

Small Group Guide

WHAT ABOUT SLAVERY, PAUL?

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

October 2, 2011

1 Timothy 6:1–2

This guide is a tool to help you lead your group into spiritual transformation. Use it as a resource to train your group into potential disciple-makers and lead your group in discovering, owning, and applying the truths of God's Word. There may be aspects you do not want to use and there may be instances where you just want to focus on a particular point or truth. Some questions may bring out emotions and cause people to dwell on an aspect of their relationship with God. Your role is to help facilitate this encounter with God in His Word with His Body, not just to complete the guide. Use this as a flexible teaching tool not a rigid group task list.

Relate . . .

Begin your group time by engaging in relational conversations and prayer that may include the following elements:

Welcome—a simple, brief time to greet one another (especially new friends), enjoy refreshments, and make announcements.

Review—a time to review the truths discussed last week and report on how members have had success or frustrations in applying those truths during the week. (The leader will want to provide encouragement and shepherding during this time.) Periodically, the leader will also want to review the gospel and allow members to share reports about opportunities they've had to share the gospel. Occasionally, the leader will want to review the vision for the group and discuss ways to accomplish that vision better.

Prayer—a time of general prayer with the whole group praying for struggles regarding the application of truths, for those with whom the group is sharing the gospel, and for understanding of today's truths.

Reflect . . .

Use the following summary and questions to review this week's message and reflect on its implications for our lives. (As a training tool, leaders might want to have various members summarize the teachings in their own words each week sharing how they think the Scripture applied to the original hearers and how the principles apply to us today.)

WHAT ABOUT SLAVERY, PAUL?

1 Timothy 6:1-2

Slavery in History...

- World history is filled with various types of slavery.
 - Hebrew servanthood.
 - Roman slavery.
 - Indentured servitude.
 - African slave trade.
- Biblical history is filled with various perspectives on slavery.
 - Slavery is not a part of creation; it is a product of sin.
 - Specific situations in a sinful world warrant specific instructions to a sinful world.
 - Biblical instructions concerning slavery do not imply biblical approval of slavery.

Small Group Guide

WHAT ABOUT SLAVERY, PAUL?

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

October 2, 2011

1 Timothy 6:1–2

Slavery in Scripture...

- The Bible condemns slavery.
 - Slavery that undermines God's creation.
 - We have equal dignity before God.
 - We are equally submissive to God.
 - We will receive equal justice from God.
 - Slavery that violates God's Word.
 - The Bible denounces physical abuse.
 - The Bible denounces human trafficking.
- The Bible regulates slavery.
 - God mandates physical protection for slaves.
 - God requires financial provision for slaves.
 - God ensures caring supervision of slaves.
 - God promotes (and in some ways guarantees) eventual freedom from slavery.
- The Bible encourages slaves.
 - Honor unbelieving masters.
 - For the glory of God.
 - For the advancement of the gospel.
 - Christianity is not aimed primarily at social reform.
 - Christianity is aimed primarily at personal redemption.
 - Respect believing masters.
 - Work wholeheartedly.
 - Serve selflessly.
- The Bible redeems slavery.
 - The beauty of Christ...
 - Our Master has become our servant.
 - The essence of Christianity...
 - We gladly become His slave.

Message Summary

Dr. Platt began with a brief description of a few different types of slavery found in world history. The differences are important to understand. For instance, Hebrew servanthood in Old Testament times for fellow Israelites was significantly different from the African slave trade of pre-Civil War days.

Slavery is not a part of creation, but rather a product of sin. The Bible explicitly condemns all slavery that undermines God's creation (denies human dignity) and/or violates God's Word (involves abuse or trafficking). In other cases, the Bible regulates slavery and provides specific instructions regarding it much like it does for divorce. However, these instructions do not imply biblical approval.

The Bible encourages slaves to honor Christ and the gospel in their slavery and ultimately redeems the concept of slavery. Christ has become our servant (slave) and, in turn, we gladly become His slave.

Group Discussion

Small Group Guide

WHAT ABOUT SLAVERY, PAUL?

