Revelation 17:14; 19:16). We will have that relationship for all eternity. See Revelation 22:3, "his servants will serve him." [The word "servant" (Greek: δοῦλος) is normally translated as "slave."]

There are many dimensions to our relationship with Jesus. Other concepts are also used to describe it, such as "friend" (John 15:15). But these other ways that we relate to Jesus do *not* cancel the master-slave relationship described in Romans 12:11. [This is illustrated in John 15. Only a few verses after Jesus called the apostles "friends" (v. 15), he again refers to the master-slave relationship (v. 20).]

- Remember that Jesus is *infinitely* superior to you, and *deserves* to be served 100% of the time - John 15:20a.

Your "Job Description"

You will either serve God or something else... it can't be both:

See Matthew 6:24. This verse applies the principle to "God vs. possessions"; but the principle itself applies to *anything* we might exalt above God.

WHAT you should do:

- Serve God (Jesus Christ), who is your master - Romans 12:11.
- Serve him *faithfully* - Matthew 24:45-46; 25:19-23.
- *Don't* be a lazy, wicked servant - Matthew 25:24-30.

Serving the Lord (Master) is an all-the-time activity. Our only other option is to serve sin and the devil. (We can try to serve *ourselves*; but in the end, all we've accomplished is to serve the devil - the one who gave us the temptation to serve ourselves.)

HOW you should do it: By fulfilling your obligation to love:

- *Love God* with all that you have and are (Matthew 22:37-38). If you love God, you will obey him (John 14:23-24; 1 John 5:3). This includes living a morally pure life.
- *Love your neighbor* as yourself (Matthew 22:39). This may include *serving* others (1 Peter 4:10).

REMEMBER THAT JESUS IS "LORD OF LORDS."

This means he is "Master over all other masters."

If you are someone who has authority over other people (= the basic definition of "master"), remember that you have a Master over *you*, who will judge you for the way you treat those who are under your authority. *Do not mistreat them!*

One other use for the word "lord" (master) - In some verses, this word is used as a title of respect, similar to our use of the word "Sir." The context of these verses makes it obvious. (Examples: John 4:11, 15, 19.)