

PROGRESSING TOGETHER



COURSE 108

TRANSFORMED RELATIONSHIPS

(Formerly Course 107 – Christian Relationships)



This means that
anyone who belongs to Christ
has become a new person.

The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT (New Living Translation)

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COURSE 108: Transformed Relationships

Course Objectives

1. Understand our new identity in Christ and its impact on all our relationships in this world.
2. Understand how a Christian should conduct himself in his personal interactions and relationships.
3. Commit to developing the attitudes and behaviours God expects of us in our relationships in this world.
4. Realise the privilege of introducing those around us to our wonderful Saviour.

Lessons

➊	Relationships in the Family
➋	Relationships to Work and with Co-workers
➌	Relationship to Worldly Possessions
➍	Relationships with Civil Authorities
➎	Relationships with Unbelievers

Introduction

In course 106 we learnt that in the Garden of Eden God placed Man and Woman in an environment where they could enjoy perfect fellowship and the bounty of God's creation. Mankind's disobedience to God broke his trust in God's goodness and provision. Man came to rely on his own capacity to care for himself even at the expense of others around him. Relationships were broken by fear, greed and selfishness. Brother killed brother and the relationship between man and his loving creator became hostile.

God sent His Son into the world to restore these relationships. Instead of being slaves to fear and sin, we become sons and daughters of our loving Father (Gal 4:6-7). Christ demonstrated the power of God over sin and death and empowered his reborn children to live in harmony with each other. In Acts Chapter 2, with the coming of the Holy Spirit, thousands of lives were transformed and God's people became so generous with their possessions that there were no needy among them. God's plan is that His generous bounty in creation be displayed in His new-born Church.

This basic change affects all our relationships.

This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person.

The old life is gone; a new life has begun!

2 Corinthians 5:17 NLT (New Living Translation)

In each lesson of this course, we will discover how our various relationships are transformed by our new identity in Christ.

Testimony

Your group leader will have you watch or listen to a testimony related to the topic of this Course.



Lesson ①: Relationships in the Family

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To understand that our love for Jesus must surpass even our love for our family.
2. To embrace the biblical attitude of love and submission between a husband and wife.
3. To view children as a blessing and commit to loving them and training them to know and follow God's commandments.
4. To evaluate our commitments to members of our personal family in the light of biblical teaching.



Our closest relationships are with those in our own family. Much if not most of our time is spent at home; so, it is not surprising that tensions often occur in these areas. As the Lord transforms our hearts this will impact our relationships at home. The Bible gives clear guidelines for us to follow.

We are not responsible for the behaviour of others, but we are personally responsible to follow as closely as possible the principles God has given us. This is the only way to enjoy harmonious and happy relationships.

But before looking at these principles, we need to remember that Jesus Christ must have the first place in our hearts and lives. Conflicting loyalties often perplex us and make it difficult to make the right choice. Jesus even said that because of Him *"a man's enemies will be those of his own household"* (Mat. 10:36) There are times when even family ties have to be broken because of our love for Jesus. When this is the case, He promises *"a hundred times as much"* in this world and eternal life in the next. (Mat. 19:29)

① OUR COMMITMENT TO CHRIST



Complete this verse from Matthew 10:37:

"Anyone who _____ his father and his mother more than me is not _____ of me.

Anyone who _____ his son or his daughter more than me is not _____ of me.



How do these words of Jesus apply to your life?

② GOD'S BLUE-PRINT FOR A HAPPY FAMILY.



Read Ephesians 5:21 - 6:9 carefully.



It is important right off to notice verse 21 which applies to all the relationships mentioned in this passage. What attitude must characterise relationships between Christians?



After considering all 6 roles (husband/wife; parent/child; master/slave), choose which definition of “submit to one another” best applies to all:



Obey whatever the other says to do.



Place the interests of the other before one’s own interests.



Don’t seek to be the leader



Allow the others to do whatever they want?

a) Wives



What should characterise a wife's attitude toward her husband (v.22)?



Why is this attitude necessary? What analogy is used and what does it teach us about the wife’s relationship to her husband?

b) Husbands



What is the responsibility of the husband (v.25)?



Who is his model and what did He do for the “bride”?



What other analogy is used to explain how a husband is to love his wife (v.28)?



