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PUBLIC SERVANT ENDORSEMENT

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ABOUT

Capitol Ministries® 8

Proverbs *on Service or Servitude While in Office*



AS YOU KNOW, I STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT legitimate ministry and real heart change stem from expositing, studying and applying the Word of God. There lies the power of effective ministries (cf. Isaiah 55:11): serving the Word of God and making it applicable for life today.

This week we take a look at “Service or Servitude”

Read on, my friend!


Ralph Drollinger

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDIES

CABINET: 7:00 AM Wednesdays, Location Undisclosed. *Refreshments Served.*
SENATE: 8:00 AM Tuesdays, Rotating Offices of Senators. *Hot Breakfast Served.*
HOUSE: 7:30 AM Thursdays, The Capitol Hill Club. *Hot Breakfast Served.*

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★ PUBLIC SERVANT ENDORSEMENT

Vicki Strong
Vermont State
Representative
District 1



"I think Capitol Ministries' mission, to make disciples of Jesus Christ among political leaders of the world is fantastic! The political world is a tremendous mission field!"

"When you think about it, there are so many ministries to all kinds of people, college kids, little kids, dads, people in sports, people in prisons, single moms, and on and on, why not to legislators, governors, and all those who are elected and appointed to lead our states, our nation, and dictate policy? That just makes great sense."

"I appreciate Capitol Ministries creating a Bible study to Vermont legislators. I appreciate being a part of a bigger picture and part of what is going on in other places in the country and the world with

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I. INTRODUCTION

In the OT Book of Proverbs, King Solomon provides many verses that illustrate the benefits of service from a pure heart, and in counter distinction, many verses that warn against serving wrong things. It is quite common, given man's fallen nature, for one to become beholden to various addictions. For instance, I know Christians who, to this day, are addicted to plagiarism; they are captive to copying the words of others.

Accordingly, this week I would like for you to meditate on the following *three rewards for service* and *seven captors of servitude passages*. My prayer is that the Holy Spirit will use His Word to stimulate growth in these areas. May God bless you as you study!

II. THREE REWARDS FOR SERVICE

An attitude of serving others in the capital will lead to rewards in at least three areas of your life: personally, in relationship to others, and before God. Notice what Solomon says as we examine the following proverbial passages pertaining to these:

A. PERSONAL PROSPERITY AND HONOR

27:18 He who tends the fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who cares for his master will be honored.

Diligence, or faithfully and consistently *tending* to something breeds personal reward. I have greatly benefited from observing this principle of *tending* for more than 40 years being

wonderfully modeled by our ministry's immediate past chairman of the board and now being modeled by our new chairman. Proverbs 10:4 states similarly, *the hand of the diligent makes rich*. This is in contrast to the numerous Proverbs that warn against "get-rich-quick" schemes (and current ministries that promote this false idea). In order to make a mark in this life, one needs to diligently pursue and *tend* a homogeneous career path. Keep in mind *fig trees* do not bear fruit immediately. It takes great perseverance and years to grow them, but then their yield is bountiful. That is how one gains momentum: industriously keeping to daily disciplines when there is no fruitfulness. Contrast this wisdom with those who change vocations regularly. It is better to be a slow, plodding agent of change, a builder and developer who is perfecting infrastructure, than someone who is always dissatisfied, looking for seemingly greener grass on the other side of the fence.

THE CHARACTER QUALITY OF TENDING IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT FOR THOSE COMMITTED TO THE INCREMENTAL TURN-AROUND OF OUR COUNTRY

As the patriarchs in the book of Genesis died without seeing the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham (cf. Genesis 12), the rewards of your faithful *tending* may not accrue to you in your lifetime either, but may possibly accrue to your children's children. Nonetheless, today with an attitude of humble service, diligently *tend* the *fig tree(s)* that God has called you to steward!



The second stanza of this Proverb cannot be contemplated without meditation on the Heavenly *Master*. He will *honor* those who diligently seek Him over a lifetime. Matthew 25:21 further elaborates on this when Jesus states the words we all look forward to hearing:

His master said to him, “Well done, good and faithful slave. You were faithful with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.”

