I. **SLAVERY IN THE FIRST CENTURY**

A. Slavery was a fact of life in the New Testament.

1. It’s estimated there were 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire.

2. Although the Bible doesn’t commend slavery, neither does it insist on its abolition.

3. Why?
   a. There had been slave revolts before but they all ended in the bloodshed of slaves.
   b. The Bible, therefore, addresses the world as it was rather than as it wished it were.
   c. There were slaves in every occupation—doctors, teachers, actors, musicians, etc.
   d. Slaves were property not people.
   e. Slaves were not permitted to marry but there was cohabitation.
   f. Not all slaves were treated harshly.

B. Although Christianity didn’t abolish slavery it created new relationships between slaves and their owners.

1. One example is the N.T. book of Philemon. Paul did not insist this Christian slave owner free his runaway slave Onesimus.

2. Instead, Paul called on Philemon to treat him as a Christian brother—1:15-16.

3. Paul instructed Onesimus that it was his Christian duty to return to his master.

C. The motive for this new relationship is our devotion to Christ—Colossians 3:17 and 1 Corinthians 10:31.

II. **HOW CAN WE SUBMIT TO PEOPLE WE DON’T WANT TO SUBMIT TO?**


C. Rely like a Christian—4:19.