What does this teach us about the proper relationship of the man toward his wife? (See also Heb 13:4.)



What steps must the husband take in obeying this command?

c) Children and Parents



Psalms 127:3-5 tells us that children are a heritage and a gift from the Lord. In Eph 6:1-4, we see how the relationship between parents and children can be blessed to the fullest measure.



What are the commands given to children? (Eph. 6:1-3)



What are the commands given to parents? (Eph. 6:4)



How does the attitude of each affect the behaviour of the other?



What is meant by “training and instruction of the Lord”? (Eph. 6:4)



Parents are also to live out their faith before their children so that they learn the commandments of the LORD as they observe their daily routine and interactions. (See Deuteronomy 6:6-7)



How should the marriage of a son or daughter affect the relationship with the parents? (Gen 1:31)



What is the responsibility of adult children toward their parents? (see 1Tim 5:4,8,16)



We saw in 1 Tim 5 that believers are each first to take care of their own family households and relatives, and then to contribute to the needs of the wider church family. The church is to take care of those in need who have no believing relatives who can do so.



How are those who neglect to take care of their families and relatives considered in 1 Tim 5:8?



What criterion is necessary before considering someone to serve as an elder in church leadership? 1 Tim 3:12



Optional activities

1. As a group discuss how the biblical view of marriage differs from that of your culture. Then, spend some time in praise, thanking God for his beautiful plan for Christian marriage.
2. As a group, discuss how the responsibilities of parents and children according to the Scriptures differ from what is custom in your culture. Then, spend some time in prayer, for Christian families that you know.
3. Discuss as a group what resources are available in your context to train and instruct children in the Lord, whether in the context of their family or at church. Make plans to access these resources and to use them for the benefit of the children of Christian families you know.



Applications

1. We all have limited time and resources. Based on the teaching of this lesson, discuss as a group how we should prioritize our responsibility to help those in need. Put 1 for the first priority and then order the others in descending priority until 5.

- _____ Your friend or neighbour
- _____ Your spouse (wife or husband)
- _____ Your children
- _____ Your parents
- _____ A brother or sister in Christ

Then, pray and ask God to show you how you are doing in balancing your commitments between family relationships and those outside? Which of these relationships, if any, are you neglecting? Are there any actions you need to take? This week, put into practice what God has shown you.

2. Pray and ask God to show you if there is anything that should change in the way you treat your spouse. If there is, ask God to change your attitude and to show you how you can start implementing these changes. Throughout this week, put into practice what God has shown you.
3. Pray and ask God to show you if there is anything that should change in the way you treat your parents or your children. If there is, ask God to change your attitude and to show you how you can start implementing these changes. Throughout this week, put into practice what God has shown you.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson ②: Relationships to Work and with Co-workers

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To develop a biblical understanding of work, serving others and avoiding debt.
2. To grow in humility and servant spirit as we see the joy and dignity of serving others.
3. To apply Biblical principles about work to one's life situation.



Whatever you do,
work at it with all your heart,
as working for the Lord, not for men,
since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward.
It is the Lord you are serving.

Colossians 3:23-24 NIV



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



“Do you see a man skilled in his work? He will stand before kings; he will not stand before obscure men.” (Proverbs 22:29).

Just as a Christian's new relationship with God affects his family relationships, it likewise transforms his attitude to work. Through work we can honour God, provide for our families, less and serve others, and represent Christ to a fallen world.



WORK IS GOOD AND HONOURS GOD



Read Genesis 2:15 and 3:17.



Because of Gen 3:17, many people today view work as a curse and a necessary evil. That is not God's original design for work.



When God commanded Adam and Eve to work and care for the garden, was this before or after they sinned?



So, was work given to mankind as a punishment for sin or as a blessing of creation?



What does this tell you about God's design for work?



Read Ecclesiastes 3:12-13.



Ecclesiastes is a book written by Solomon about this journey to find purpose in life.



What are five things that Solomon concludes about the purpose of man?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.



What do you think it means to "find satisfaction in your work"?



What in addition does Solomon say about "finding satisfaction in your work"?



Share an example of a time when you found satisfaction in a job well done.



HONOURING GOD IN OUR WORK RELATIONSHIPS



Read Ephesians 6:5-9.



