

## 1 PETER 2:18-20

## GLORIOUS SUBMISSION

<sup>18</sup> *Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.* <sup>19</sup> *For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God.* <sup>20</sup> *But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.*

This is another case of “context is everything.” I’ve read that the slavery referred to in the Bible is not the chattel slavery of the institution as it existed in 17<sup>th</sup> century America, but somehow a kinder, gentler household worker-type of vocation. I’m sure it was different, but nowhere in history have I read that anyone aspired to be a slave. Rather slaves were subject to abuse and were valued more for their utility than their personhood. Certainly the Jews did not find slavery in Egypt to be a highlight of their history, so I doubt Peter is extolling slavery as a way of life.

Rather than a social commentary, Peter is encouraging a way of life based on the humility of knowing who you are. It is a matter of keeping focused on the big picture. Regardless of your station in this worldly life, as a believer you are a child of God and you reflect your son-hood through your actions and reactions in life. Again, our ultimate goal is to glorify God. It is no credit to God if we do wrong in his name and suffer punishment for it. True glory comes from doing what is right regardless of what other people are doing, even to you. There is no possibility of a twinge of conscience when someone metes out deserved punishment. In contrast, many a mind has been disturbed by having perpetrated violence on one who is innocent, and yet received the blows. Often, the Holy Spirit can use that .little twinge to break through for the Gospel.

The context for all Christian living is God. If he lives in us and we are his body, then regardless of the chains we wear in this life, we are eternally free. What is your context – the chains of the world or the freedom of the Spirit?

**Father, in this fallen world many suffer injustice and lack of freedom. Keep me from dictating to them their need to remain in bondage. Rather, Lord, help me to work for their freedom as you worked to establish mine. Let me take these words and apply them to my life and my situation. Help me to follow the example of Jesus and live into my freedom to glorify you. Amen.**