

# 1 Peter 2:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

## Analysis

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Peter addresses Christian slaves directly: "Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear" (hoi oiketai hypotassomenoi en panti phobō tois despota). "Servants" (oiketai) were household slaves. "Subject" (hypotassomenoi) means voluntary submission. "With all fear" (en panti phobō) indicates reverent respect. Peter qualifies: "not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward" (ou monon tois agathois kai epieikesin alla kai tois skoliois). Easy to serve kind masters; difficult to serve "froward" (skoliois, crooked, harsh) ones. Yet submission extends even to unjust masters—not approving injustice but maintaining Christian witness despite it.

## Historical Context

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Roman Empire's economy depended on slavery—estimates suggest 30-40% of population enslaved. Masters had absolute power; slaves had no legal rights. Christianity didn't immediately abolish slavery (beyond early church's capacity) but transformed it from within by calling masters and slaves to mutual Christian respect (Ephesians 6:5-9, Colossians 3:22-4:1). Peter addresses slaves' difficult reality: many served harsh, unjust masters. Rather than rebellion (futile and dangerous), Peter calls for faithful service as Christian witness. This eventually undermined slavery by elevating slaves' dignity and limiting masters' behavior.

## Related Passages

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**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**Colossians 1:16** — All things created through Christ

**Genesis 1:1** — Creation of heavens and earth

## Study Questions

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1. How can modern employees apply Peter's teaching about serving difficult supervisors 'as unto the Lord'?
2. What's the difference between enduring unjust treatment as Christian witness versus enabling ongoing abuse?

## Interlinear Text

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Οἱ οἰκέται ὑποτασσόμενοι ἐν παντὶ φόβῳ τοῖς  
G3588 **Servants** **be subject** **with** **all** **fear** G3588  
G3610 G5293 G1722 G3956 G5401

δεσπόταις οὐ μόνον τοῖς ἀγαθοῖς καὶ ἐπεικέσιν ἀλλὰ  
**to your masters** **not** **only** G3588 **to the good** **also** **gentle** **but**  
G1203 G3756 G3440 G18 G2532 G1933 G235

καὶ τοῖς σκολιοῖς  
**also** G3588 **to the froward**  
G2532 G4646

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 8:13** (Parallel theme): The fear of the LORD is to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

**Proverbs 3:32** (Parallel theme): For the froward is abomination to the LORD: but his secret is with the righteous.