The master-slave relationship was perhaps the most common work arrangement in the working world of Paul's day; certainly, it was the most challenging to manage appropriately as Christians. The slave (*doulos* in Greek) was owned as the master's property. Without legal protection, the slave's welfare depended largely on the master's good will. (You can learn more about the conditions of slaves in the Roman Empire in the appendix at the end of this course.)



Think of the last job you had or the one you have currently. In what ways is your work relationship with your supervisor (or employee) similar to that of a slave with his master? In what ways is it different?

Similarities (as employees):

Differences:



In the chart below, the manner in which a Christian slave was to do his work is provided for you. Fill in the blank with what that means for how we are to do our work today. (Eph 6:5-8)

How a Christian slave should do his work	What it means for our work today
In obedience	We submit to our supervisor and do what he asks us to do
With fear and trembling	
With a sincere heart	
With the mindset we are serving Christ	
Not as people pleasers	
With good will	
With hope that we will receive back a reward from God	



Are these principles dependent on work conditions or the supervisor?



To whom are both slave and master answerable (Eph 6:9)?



What is the importance of this truth for the behaviour of both the employee and the employer?

③ DEBT FREE AND A BLESSING TO OTHERS



Read Romans 13:8-10.



According to Romans 13:8-10, what does God say about being in debt?



What is the debt we all owe and how can we discharge it?



Read Luke 16: 1-14.



In this parable, Jesus is not condoning dishonesty or cheating your employer. Rather he is using the shrewd actions of the manager to teach kingdom principles.



What was the dishonest manager's problem?



What exactly did he do? Why?



Verses 8-12 are the key to understanding this parable. Why was the rich man impressed with the manager? (v8-9)



How did Jesus apply this parable to believers?



Which of the following principles are true based on this passage? (Tick the box beside each correct statement.)

☐

God is not concerned about our money.

☐

It is ok to use money deceptively for a good cause.

☐

God wants us to use our wealth to further the kingdom.

☐

God wants us to be wise with how we use our resources.

☐

Generosity is not pleasing to God.

☐

If we are faithful in small things, God is pleased to entrust us with greater things.

☐

We can make our goal to get rich while serving God in this life.



Optional activities

1. Play 2 skits that illustrate the following verse: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men." (Colossians 3:23) In the first one, people are working to please their boss when he is present; in the second, they work with all their heart as for the Lord.
2. As a group, discuss what attitudes are most common in your culture with regards to work and work relationships. How are the instructions of the Bible different? How easy or difficult is it to be a Christian in the work place? Then, pray for the witness of Christians to their colleagues.
3. If anyone in the group has faced difficulties at work or even lost their job because of their faith, ask them to share what happened. Has God blessed them or any other people through this experience? If this situation is still current, pray for them.



Applications

1. Pray and ask God to show you if there is anything that needs to change in the way you manage your employees (if you are an employer) or in the way you do your work (if you are an employee or serving your family). Break up into groups of two or three and share what God has shown to you (as specifically or generally as you want). Then, pray for each other. Throughout this week, put into practice what God has shown to you.
2. Pray and ask God to show you if there is anything that needs to change in the way you use your resources. Ask him to show you if you could use them to further his kingdom in some way and how you could do this. Throughout this week, put into practice what God has shown to you.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson ③: Relationship to Worldly Possessions

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. Decrease worrying while growing in confident dependence on God.
2. Recognize the roots of greed and jealousy in our hearts, and learn contentment.
3. Commit to becoming a faithful steward of our gifts and resources until Christ's return.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



The biggest preoccupation of most people is that of financial and material wealth. It may surprise you to find that the Bible has a great deal to say on this subject and that our attitude towards it can greatly affect our Christian walk and witness.

① **BEWARE OF GREED.**



Read Luke 12:13-21.



Someone asked Jesus to tell his brother to share their family's inheritance. Jesus declines. Instead he tells a parable. What must we learn from this parable?



What do you suppose it means to be "rich toward God"?

② DO NOT WORRY.



Read Luke 12:22-34 carefully.



We all have legitimate material needs and it is so easy to be anxious about meeting them. What reasons does Jesus give for not worrying?



Who, according to Jesus, searches for material things?