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

October 2, 2011

1 Timothy 6:1–2

Use the following questions to help review the application of God's Word to our Head (What does God want me to know?), to our Heart (What does God want me to desire/value?), and to our Hands (What does God want me to do?).

- Review some of the different types of slavery found in world history. How would you differentiate between Hebrew servanthood, Greco-Roman slavery, and the African slave trade? (It may be helpful to read Leviticus 25:35–43.)
- How do we know that slavery is always a product or result of the Fall (sin)? Why is this true even for Hebrew servanthood, as well as for the African slave trade and other types of slavery?
- Read Galatians 3:28; Job 31:13–15; James 2:1–9; and Genesis 1:27. Why do all men and women possess equal dignity before God? Why are discrimination, racism, prejudice, favoritism, and partiality sinful and not fitting for believers? Are there any attitudes toward individuals or groups of people that you need to repent of?
- Read Ephesians 6:5 and 9; Colossians 3:22 and 4:1. Ultimately, to whom must all men and women give account? Who is the final judge? How does a reverent fear of God lead us to treat all others with respect and kindness? Is there any sin toward other individuals you need to confess?
- Read Exodus 21:16 and 26–27; 1 Timothy 1:8. How did the African slave trade violate God's Word? How does all types of modern human trafficking violate God's Word?
- Were you aware of the scope of modern-day slavery, or human sex trafficking? How did it make you feel to hear of the oppression that men, women, and children experience today? Why do you think women and children are most vulnerable? What kinds of actions can the church take to combat this evil?
- Regarding Hebrew servanthood and voluntary Greco-Roman slavery, what are the intentions of the Bible's regulations? Who is being protected? In what ways?
- Read Leviticus 19:9–10; Deuteronomy 15:4; Deuteronomy 24:21; Exodus 22:25. How did God expect His people to treat the poor and needy? How would this help prevent slavery? How can the church help those at risk today in our own community and around the world? How can you serve the poor?
- Read 1 Timothy 6:1–2. Why did Paul tell slaves to honor their unbelieving masters? Why did Paul tell slaves to show the same respect for believing masters? Why should Christian employees/students today honor their unbelieving employers/teachers? How can Christian employees be a witness to their employers, whether believing or unbelieving? In any case, for whom are we ultimately working?
- Read Mark 10:45 and Philippians 2:7. How does the Bible ultimately redeem the concept of slavery? How does Christ continue to serve us day by day? What is your reaction to this truth?
- Is Christianity's primary purpose social reform or personal redemption? How should the gospel lead to social reform? Does social reform without the gospel honor God? Why or why not?
- In Romans 1:1, Paul calls himself a "slave" (in Greek) of Christ Jesus. What does that mean? How are we to be slaves of Christ?

Respond . . .

Encourage your group to break out into smaller, same-gender groups where they will respond to the truths of today's study. These groups will share with one another based on the following questions and then close in prayer:

- What are some of the main truths that God wants you to know from this study?
- How do your thoughts need to adjust to align with these truths?
- According to the truths from this study, what does God want you to desire/value?
- How do your values need to change to align with His values?
- What actions does God want you to take according to the truths of this study?
- What is an action that you can start to implement today or tomorrow?
- What is going to be the most difficult aspect of this study to personally apply?

Close this time by praying for each other, specifically for strength to apply these truths, for personal needs, for the lost people with whom you are seeking to share the gospel, and for our weekly prayer focus as a church..

Small Group Guide
WHAT ABOUT SLAVERY, PAUL?

The Church at Brook Hills

Dr. David Platt

October 2, 2011

1 Timothy 6:1–2

Weekly Prayer Focus ...

- ***Lives and Church:*** *Pray for those caught in the slave trade currently around the world. Pray for their release and that they would hear the gospel from churches in their area. Pray that slave traders would repent and turn to Christ for salvation.*
- ***Local:*** *This week we are praying for Hearts in Hands Ministry. They provide support for acute or immediate physical needs—particularly to those without family resources—to widows and those families under hospice care. We are also praying for Southside Baptist, J. Stephen Jones, pastor.*
- ***Global:*** *This week we are praying for our partners Nathan and Kari Shank serving in India. We are also praying for our short-term teams serving in North Africa and India.*