

# Deuteronomy 25:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.

## Analysis

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**Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn**—the Hebrew *lo-tachsom* (לֹא־תִסֹּם, do not muzzle) protects the working animal's right to eat from its labor. Threshing (*dush*, דָּשָׁ) involved oxen treading grain to separate kernels from chaff—arduous work deserving immediate reward.

Paul applies this principle twice to gospel ministry (1 Corinthians 9:9-10, 1 Timothy 5:18), arguing a *fortiori* that if God cares for oxen, how much more for those laboring in spiritual harvest. The principle extends beyond oxen to all workers: those who labor deserve provision from their work. This seemingly minor law reveals God's comprehensive concern for justice extending even to animals (Proverbs 12:10).

## Historical Context

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Ancient threshing floors were communal spaces where oxen walked in circles over harvested grain. Muzzling prevented animals from eating, maximizing owner profit at the animal's expense. This law revealed Israel's distinct ethic: covenant people must reflect God's justice even in treatment of beasts, since all creation belongs to Him (Psalm 50:10-11).

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**John 3:16** — God's love and salvation

## Study Questions

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1. How does Paul's application of this law to gospel workers challenge your view of supporting those in Christian ministry?
2. If God commands justice toward animals, what does this imply about treatment of human workers in employment relationships?

## Interlinear Text

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לֹא	תִּחַסֵּם	שׁוֹר	בְּדִישׁוֹ
H3808	<b>Thou shalt not muzzle</b>	<b>the ox</b>	H1758
	H2629	H7794	

## Additional Cross-References

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**Proverbs 12:10** (Parallel theme): A righteous man regardeth the life of his beast: but the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.

**Hosea 10:11** (Parallel theme): And Ephraim is as an heifer that is taught, and loveth to tread out the corn; but I passed over upon her fair neck: I will make Ephraim to ride; Judah shall plow, and Jacob shall break his clods.