Who can claim the promise “*all these things will be given you*”? (See also Matt 6:33)



Seeking God’s kingdom first allows us to be content with what God provides for us. This in itself is a treasure for us as believers whatever our material wealth may be. (Phil 4:11, 1 Tim 6:6-8)



What does Jesus promise to those who are prepared to leave wealth aside in order to follow Him? (see also Mt 19:29)



Which of the following could be examples of how one can store up treasures in heaven? Tick the box next to each appropriate example.



Confess and trust in Jesus Christ for one’s own access to eternal life. (Rom 10:9-10)



Share the message of salvation with others who do not know the Lord.



Leave one’s spouse and children to live in a monastery.



Give generously to your local church and to those who give their lives to teach and spread God’s Word.



Offer hospitality to God’s people and to those in need in Christ’s name.



Sell possessions in order to care for poor and needy people.



Share an example of how you are storing up treasures in heaven.

③ STEWARDS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD



Read Luke 12:35-48, carefully.



Jesus compares his disciple's relationship to Himself with that of a steward (manager) entrusted by his master to care for his servants while he is away. In what ways are we like this manager?



What qualities are essential to being a good steward?



Verse 48 says: *"From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded."* What has God entrusted to you, for which you will have to give an account? (Include skills and abilities, wealth, time, Biblical training, responsibilities)

④ GUARDING AGAINST THE LOVE OF MONEY



Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10, carefully.



In this chapter Paul warns Timothy as a servant of the Gospel against the temptation to use his ministry to get rich. For what reasons should we be on our guard against the love of money?

⑤ INSTRUCTIONS TO THE WEALTHY



Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19 carefully.



What instructions does Paul give to those who are rich?



In the first text we studied in this lesson we asked the question: What do you suppose it means to be rich toward God? What can you add to your answer based on this passage and the rest of this lesson?



King David said: “Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the majesty and the splendour, for everything in heaven and earth is yours”. (1 Chronicles. 29:11) All that we have is a gift from Him to be used for His glory.



Optional activities

1. Read Mark 12:41-44. Then, discuss the following questions as a group: How did the poor widow give more than all the others? Why do you think she gave everything she had? What does this teach us about our relationship to worldly possessions and how God sees them?
2. In Genesis, God gave the care of his newly created earth to mankind. What responsibility do we have in caring for the physical world today? Discuss this as a group. Then, come up with some action points to put into practice individually or as a group.



Applications

1. Spend some time in prayer and ask God to help you evaluate your priorities in regard to material wealth. If Jesus were to examine your heart, would he find greed, or worry? Ask God to show you what attitudes must change. Break up into groups of two or three and share what God has shown to you (as specifically or generally as you want). Then, pray for each other. Throughout this week, put into practice what God has shown to you.
2. Review the examples of how one can store up treasures in heaven in section 2 above. Pray and ask God to show you what you can do, according to your gifting, to be rich in good works which build the kingdom of God. Plan how you are going to do this and start putting this plan into practice this week.

3. Sing one of the songs listed below, or another song of your choice, to reaffirm your trust in God's providence for all your needs.

- [The Lord will provide](#)
- [My worth is not in what I own](#)
- [Do not worry](#)
- [Trust in you](#)
- [I will fear no more](#)
- [Sparrows](#)

Memorise one of these songs and sing it throughout the week every time you are worried about anything.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson 4: Relationships with Civil Authorities

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. Recognize civil authorities as God's appointed servants to do good.
2. Understand and embrace one's personal responsibility to respect and submit to authorities.
3. Realise how to respond when it is necessary to disobey certain decrees or laws which contradict God's law.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



A Christian is sometimes accused of being a traitor to his country. But one who lives according to the teaching of the Bible is, in fact, a better citizen because he will love others, live honestly, respect civil authorities, and obey the laws of the land.



Read Romans 13:1-8, and 1 Peter 2:13-17 carefully.



Who has ordained civil authorities?



What should be their role in society?



Why is it necessary to submit to governing authorities? (Romans 13:1-6)



Is it necessary for Christians to pay taxes? (See Romans 13:6-7 and also Matthew 22:15-22.)



Why?



What does God want to accomplish through our submission to human authorities? (1 Peter 2:15)



The Christian is free in Jesus Christ. How should he use this freedom in society? (1 Peter 2:15-17; Romans 13:11-14)



You are no doubt saying to yourself, “But it is not so simple. What if the authorities require us to disobey the laws we find in God's word?” Are we still to submit to these authorities?

