

# 119

## GROUP STUDY GUIDE

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### Slavery and the Bible

#### TEACHING SUMMARY

This teaching examines biblical servitude by distinguishing it from the brutal slave trade familiar from later history. It interprets the Hebrew term *ebed* as a contractual servant and compares aspects of the arrangement to exchanging labor for provision and financial stability.

The teaching begins with the prohibition against stealing and selling a person. It then discusses rest, humane treatment, and provision for servants. The release of Hebrew servants after six years, with generous supplies, is presented as an important protection and opportunity for a new start.

Further passages address injury, escape, and redemption. The teaching interprets them as safeguards against abusive conditions and explains that a servant could choose continuing service. It also discusses poverty, repayment for theft, and the circumstances of servants acquired from surrounding nations.

Difficult passages are examined within this framework. The teaching connects Exodus 21's instructions about a daughter with marriage arrangements, and distinguishes intentional murder from the other case described in Exodus 21:20–21. It argues that these texts establish accountability rather than permission for ruthless treatment.

New Testament instructions require masters to act justly, remembering their own Master in heaven. The teaching reads Yeshua's servant parable as a lesson about readiness and judgment. It also considers labor imposed as a condition of peace in Deuteronomy 20, presenting this as an alternative to war.

The final application connects redemption from sin with becoming a bondservant of Yeshua. The teaching concludes that the biblical arrangements it has discussed were intended to provide support, protection, or peace, and emphasizes the responsibilities governing those who held authority over servants.

## SUMMARY POINTS

- The teaching distinguishes biblical servitude from later forms of brutal slavery.
- It explains ebed as a contractual servant with protections.
- Exodus 21:16 prohibits stealing and selling a person.
- Rest and humane treatment are included among the servant's protections.
- Hebrew servants are released after six years with generous provision.
- The teaching discusses injury, escape, and redemption as safeguards.
- Poverty and repayment for theft are among the circumstances it examines.
- Masters are reminded that they also answer to a Master in heaven.
- Deuteronomy 20's labor requirement is discussed as a condition of peace.
- The teaching connects redemption from sin with service to Yeshua.

## FILL-IN-THE-BLANK

### Basic

1. The Hebrew term explained as a contractual servant is \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A Hebrew servant ordinarily serves for \_\_\_\_\_ years before release.
3. The release described in Deuteronomy 15 occurs in the \_\_\_\_\_ year.
4. The released servant is not to be sent away \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Masters are reminded that they also have a Master in \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The teaching describes believers as redeemed from slavery to \_\_\_\_\_.

### Challenging

1. The servant who chooses continuing service has his ear pierced with an \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The redemption calculation in Leviticus 25 looks ahead to the year of \_\_\_\_\_.
3. The Hebrew term given for a female bondservant is \_\_\_\_\_.
4. The teaching reads Luke 12 as emphasizing readiness for when Yeshua \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Before fighting the city in Deuteronomy 20, Israel must offer terms of \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Romans 6 describes those freed from sin as becoming slaves of \_\_\_\_\_.

## GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does the teaching begin by distinguishing biblical servitude from familiar images of slavery?
2. How do the release instructions in Deuteronomy 15 support the teaching's view of provision and recovery?
3. How does the teaching use the passages on injury, escape, and redemption to explain protections for servants?
4. How does the teaching distinguish the purpose of Yeshua's parable from instructions governing a master's conduct?
5. How does the teaching describe the labor requirement in Deuteronomy 20, and why does it connect that requirement with peace?
6. What connection does the teaching draw between a bondservant's relationship to a master and redemption through Yeshua?

## ANSWER KEY – GROUP GUIDE

### Basic

1. ebed
2. six
3. seventh
4. empty-handed
5. heaven
6. sin

### Challenging

1. awl
2. jubilee
3. amah
4. returns
5. peace
6. righteousness