There is no greater honor than to personally hear those words from the lips of our Lord! May He reward your diligence with prosperity and *honor* as you faithfully, consistently *care* for the concerns of your *master* in the capital and back home. God desires for you to serve Him from a pure heart!

Secondly, service from a pure heart builds friendships in this world:

B. LONG-TERM FRIENDS

29:21 *He who pampers his slave from childhood will in the end find him to be a son.*

This Proverb must be interpreted with the context of understanding the economy of ancient slavery in society. Given that many slaves were respected and well taken care of by their owners, the application in our society with our present-day employee/employer construct is this: Take care of your loyal employees and they will take care of you.¹ Here is the biblical principle that assuages management/labor tensions so besetting in our culture: You will be blessed with friends for a lifetime if you consider those who work for

you as more important than yourself. There is little in this fallen world that compares to the blessings of long-time loyal friendships. Serve your employees!

C. BLESSED BY GOD

25:13 *Like the cold of snow in the time of harvest is a faithful messenger to those who send him, for he refreshes the soul of his masters.*

Two families who greatly helped in the establishment of Capitol Ministries in the 1990s were the nation’s largest carrot growers. On many occasions I have visited their packing plants. Immediately upon *harvest* one of the first tasks to accomplish is to reduce the carrot’s core temperature by washing it with cold water. This procedure curtails the aging process, enabling it to travel to various markets throughout the world without spoilage or change. With today’s mechanization and technology, *harvest* in America is often accompanied by *the cold of snow* so to speak (ice making machines in this case). In Solomon’s day too, such *cold* would preserve the crop much longer than usual.

In a similar way, the faithful servant of Christ must view him or herself as a *messenger* who preserves the integrity of a communiqué. Avoiding decomposition then, is the common thread of both *snow* and the *faithful messenger*. Accuracy — truthfulness — in this Proverb is deemed *refreshing* to the one who sent you to lead family and nation (cf. John 15:16). If you serve the Savior faithfully, truthfully and accurately as His *messenger*, God will bless you. Be increasingly straight with

♥ VERSE OF THE WEEK

Joshua 24:15

“As for me and my house, we will serve the LORD.”



Serve while in office with the love of Christ, and great blessings will inure to you. Conversely, there are many pitfalls that lead to a life of bondage — the need to serve them rather than the Savior.

Continued from page 2

Capitol Ministries because Vermont is small and very secular with very little church attendance.

“The Christian light is not shining very brightly here, and to be a part of a group that is shining the light across the country and the world is a blessing. It gives me a lot of strength in my role as legislator and a Christian in this environment.”

Representative Strong sponsors the legislative Bible study in Vermont that is led by Pastor Rosaire Bisson.



William Samuel Johnson



In an address to graduates:

“Love, fear, and serve Him as your Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. Acquaint yourselves with Him in His word and holy ordinances.... [G]o forth into the world firmly resolved neither to be allured by its vanities nor contaminated by its vices, but to run with patience and perseverance, with firmness and [cheerfulness], the glorious career of religion, honor, and virtue....”

— William Samuel Johnson, signer of the Constitution; member of the Continental Congress; judge; framer of the Bill of Rights; President of Columbia College; U.S. Senator.

E. Edwards Beardsley, *Life and Times of William Samuel Johnson* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin and Company, 1886), pp. 141-145.

the truth (at the same time loving): don’t diminish what is true nor exaggerate what is not. Represent God with integrity in all your dealings. He will reward you for such service.

Solomon says these are the benefits of true service: personal gain, loyal friends, and favor with God! Serve your nation with a pure heart and motives! My prayer is that God will bless you in these three ways as you serve Him in leadership of our nation.

III. SEVEN CAPTORS OF SERVITUDE

In contrast to humble rewarded service is the definition of servitude. It is the condition of a slave or serf: “a state of subjection to an owner or master: bondage, serfdom, slavery” (Merriam-Webster). This is a good English understanding of the Hebrew word *ebed* found in all the Proverbs that follow. It means, “attendants, slaves, or bondage,” depending on the contextual use.

