

# You Are a Slave

*Editor's Pick. Written by Daniel Hawkins.*

To those unfamiliar with the libertarian-anarchist world, this is probably a jarring headline. *I'm not a slave, you may think, I don't have a master. I don't work for free. I don't get whipped. I own property. I am free.* Libertarians and anarchists take heat for using the word "slave." It's not a light word to throw around, either. I agree. Slavery is very serious. To clarify, though, I'm not talking about chattel slavery. Chattel slavery is a horrific blight on the human race. It's reasonable to interpret the use of the word as crass or naive. But not being bound by chains or ropes, and living in a nice house with nice amenities, and voting, and thinking you own yourself, does not mean you are not a slave. It's not the physical condition of slavery that makes it slavery. Slavery is the denial of self-determination.

In the 1880s, former slave John Parker wrote that "[brutality] was an incident to the curse, but the real injury was the making of a human being an animal without hope." While the pain and savagery of chattel slavery were inflicted on people, those were additional injustices to the state of being owned. The definition of slavery from Oxford Dictionary is:

*"a person who is the legal property of another and is forced to obey them."*

Now that we have the definition, let's test my claim.

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