

1 Timothy 6:1

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour, that the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed.

Analysis

Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honour (Ὅσοι εἰσὶν ὑπὸ ζυγὸν δοῦλοι, τοὺς ἰδίους δεσπότας πάσης τιμῆς ἀξίους ἡγείσθωσαν, Hosoi eisin hypo zygon douloi, tous idious despotas pasēs timēs axious hēgeisthōsan)—'all who are slaves under the yoke should regard their masters as worthy of all honor.' Zygos is yoke, a metaphor for slavery's burden. Despotēs means master, lord. Timē is honor, respect, value.

That the name of God and his doctrine be not blasphemed (ἵνα μὴ τὸ ὄνομα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ ἡ διδασκαλία βλασφημῇται, hina mē to onoma tou theou kai hē didaskalia blasphemētai)—'so that God's name and the teaching will not be blasphemed.' Blasphēmēō means to slander, revile, speak evil of.

Christian slaves must honor masters not because slavery is good, but because their witness affects God's reputation. If Christian slaves were rebellious or disrespectful, pagans would blaspheme God and dismiss the gospel. The priority is gospel advancement—slaves must not use Christian freedom as excuse for insubordination. Their humble service commends Christ.

Historical Context

Slavery was ubiquitous in the Roman Empire—perhaps one-third of the population. The gospel spread among slaves (1 Corinthians 1:26-28), raising questions about

their obligations. Some apparently used Christian freedom as justification for disrespecting masters. Paul insists Christian slaves honor masters—not endorsing slavery, but protecting the gospel's reputation. The watching world judges Christianity by believers' conduct.

Related Passages

Revelation 20:12 — Judgment according to deeds

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. How does Paul address slavery without directly condemning the institution—why this approach?
2. Why does Christian witness require respectful conduct even in unjust situations?
3. How do believers today apply this principle in unjust employment or authority relationships?

Interlinear Text

Ὅσοι	εἰσὶν	ὑπὸ	ζυγὸν	δοῦλοι	τοὺς	ἰδίους	δεσπότας	
as	Let	under	the yoke	servants	G3588	their own	masters	
G3745	G1526	G5259	G2218	G1401		G2398	G1203	
πάσης	τιμῆς	ἀξίους	ἡγείσθωσαν	ἵνα	μὴ	τὸ	ὄνομα	τοῦ
of all	honour	worthy	count	G2443	G3361	G3588	the name	G3588
G3956	G5092	G514	G2233				G3686	
θεοῦ	καὶ	ἡ	διδασκαλία	βλασφημῆται				
of God	and	G3588	his doctrine	be				
G2316	G2532		G1319	G987				

Additional Cross-References

Titus 2:5 (References God): To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

Romans 2:24 (References God): For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles through you, as it is written.

Acts 10:7 (Parallel theme): And when the angel which spake unto Cornelius was departed, he called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them that waited on him continually;

Acts 10:22 (References God): And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

Acts 15:10 (References God): Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

Matthew 11:30 (Parallel theme): For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Luke 17:1 (Parallel theme): Then said he unto the disciples, It is impossible but that offences will come: but woe unto him, through whom they come!

Galatians 5:1 (Parallel theme): Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Malachi 1:6 (Parallel theme): A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master: if then I be a father, where is mine honour? and if I be a master, where is my fear? saith the LORD of hosts unto you, O priests, that despise my name. And ye say, Wherein have we despised thy name?

1 Peter 2:12 (References God): Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.