

# 1 Timothy 6:2

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren; but rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit. These things teach and exhort.

## Analysis

**And they that have believing masters, let them not despise them, because they are brethren** (οἱ δὲ πιστοὺς ἔχοντες δεσπότας μὴ καταφρονεῖτωσαν, ὅτι ἀδελφοί εἰσιν, hoi de pistous echontes despotas mē kataphroneitōsan, hoti adelphoi eisin)—'those who have believing masters must not disrespect them because they are brothers.' Kataphroneō means to despise, look down on. The danger: Christian slaves might presume on brotherhood to slack off or show disrespect.

**But rather do them service, because they are faithful and beloved, partakers of the benefit** (ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον δουλεύετωσαν, ὅτι πιστοὶ εἰσιν καὶ ἀγαπητοὶ οἱ τῆς εὐεργεσίας ἀντιλαμβανόμενοι, alla mallon douleuetōsan, hoti pistoi eisin kai agapētoi hoi tēs euergesías antilambanomenoi)—'rather serve them even better, because those who benefit from their service are believers and beloved.' Douleuo means to serve as a slave, work. Euergesia means good deed, benefit, kindness.

Christian slaves with Christian masters should serve better, not worse—motivated by love for brothers and desire to honor Christ. Gospel unity doesn't erase social distinctions but transforms their meaning. Master and slave are equal in Christ (Galatians 3:28) while maintaining different roles. Love motivates excellence in service.

## Historical Context

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The early church included both slaves and masters worshiping together (Philemon demonstrates this). Some slaves apparently assumed Christian freedom meant social equality—refusing proper respect to Christian masters. Paul corrects this: spiritual equality in Christ doesn't abolish social roles. Slaves should serve Christian masters even more faithfully, motivated by brotherhood, not less. The gospel transforms relationships, not structures.

## Related Passages

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**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

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

## Study Questions

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1. How does spiritual equality in Christ relate to social/economic differences in this world?
2. Why should Christian slaves serve Christian masters even better—what motivates excellence?
3. How does this principle apply to Christian employees and employers today?

## Interlinear Text

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οἱ	δὲ	πιστοί	ἔχοντες	δεσπότας	μὴ	καταφρονεῖτωσαν
G3588	<b>And</b>	<b>believing</b>	<b>they that have</b>	<b>masters</b>	<b>not</b>	<b>despise</b>
	G1161	G4103	G2192	G1203	G3361	G2706
ὅτι	ἀδελφοί	εἰσιν	ἀλλὰ	μᾶλλον	δουλεuέτωσαν	ὅτι
<b>because</b>	<b>brethren</b>	<b>they are</b>	<b>but</b>	<b>rather</b>	<b>do them service</b>	<b>because</b>
G3754	G80	G1526	G235	G3123	G1398	G3754
πιστοί	εἰσιν	καὶ	ἀγαπητοὶ	οἱ	τῆς	εὐεργεσίας
<b>believing</b>	<b>they are</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>beloved</b>	G3588	G3588	<b>of the benefit</b>
G4103	G1526	G2532	G27			G2108
ἀντιλαμβανόμενοι	Ταῦτα	δίδασκε	καὶ	παρακάλει		
<b>partakers</b>	<b>These things</b>	<b>teach</b>	<b>and</b>	<b>exhort</b>		
G482	G5023	G1321	G2532	G3870		

## Additional Cross-References

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**Colossians 4:1** (Parallel theme): Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal; knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.

**1 Timothy 4:11** (Parallel theme): These things command and teach.