



# The Thirteenth Amendment

By Sister Rosa Wells-Garris

**Day 26**  
**March 23, 2023**

**Scriptures for Mediation**

**Read Galatians 5:13-14**

<sup>13</sup>You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. <sup>14</sup>For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

**Critical Race Facts!**

“Alabama rewrote its constitution in 1901 with the purpose to re-establish white supremacy in this state ... and regain legalized racial subordination. From 1865 to 1908, all eleven former Confederate states rewrote their constitutions to include provisions restricting voting rights with poll taxes, literacy tests, and felon disenfranchisement. Many of these new constitutions also included segregationist prohibitions against interracial marriage and integrated public education.

**Today’s Prayer:**

Lord, we know that a document can’t make us free. Thank you for the freedom of mind, body, and spirit that we possess. Help us to live in freedom and seek the freedom of others. In Jesus Name I pray, **amen**.

Thirteenth Amendment of 1865 states: SEC. 1. Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction.

SEC. 2. Congress shall have power to enforce this article by appropriate Legislation. Brief and to the point, the Thirteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, ratified December 18, 1865, abolished slavery “within the United States,” thus completing the job begun by the Emancipation Proclamation.

When the Civil War began, the Black Man had two major goals: To get into the fight and to see to it that all Black men were free. Lincoln insisted that slavery was not the issue at the heart of the war. If Lincoln had had his way, he would have eliminated the race problem through a program of gradual, compensated emancipation and colonization. When his colonization schemes were made public in 1862, Black people throughout the union protested. He had decided to issue a Proclamation for the slaves in the rebel territories. He felt that it would be easier for Whites to accept the situation if the freed Blacks were to leave the country.

Abolitionist, Frederick Douglass, called for Lincoln to “FREE THE SLAVES AND THEN LEAVE THEM ALONE.” The struggle of inequality, believed by many, was that the color of their skin determined his or her acceptance and social standing and continues to this day. My dad was born 1900, and my mother was born 1912. They felt the discrimination in so many ways, but with their belief in God, mother held on to her faith and praised our God anyhow! again. We must preserve this landmark for generations to come.

**Questions to Ponder**

How has your life been impacted by the 13<sup>th</sup> amendment? How has the clause, “*except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted*” been used to undermine the freedom of former enslaved people?

