

In search of...

Truth & Right

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Slavery and Women

"When the church faced the issue of slavery on the eve of the Civil War it took sides and took them vehemently. Both sides turned to scripture to validate and justify their position. Now, with the benefit of hindsight, we see that both the Old Testament and Paul's instructions on slavery were indeed cultural even though they are given as commands (slaves OBEY your masters). It is my prayer that it does not take us a century and a half to come to the same conclusions about the roles of women in the church."

This oft-used argument (obtained from the "comments" section of a particular website) as well as a wellspring of others extremely similar to it, seeking to equate God's scriptural commandments restricting women from teaching or leading over men, and/or speaking out and up in our worship assemblies (1 Tim. 2:8-15, 1 Cor. 14:33-37) with slavery, are so poor and porous from so many perspectives, that they would be pretty preposterous if they weren't quite so pitiful.

To begin with, in regions of the globe today where slavery does still exist, does this mean that God's commandments regarding Christians who are still slaves are not still in effect? Should those who are still slaves today showcase their sincere Christianity through revolt, rebellion, and insurrection instead (See Eph. 6:5-6)?

Secondly, OF COURSE those divinely-inspired instructions to slaves do not – and cannot, by virtue of good old common and biblical sense – apply in a culture such as today's America which no longer has slaves as it did in the early 1800's: No slaves – no application of the divinely-inspired instructions concerning them! That's pretty easy to understand, isn't it? But; for those who still want to continue to try to use God's divinely inspired commandments regarding slavery, as a parallel to God's divinely inspired commandments regarding women, then let's honestly do so, on a truly parallel basis for just once in our lives, or else stop using it altogether. In other words, of course God's instructions to slaves have ceased to be applied in our

modern-day American culture where slavery, as it was practiced in pre-civil war America, no longer exists. And the exact same thing is absolutely and unquestionably true concerning God's rules on women's roles in the church: Where, when, and if, women – like slaves – ever no longer exist in our culture, then surely God's restrictions on their roles in religious settings should most certainly cease to be applied as well! But as long as there has been no civil war to outlaw having women in our homes, society, and assemblies (And thank God there hasn't been and never will be!), then God's instructions are indeed to be applied and put into practice, whenever and wherever godly women – unlike slaves today in the pre-civil war sense of course – are still in existence!

Thirdly, those who apparently, purposefully use the word "slavery," along with its well-known and very negative connotation of one who was made a slave entirely against their will (as was tragically the case in pre-civil war America), continually use that word, most likely I presume, in reference to "Paul's instructions on slavery" in passages such as Eph. 6:5-6, Col. 3:22, and 1 Tim. 6:1 for example (which see). Ironically, these are passages wherein the Greek word "duolos" is instead used – a word with a completely different meaning and connotation than the one they seem to want to seek to communicate with "slavery." "Duolos" is defined as a "**bondservant**," that is to say, one who **freely, willingly** gives themselves up to another's will; one who **willingly** – not grudgingly, or out of compulsion, or against their will – devotes themselves to another's service.

And THAT sort of willing

bondservice (which some want to so wrongly label "slavery" in the worst possible sense in order to try to make a point that is scripturally unsustainable) IS CERTAINLY still around today. Anyone today (including quite probably, even most surely many of those who say that "slavery" in the sense used in the bible is "cultural" and no longer around today) who works on a job where they have a boss or supervisor, is still a "bondservant" (or "slave") in the biblical sense thereof! Therefore, "Paul's instructions on slavery" in passages like Eph. 6:5-6, Col. 3:22, and 1 Tim. 6:1 for example, are alive and well, and yet in effect, and still apply in 21st century America today – and always will for as long as any of us still have to work for a living, willingly putting ourselves and our services under someone else's authority.

And so we see that just like God's restrictions on women leading which date back to the creation (2 Tim. 2:8-15), this sort of "bondservice" (Eph. 6:5-6, Col. 3:22, and 1 Tim. 6:1) is also timeless; it is what all faithful Christians unmistakably practice on an hourly basis in today's America as well. They willingly put themselves under Christ. They willingly submit to His will... unless of course Romans 6:16-19 wherein we are called to be "slaves" ("duolos" – "bondservants") of God and righteousness are no longer binding either, being somehow "outlawed" by the Civil War (?!?). And this "bondservice" is also exactly what faithful Christian women continually and willingly practice and submit themselves to, when it comes to their Lord and Savior, and their heavenly Father's commandments, such as are contained in scriptures like 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2.