RATHER THAN SERVE FROM A PURE HEART, ONE CAN TOO EASILY BECOME THE SERVANT OF SINFUL PROCLIVITIES IN THE CAPITAL COMMUNITY

Importantly, notice in the following Proverbs that *ebed* is used in by Solomon to depict someone falling into a lower way of life, i.e., ending up having to, or forced into bondage. No longer free, he now must serve a master other than the Savior.

For example, the person in financial

debt ends up serving the creditor; the person who is lazy will serve an overly demanding boss. A criminal will serve the state; and a plagiarist will always serve the originator.

UNDERSTANDING THE BIBLE REGARDING SLAVERY

All of the aforementioned raises the bigger issue regarding the institution of slavery in the New Testament and subsequent slavery in early American and British culture. To clear the air about this, note the following in this regard: “Although the Bible does not approve of removing slavery by social revolution, (cf. the NT book of Philemon) the Gospel throughout history has brought [about] the freedom of more slaves than any human philosophy, movement, or political system. In past times, some Christians unfortunately, have supported and tried to justify slavery, but the Bible does not; and where Christians are faithful to Scripture, slavery cannot flourish.”² Paul neither condemned nor approved slavery. His emphasis, and the *emphasis* of Scripture was not on racial or social reform, rather it is on matters of one’s heart and conversion in Christ.³ “Had Jesus and the apostles attacked slavery directly, the result would have been chaos. Any slave insurrection would have been brutally crushed and the slaves massacred. The Gospel would have been swallowed up by the message of social reform.”⁴



Illustrative of the spiritual vs. social reform emphasis of Scripture, Paul uses slavery as an analogy to believers' *spiritual* walk with God. He refers to himself in a spiritual sense as a "bondservant of Christ." Indeed all believers are: We have been bought at a price!

Now back to "Proverbs on Service or Servitude While in Office." Solomon's uses of the idea of slavery that follow in my outline are in a personal sense — the demise of one's status into being the slave of sin as underscored by the following seven captors:

A. THE CAPTOR OF FOOLISHNESS

11:29 *He who troubles his own house will inherit wind, and the foolish will be servant to the wisehearted.*

There exist *households* and nations that are *troubled* by ungodly leadership. They possess *foolish* superiors. The ungoverned passions of leaders too often blight the advance of the family and citizenry. In the end, they serve the *wisehearted* judgment of the court or the verdict of the investigative committee. Their end is personal demise if not foreign control. In a world governed by the principle of sowing and reaping, the inevitability of *foolishness* (despising wisdom) is always bondage or slavery, synonyms for *servitude*, the captors of such creatures.

B. THE CAPTOR OF PRIDE

12:9 *Better is he who is lightly esteemed and has a servant than he who*

honors himself and lacks bread.

People who *honor* themselves are full of pride. This captor, states this Proverb, will lead to personal poverty in the end. Opposite of pride, in Matthew 5:3, Jesus states in the Beatitudes, "*Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.*" The person who is poor in spirit is opposite of the self-sufficient, foolish and prideful person. He realizes his or her bankruptcy apart from Christ's imputed righteousness. Accordingly, these are those who are *lightly esteemed* by the proud. The world despises and hates the humility of the poor in spirit. But such are those who will not only have a *servant*, but some day, in the Millennium, will "*inherit the earth*" (Matthew 5:5; cf. Revelation 20:4-6).

PRIDE TODAY LEADS TO EVENTUAL BONDAGE OR SERVITUDE TOMORROW

C. THE CAPTOR OF SHAMEFULNESS

14:35 *The king's favor is toward a servant who acts wisely, but his anger is toward him who acts shamefully.*

This axiom is true not only in this world, wherein governmental leaders appropriately reward and punish staff, but it is also true as it pertains to the Bema Seat judgment of every believer when they will one day stand before the King of kings and Lord of lords. Note again in this specific regard, Matthew 25:21 from the Parable of the Talents:

His lord said unto him, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things,

George Washington



"I now make it my earnest prayer, that God would have you, and the State over which you preside, in his holy protection, that he would incline the hearts of the Citizens to cultivate a spirit of subordination and obedience to Government, to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another, for their fellow Citizens of the United States at large, and particularly for their brethren who have served in the Field, and finally, that he would most graciously be pleased to dispose us all, to do Justice, to love mercy, and to demean ourselves with that Charity, humility and pacific temper of mind, which were the Characteristics of the Divine Author of our blessed Religion, and without an humble imitation of whose example in these things, we can never hope to be a happy Nation."

