

**Soft Hands and Open Hearts: Part III**  
**Soft Hands and Open Hearts toward the Poor of One's Household**  
**Deuteronomy 15:12-18**

**Veritas Class**  
**July 14, 2013**

A. Introduction to the Passage

1. The Ancient Near Eastern Background to the Issue (Hammurabi §§117-119)
2. The Biblical Background to the Issue
  - a. Exodus 21: 2-11
  - b. Leviticus 25:39-46
  - c. The Stages of Destitution
    - (1) Selling property (houses, land, livestock) to pay off a debt or giving it as security for a loan.
    - (2) Giving up the last of one's land and becoming a "tenant farmer" for the creditor, in which case one still benefits from the produce of the land.
    - (3) Becoming a part of the creditor's household as a debt-servant or hireling.

B. **Explanation**

1. **The Primary Case: Principles Governing the Treatment of Indentured Servants (12-15)**
  - a. The Situation (12a)
  - b. The Righteous Response (12b-15)
    - (1) The Debtors Obligation (12b)
    - (2) The Creditors Responsibilities (12c-14)
      - (a) Release him in the seventh year.
      - (b) Lavish him with provisions as he leaves
        - not empty-handed
        - liberally ("place a necklace around their neck—gussy him up)
        - proportionately
  - c. The Motivation (15)

**2. The Exceptional Case: Principles Governing Exceptional Cases (16-17a)**

a. The Situation (16)

(1) The Indentured Servant's Response

(2) The Indentured Servant's Reasons

(a) His covenant commitment to his creditor

(b) His flourishing with his creditor

b. The Righteous Response (17)

(1) The Required Action (17a)

(2) The Result (17b)

[A Parenthetical Aside (17c)]

**3. A Concluding Appeal (18)**

a. The Righteous Response (18a)

b. The Motivation

(1) Gratitude to the Indentured Servant (18b)

(2) The Condition of Future Blessing (18c)

**C. So What? What relevance has this ordinance for Christians?**

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.