Yes, in fact, Christian women who love the Lord actually are still "slaves" today in the biblical sense – willing bondservants of Jesus Christ – and they always will be! And they therefore submit themselves to His authority daily, as do I as yet another very willing bondservant of God and slave of righteousness (Romans 6:16-19). All faithful Christians – male or female (Gal. 3:26-29) – are exactly that and will be until the end of time, or else not be Christians at all. The day Christians cease to be God's willing "slaves" – that is to say, "bondservants" – is the day they will cease to be Christians – whether they admit, know it, or not!

Am I a "slave" of Jesus Christ? Absolutely! Am I a willingly submissive servant of His word who voluntarily submits to His all-encompassing authority? Once again yes and absolutely! I wouldn't have it any other way! And neither would any of the good and faithful God-fearing Christian sisters I know!

And so the next time some Christian or congregation seeks to circumvent the clear-cut commandments of God as exclusively expressed and evidenced in the divinely-inspired Scriptures (such as in 1 Corinthians 14:33-37 and 1 Timothy 2:8-15), with the old, "Well, that's only as culturally-binding as slavery" line, take their ill-advised illustration all the way through to its logical (and therefore totally illogical and actually, quite unloving – John 14:15) conclusion.

In closing, it is my prayer that it does not take us any longer than it took to read this short article, to come to the proper, godly and God-fearing biblical conclusion, regarding the roles of both male and female bondservants and slaves of God and His righteousness, in the church of our Lord Jesus Christ. "The churches of Christ greet you" (Romans 16:16)!

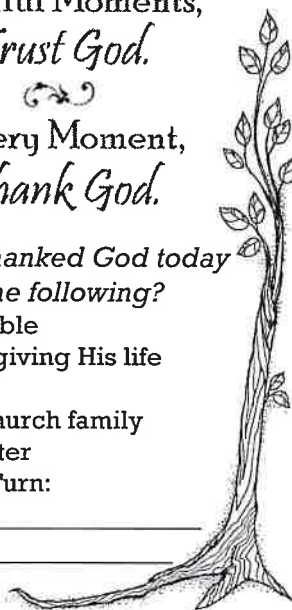
Doug Dingley

Happy Moments,
Praise God.
Difficult Moments,
Seek God.
Quiet Moments,
Worship God.
Painful Moments,
Trust God.

Every Moment,
Thank God.

Have you thanked God today
for any of the following?

- The Bible
- Jesus giving His life for us
- Our church family
- Laughter
- Your Turn:



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WELLSBURG CHURCH OF CHRIST

92 Rose Cottage Lane
Wellsburg, WV 26070
304-737-1422

<http://www.truthandright.org>



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BIBLE Trivia!

DIRECTIONS: After searching through your Bible, circle which answer is correct.

1. What prophet purified some deadly stew and a water supply?

- a) Isaiah
- b) Nathan
- c) Elisha
- d) Elijah

2. What is the greatest number of lepers Jesus healed at any one time?

- a) Twelve
- b) Ten
- c) Thirty
- d) Nine

3. Who was buried with Manoah, his father?

- a) Joel
- b) Benjamin
- c) Caleb
- d) Samson

4. According to Paul, who is called to be the temple of God?

- a) The local church in Jerusalem
- b) Christ
- c) All believers
- d) Preachers

5. Which book says that children will not be put to death for their parents' sins?

- a) Deuteronomy
- b) Leviticus
- c) Numbers
- d) Joshua

6. After Gideon's death, what Canaanite god did the Israelites turn to?

- a) Baal-berith
- b) Ashteroth
- c) Tiamat
- d) Dagon

7. Where was Jesus when He healed the son of an official from Capernaum?

- a) Bethsaida
- b) Jericho
- c) Bethany
- d) Cana

8. What priest had seven sons who were casting out demons in the name of Jesus?

- a) Zechariah
- b) Sceva
- c) Annas
- d) Caiaphas

9. On what day of Creation did God make the plants?

- a) The second day
- b) The fourth day
- c) The third day
- d) The fifth day

10. In Jesus' parable, what was the woman who searched her house with a lantern looking for?

- a) A lost coin
- b) A flask of ointment
- c) A missing comb
- d) A crumb of bread

LAST MONTH'S ANSWERS & VERSES:

- 1) B, Reference: 1 Corinthians 1:1
- 2) D, Reference: Revelation 1:15
- 3) A, Reference: Acts 2:16-21
- 4) B, Reference: 1 Kings 14:17
- 5) C, Reference: Matthew 22:1-14

- 6) A, Reference: Job 8:14
- 7) C, Reference: Luke 3:14
- 8) D, Reference: Jonah 1:3
- 9) A, Reference: 1 Corinthians 14:20
- 10) D, Reference: 2 Samuel 3:20