— George Washington, first President of the United States; Commander-In-Chief of the Continental Army; member of the Continental Congress; President of the Constitutional Convention, 'Father of His Country'; judge.

George Washington, *capital letter of farewell to the Army*, June 8, 1783



Noah Webster



“All the ... evils which men suffer from vice, crime, ambition, injustice, oppression, slavery and war, proceed from their despising or neglecting the precepts contained in the Bible.”

— Noah Webster, revolutionary soldier; judge; legislator; educator; “Schoolmaster to America.”

Noah Webster, *History of the United States* (New Haven: Durrie and Peck, 1832), p. 6.

Proverbs on Service or Servitude While *in* Office

I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord. (KJV)

Therein is the King of kings’ *favor toward a servant who acts wisely*. Your reign tomorrow relates to your faithfulness today. Now note in Matthew 25:26-29 *His anger*:

“But his master answered and said to him, ‘You wicked, lazy slave, you knew that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I scattered no seed. Then you ought to have put my money in the bank, and on my arrival I would have received my money back with interest. Therefore take away the talent from him, and give it to the one who has the ten talents. For to everyone who has, more shall be given, and he will have an abundance; but from the one who does not have, even what he does have shall be taken away.’”

Observe the conclusion of this passage as it relates to serfdom resulting from shameful behavior: *even what he does have shall be taken away*. I am often saddened by what to me, (looking through the lens of scriptural truth) is obvious: the various forms of the judgment of God in the life of disobedient, shameful believers. One needs to soberly ask when facing adversity, “is this God’s chastisement for my sin?” (Cf. Hebrews 12:3-11). That’s not an easy thing for me to mention, but it is nonetheless part of the whole counsel of God. The following Proverb continues on the demise of *shameful* behavior, a.k.a. disobedience to God:

17:2 *A servant who acts wisely will rule over a son who acts shameful-*

ly, and will share in the inheritance among brothers.

If it is true that ultimately it is God who promotes and takes down (Psalm 75:6, 7), then, if you really believe what this passage says, you too can then trump cronyism via striving above all else to please God. Yes, faithful servants of Christ can triumph over bloodlines at times. On the human side, leaders of households, states, businesses, and churches are looking for men and women of character, and few have it! I have seen this principle manifest with my children who have been hired because of their character more so than their resume. With character in our culture in decline, more and more bosses realize that it’s wiser to hire character and train skill than the other way around. One is *held captive by shameful behavior* and one *wins favor by acting wisely!*

D. THE CAPTOR OF APPOINTMENTS

19:10 *Luxury is not fitting for a fool; much less for a slave to rule over princes.*

This is a difficult Proverb to interpret. If *luxury* is common to princes, and it is then the prince who is the *fool* in the Proverb. Why? His *foolishness* is manifest in elevating people who lack character or qualification. This is a leader who appoints servants (in this case are seen in a negative light) for positions either because of cronyism or subservience to the foolish leaders’ folly.⁵ Cronyism is “Partiality, especially as evidenced in the appointing of political hangers-on to office without due regard being taken of their qualifications.”⁶



It follows that it is *not fitting* that such minions should have any delegated power or authority — being “yes men,” they possess no innate qualifications to rule. The *luxury* then afforded such a *prince*, or today a political leader in society, is not fitting; it is incongruous. King Rehoboam himself best illustrates this when he violated this very principle by elevating his unwise buddies to prominence in Israel. He took their advice over his father’s counselors (cf. 1 Kings 12). The *luxury* of the office was therefore not fitting.

