

Webster's 1913 Edition

OE. *servant, servaunt*, F. *servant*, a *** p. pr. of *servir* to serve, L. *servire*. See Serve, and cf. Sergeant.

1. One who serves, or does services, voluntarily or on compulsion a person who is employed by another for menial offices, or for other labor, and is subject to his command; a person who labors or exerts himself for the benefit of another, his master or employer; a subordinate helper.

"A yearly hired *servant*." *Lev. xxv. 53.*

Men in office have begun to think themselves mere agents and *servants* of the appointing power, and not agents of the government or the country. *D. Webster.*

* In a legal sense, stewards, factors, bailiffs, and other agents, are *servants* for the time they are employed in such character, as they act in subordination to others. So any person may be legally the servant of another, in whose business, and under whose order, direction, and control, he is acting for the time being. *Chitty.*

2. One in a state of subjection or bondage.

Thou wast a *servant* in the land of Egypt. *Deut. v. 15.*

3. A professed lover or suitor; a gallant.

[Obs.]

In my time a *servant* was I one. *Chaucer.*

Servant of servants, one debased to the lowest condition of servitude. -- Your humble servant, or Your obedient servant, phrases of civility often used in closing a letter.

Our betters tell us they are *our humble servants*, but understand us to be their slaves. *Swift.*

4. To subject.

[Obs.] *Shak.*

Webster's 1828 Definition

SERV'ANT, [L. *servans*, from *servo*, to keep or hold; properly one that waits, that is, stops, holds, attends, or one that is bound.]

1. A person, male or female, that attends another for the purpose of performing menial offices for him, or who is employed by another for such offices or for other labor, and is subject to his command. The word is correlative to *master*. *Servant* differs from *slave*, as the servant's subjection to a master is voluntary, the slave's is not. Every slave is a servant, but every servant is not a slave.

Servants are of various kinds; as *household* or *domestic servants*, menial servants; *laborers*, who are hired by the day, week or other term, and do not reside with their employers, or if they board in the same house, are employed abroad and not in the domestic services; *apprentices*, who are bound for a term of years to serve a master, for the purpose of learning his trade or occupation.

In a *legal sense*, stewards, factors, bailiffs and other agents, are *servants* for the time they are employed in such character, as they act in subordination to others.

2. One in a state of subjection.

3. In *Scripture*, a slave; a bondman; one purchased for money, and who was compelled to serve till the year of jubilee; also, one purchased for a term of years.

4. The subject of a king; as the *servants* of David or of Saul.

The Syrians became *servants* to David. 2 Sam. 8.

5. A person who voluntarily serves another or acts as his minister; as Joshua was the *servant* of Moses, and the apostles the *servants* of Christ. So Christ himself is called a *servant*, Is. 42. Moses is called the *servant* of the Lord, Duet. 34.

6. A person employed or used as an instrument in accomplishing God's purposes of mercy or wrath. So Nebuchadnezzar is called the *servant* of God. Jer. 25.

7. One who yields obedience to another. The saints are called *servants* of God, or of righteousness; and the wicked are called the *servants* of sin.

8. That which yields obedience, or acts on subordination as an instrument.

9. One that makes painful sacrifices in compliance with the weakness or wants of others.

10. A person of base condition or ignoble spirit.

11. A word of civility. I am, sir, your humble or obedient *servant*.

Our betters tell us they are our humble *servants*, but understand us to be their slaves. *Swift*.