We need to remember that the words that we have just read from Peter's letter were written at a time when the governing Roman authorities were evil men who established a cult of the emperor worship and persecuted the Christians to death. But because of leaders' positions, they were still worthy of respect. However, there are two passages that can help us find the answer to our dilemma.



Read Acts 4:1-22.



Here we have the account of Peter and John who were arrested and imprisoned by the religious authorities. What were they accused of?



Had they done anything wrong?



What reason did they give for not obeying their orders?



What did they do that demonstrated their submission and respect to the authorities? (Check the boxes by the responses below that apply.)



They obeyed what the authorities commanded them to do.




They did not try to rebel or overthrow the authorities or even insult them.



They recognized that the leaders had the authority to deal with them as they judged best.

- ☐ They were willing to accept whatever punishment or sanctions the authorities imposed on them in order to honour God.
- ☐ They told them the truth and explained their reason for not complying/obeying their command.

 The apostles showed us how we can obey God over and above civil authorities while remaining submitted to them. We see how right after this experience they prayed asking God to give them boldness to announce the Gospel with power (Acts 4:23-31). This can often be at the risk of great sacrifice.

You can read of two similar stories in the Old Testament in Daniel chapters 3 and 6 where Daniel and his friends take position for God at the risk of their lives and against the orders of the King.



Read 1 Tim 2:1-4



What does this passage encourage us to do for kings and all those in authority? Why?



Optional activities

1. Memorise Acts 5:29b. Invent a skit illustrating 2 or 3 situations that may occur in your context where a Christian would have to obey God rather than people.
2. Discuss what you could do as a group to help someone who is persecuted or even arrested for choosing to obey God, rather than men.



Applications

1. As a group, discuss how you could intercede for the civil authorities that are over you both locally and nationally. Think also of the reasons why you could give thanks for them. Then, take some time to pray for the leaders of your country.
2. Pray and ask God to show if there is any disdain, mockery or even hatred in your heart towards your leaders. If this is the case, confess this to God and ask for his forgiveness. Then, pray for your leaders and ask God to help you respect them. During the coming days, pray for them every day.
3. Pray and ask God to show you if there is an area in your life where...
 - you are not obeying the civil authorities as you should.
 - you don't obey God because you fear men more than him.

Confess this and ask for his forgiveness. Break up into groups of two or three and share what God has shown to you (as specifically or generally as you want). Then, pray for each other that you would have the courage to obey God. Throughout this week, put into practice what God has shown to you.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Lesson 5: Relationships with Unbelievers

Name: _____ Date: _____

Lesson Objectives

1. To appreciate the impact our new identity in Christ has on our relationships with unbelievers.
2. To commit to replacing our old practices with those of our new life in Christ.
3. To recognize when it is necessary to break ties with unbelievers.
4. To seek out opportunities to share our hope in Christ with unbelievers in our relational networks.



How are you getting on?

1. What were the main points of the last lesson?
2. What happened when you shared with others what you learned?
3. What changed in your lives as a result of these teachings?



Another thing that will happen, now that you have a new relationship with God, is that your relationship with your friends will change as well. Your interests and desires have changed so radically that some of the places you used to frequent, and some of the topics of conversation that once absorbed you, no longer hold the same appeal. Your friends too will have difficulty understanding your new interest in God's Word and God's people. You will begin to feel more at home with other Christians, and this is normal because you are members of the same family. What then, should your relationship to unbelievers be? Should you break all ties with them? The Bible counsels us as well in this area by showing us a good approach.



Read 2 Corinthians 6:14-7:1 carefully



In Corinth, there was a serious problem of idol worship. Paul certainly did not want the Christians participating with the unbelievers. A “yoke” is a wooden frame placed across the shoulders of two animals, linking them together. To be “under the same yoke” meant to have a close relationship and common purpose. Why is it not a good thing for a believer to be “yoked together” with an unbeliever?



In the context of impure practices, what command and what promise does God give us?