REHOBAM’S WRONG APPOINTMENTS LED TO HIS PERSONAL SERVITUDE AND BONDAGE

Scripture records this when it states, *And King Rehoboam made haste to mount his chariot to flee to Jerusalem.* And that’s to say nothing of the nation’s eventual ensuing bondage to Babylon. Remember, your deliberate, wrong appointments can lead to your personal enslavement and servitude.

E. THE CAPTOR OF BORROWING

22:7 The rich rules over the poor, and the borrower becomes the lender’s slave.

A borrower no longer has the free use of his earnings, he must pay his debts; such becomes mental and psychological slavery. In biblical times, the inability to repay one’s debts could lead to physical slavery.⁷ In general, it is best to only incur debt when purchasing an appreciable asset, lest you become enslaved to something other than the One who purchased your allegiance

with His own blood. If you have been bought with a price, who are you to then sell yourself to another?

F. THE CAPTOR OF PASSIVITY

29:19 A slave will not be instructed by words alone; for though he understands, there will be no response.

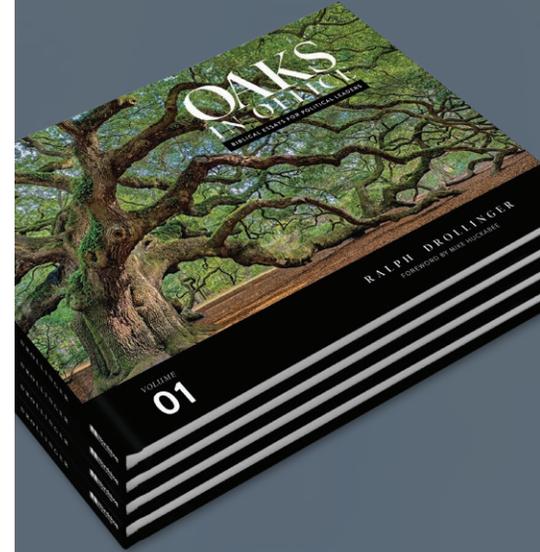
Herein is the mule. In this passage, *enslavement* is the direct object of the captor called passivity. How difficult it is to work with passive-aggressive people! They are calm on the outside but no less rebellious than the angry and explosive. Such an attitude finds great disfavor with God and others.

G. THE CAPTOR OF SUDDEN RISE

30:21-22 Under three things the earth quakes, and under four, it cannot bear up: Under a slave when he becomes king, and a fool when he is satisfied with food.

What the king and the glutton have in common in this Proverb is sudden rise. With a windfall there is often a lack of experience commensurate with respective stewarding abilities. A skyrocket in power usually means great offense toward others: one doesn’t know how to wield power with meekness. Likewise, those who stumble into prosperity are often irritating to others.

BEWARE OF SUDDEN RISE IN OFFICE AND THE OFT INABILITY TO MANAGE IT; IT CAN BE A CAPTOR



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Sudden and unexpected rises by individuals bring with them difficulty, if not with self, with others.

IV. CONCLUSION

Serve while in office with the love of Christ, and great blessings will inure to you. Conversely, there are many pitfalls that lead to a life of bondage — the need to serve them rather than the Savior.

Should you find yourself in some sort of servitude or bondage today, how will you work with Christ's help to get out of it? At Capitol Ministries we're here to help; give us a call for confidential counseling. *Choose you this day whom ye will serve* (Joshua 24:15, KJV). [cm](#)

- 1 Contra. I differ greatly with Charles Bridges on his commentary regarding this and other Proverbs that deal with servants. His Old English attitude toward servants is often quite appalling. Cf. pg. 580.
- 2 MacArthur, John *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 Corinthians* (Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, 1984) p. 174.
- 3 The Christian activist, who places social reform above personal evangelism and ministry, must grapple with Philemon in the NT. Such is not in keeping with the priorities of Paul, the NT or the Bible as a whole.
- 4 MacArthur, John *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, Colossians and Philemon* (Moody Bible Institute, Chicago, 1992) p. 206.
- 5 Bridges, Charles *Proverbs* (Banner of Truth, 1998) p. 314.
- 6 Merriam-Webster, electronic edition.
- 7 Stevenson, Peter A. *A Commentary on Proverbs* (BJU Press, 2001) p. 301.