

## Amazing Grace

*Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the council of elders laid their hands on you.*

*Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. 1 Timothy 4:12-16*

William Wilberforce spent most of his adult life trying to end slave trade in the British Empire. Although many people agreed with him that slavery was wrong, they didn't vote for ending it because of the financial hardship it would create for slave owners.

If you had been a member in the House of Commons how would you have voted if you knew that ending slavery could destroy the businesses of the people in your district?

William Wilberforce and William Pitt were very young when they entered politics, but in a few short years they rose to positions of influence. When William Wilberforce experienced a Christian conversion he became even more effective in his work because he knew that God was leading him and helping him.

How do you think God leads people today?

Slavery is the mistreatment of some people for the gain of others. Many people today compare slavery to abortion. They say that each person is given one chance at life and aborting the child solves the problem of the mother at the expense of taking the life of the child.

Do you think this is a fair comparison?

Although many people believe that slavery is about one race dominating another, in reality there were African's who kidnapped and sold their fellow Africans into slavery. The slave traders and slave owners were predominately white, but it was also non-African people like William Wilberforce and Abraham Lincoln who devoted their lives to ending slavery. The color of our skin is not as important as the color of our hearts. Do we respect other people, no matter what their race, or do we think ourselves superior?

William Wilberforce lived his life trying to end slavery. He also devoted himself to the improvement of society, calling for a return to traditional values and morals.

What do you think needs changing today? What can you do to make the world a better place?

William Wilberforce believed that "all men are created equal" and was willing to devote his life to save the lives of those who could not protect themselves. Each of us has a responsibility to God and to each other to protect ourselves and those around us. The Bible tells us to love God with all of our heart, soul, strength and mind and to love our neighbor as ourselves. (Luke 10:27) When we choose to love Him and live for Him as William Wilberforce did, it compels us to live a life of love for God and each other.

*Dear Lord, we confess that we often live for ourselves instead of seeing how our actions affect the people around us. Open our eyes to the truth of Your word and the truth of our actions. Show us how we can live our lives to make the world a better place. Fill us with Your love. Give us lives of peace and joy. In Jesus' name, Amen.*