To which of the following partnerships might it be necessary to avoid or escape from a commitment with unbelievers? (Check the boxes that apply)



a business contract where you are an equal partner



a fiancé(e) (engaged couple)



a spouse (husband or wife)



a sports club or other association



While the Bible is clear in commanding us not to be joined together with unbelievers, this does not mean that we have no contact and no responsibility towards those all around us who do not know Christ



Read Matthew 5:13-16 carefully.



For what purpose are salt and light used?



Why do you think that Jesus used these two illustrations to refer to the presence of Christians in the world?



Read Luke 10:25-37 carefully.



Who is your neighbour and how should you treat him?



Read Luke 6:27-38 carefully.



How should we behave towards those who turn against us because of our faith in Christ?



If someone treats us unfairly do we have the right to treat him in the same way?



Verse 31 is referred to by many as “The Golden Rule.” Complete the verse.

“Do to others _____.”



What characteristics of our Father should His children display?



In the beginning of this course, we saw that our new identity in Christ and our new relationship with him transforms all of our relationships in this world. Can you remember the theme verse on the title page? Write it below:



Read 1 Peter 3:15-16. Those who observe us will notice the difference as we “set Christ as Lord” in our hearts. What is our privilege and responsibility as they seek to know why?



How can we prepare ourselves to do this?



Optional activities

1. Play a skit illustrating the difficulties that occur in a marriage or in a work context where partners are “unequally yoked”. Then, pray for “unequally yoked” couples or work partners that you know and ask God to show his grace in these situations.
2. Thinking of the parable of the Good Samaritan, discuss as a group who would be the people who are rejected and despised (like the Samaritans) in your context. In what practical ways can you show love to these ‘neighbours’?



Applications

1. Pray and ask God to show you if there is something that he wants you to do to let your light shine or shine brighter. Break up into groups of two or three and share what God has shown to you. Then, pray for each other. Throughout this week, put into practice what God has shown to you.
2. Make a list of the people who are close to you but who are not followers of Jesus yet. Then, spend some time in prayer for unbelieving friends, colleagues and family members. Throughout this week, continue to pray for the people on your list and for opportunities to share the Gospel with them.



Review of Course 108

Review the five lessons of this Course. What is the most helpful thing you have learned? Share your discoveries with the group.

Then, play a drama that shows what you have learned about discerning the will of God through this course.



Sharing

This week, share with others what you have learned in this lesson. You can also redo the lesson with someone.



Appendix for Lesson 2, Section ②

From the article "Slavery and Roman Society" in *Nelson's New Illustrated Bible Manners and Customs*, by Howard F. Vos Ed. Thomas Nelson, 1999. pp 629-30

Extent of Slavery and the Source of Slaves

During the New Testament period the Roman Empire needed over 500,000 new slaves annually....

Where did these slaves come from? In earlier years large numbers became available as captives of war. But during the first century warfare was not as extensive as the previous two hundred years....

Second, large numbers of slaves were born to existing slave populations.

Third, trade with peoples beyond the frontiers of empire brought many to the slave markets of Rome. Especially the Black Sea and Caucasus regions, as well as what is now Somalia, sent captives from their border wars.

Fourth, exposed or unwanted infants were often bought up as slaves.

Last, kidnapping and piracy netted many slaves, with children and sometimes even adults in remote areas carried off.

Large numbers of slaves belonged to the households of wealthy town dwellers, often for show more than for needed services. Rural slaves on the large farms of southern Italy not only worked the land but also watched the flocks and herds. These had to be armed to protect themselves and their charges against robbers or wild animals. They often took advantage of the situation to become robbers and highwaymen themselves.

Condition of Slaves

The lot of slaves in the empire was not as bad as often has been the case in slave-holding societies. Slaves had no identifying mark and were the same colour as freemen. Though they could not wear the toga, any citizen engaged in a variety of tasks didn't either. So, slaves couldn't be differentiated from freemen on the streets. Further, though the law did not recognize marriage between slaves, such unions were permitted and even encouraged. And public opinion did not tolerate the breaking up of slave families. Although slaves and all their possessions presumably belonged to their masters, owners generally allowed slaves to keep any tips or other funds they could accumulate. Sometimes they could even buy their freedom. Finally, slaves were generally regarded as human beings, who might even become citizens.

Economic results of Slavery

The existence of slaves tended to reduce the wages free laborers could expect, since wages were determined by the cost of buying and maintaining slaves.