

ARE YOU A SERVANT OR A SLAVE?

A Revised John MacArthur Sermon

In reality most of us are servants in one way or another. If you have a job, more than likely it helps someone else in some way. Servants are usually paid for their service. They can work for different people from time to time. They can quit serving their employer if they desire. They generally have time off from their job and employer to do what they please on their off time. They are independent, having the freedom to choose who to serve.

Although the primary purpose of both a servant and a slave is to please their employer or master, there are huge differences in the two roles. Slaves are not normally paid any monetary compensation for their service. Slaves have already been paid for, so no more is owed for their service. A slave has nothing, wills nothing, and receives nothing other than what their master gives. Slaves are completely dependent on their master for everything, such as for their protection and provisions (housing, food, supplies, etc.). There is exclusive ownership of the slave to one master; they are not free to change masters on their own. They are subject to only one will - they are singularly devoted to only one master. All discipline and rewards come from only their master. They are available for service to their master at all times; they get no time off from being available to their master. They cannot quit or leave their master unless they are bought by another master.

Although the Greek word “doulos” in the Bible is almost always translated as “servant,” its true meaning is “slave.” The word “slave” is also a better description for the relationship of a Christian to Christ. The New Testament does not condemn or condone slavery, it just says that it exists. But it does condemn abuses of both slaves and masters. Col. 4:1 states: Masters, give your bondservants what is just and fair, knowing that you also have a Master in heaven.” The relationship between slaves and their master, should be an example of how Christians and Christ should relate. (Read paragraph #2 above again to see this relationship.) Although we can choose to be a servant when we desire, slaves do not have that choice. We are all slaves to someone 24 hours a day - 7 days per week every week. We are all slaves to Satan, or sin, before we are saved, and slaves to Christ after we are saved. Christians have been paid for with the price of Jesus’ sacrificial death. We Christians belong to Jesus Christ; He is our one and only true master, our Lord.

Although slaves have no independent rights, slaves do have a status. They get their status from the status of whom they serve, their master. So whom are you serving? To whom are you a slave? Satan or Jesus Christ? Are you totally dedicated to serving your master? Do you find joy in serving your master? As Christians, followers of Christ, our Master makes us His sons and daughters. We will inherit God’s heavenly kingdom forever for our joy and for His pleasure. What does the master Satan promise? Luke 16:13 states “No servant (or slave) can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.” Mammon is earthly, material treasures as money. So determine whom you will follow. As for me I choose to be a slave for Jesus.