**1 Peter: Submission to Governing Authorities, Pt 2**

1 Peter 2:14-17

**Context**

**1 Peter 2:13-17**—*Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,****14****or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.****15****For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.****16****Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.****17****Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.*

God has created order in His divine decree. His plan is perfect. To maintain His purposes and to fulfill His plan, we must submit to all those whom the Lord has established as a governing authority. Admittedly, we often struggle with any form of submission.

Our witness and testimony to fear and honor Him means we must honor those whom He has put into positions of leadership—even in their imperfect state. We have an easier time submitting when we think the person to whom we are submitting is good, honorable, and trustworthy. If they lack our defined qualities, we chafe under their rule and are far less likely to respond in compliance. This text is a clear example of a very different paradigm than our natural way of thinking.

Moreover, Stephen, the first Christian martyr, is a compelling model of this type of submission. Luke tells us in **Acts 6:5**, the Stephen was “*a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit*.”

When faced with opposition from the religious leaders, he has an amazing reaction to these unjust, false accusations against him. As a stark contrast to either a natural reaction nor the reaction of his accusers, *he had the face like the face of an angel* (**6:15**). He demonstrated a resolve, calm, unwavering determination to respond in like manner as that of His Lord. Even his dying breath was one of forgiveness: “*Lord, do not hold this sin against them!”* (**7:60**)

Let’s allow the Spirit of God and His word to guide us on how we can do that which He commands us to do in like manner.

**Christian submission to God-ordained authority**

1. **The command: submit yourselves**

**1 Peter 2:13a**—*Submit yourselves…*

1. **The reason: for the Lord’s sake**

**1 Peter 2:13b**—…*for the Lord’s sake…*

1. **The scope: to every human institution**

**1 Peter 2:13c-14**—…*to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,****14****or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.*

We do so unless it violates the clear mandates of Scripture. “The church is duty-bound to obey Christ even when doing so violates governmental regulations and restrictions.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

1. **IV. The reason: for such is the will of God**

**1 Peter 2:15**—*For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.*

1. The *will of God* is always obedience to what He has commanded
   1. His will is not mystical or mysterious
   2. It is given to us clearly through the scriptures
   3. It means that we *do right*
2. The argument is clear: living in an extraordinary, exemplary way silences the critics
   1. *Silence*—to close the mouth with a muzzle, to muzzle; to stop the mouth, make speechless, reduce to silence[[2]](#footnote-3)

**Matthew 22:12***—and he \*said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without wedding clothes?’ And the man was speechless.*

**22:34***—But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together.*

**Mark 1:25***—And Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet, and come out of him!”*

**4:39***—And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “Hush, be still.” And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.*

**Luke 4:35***—But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be quiet and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in the midst of the people, he came out of him without doing him any harm.*

* 1. *Ignorance*—not knowing, ignorance[[3]](#footnote-4); the word indicates a willful, hostile rejection of the truth.[[4]](#footnote-5)

**1 Corinthians 15:34**—*Become sober-minded as you ought, and stop sinning; for some have no knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame.*

* 1. *Foolish*—senseless, without reason, foolish, stupid; and may express a lack of mental sanity.[[5]](#footnote-6)

Integrity, impeccable moral fiber, and purity of life are all effective character tools to muzzle the enemies of Christianity. [[6]](#footnote-7)

**Titus 3:1-3***—Remind them to be subject to rulers, to authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good deed,****2****to malign no one, to be peaceable, gentle, showing every consideration for all men.****3****For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another.*

1. **V. The course: act as free men**

**1 Peter 2:16**—*Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.*

1. Acting as free men means we have the right attitude and frame of reference
2. Because of our salvation and the work of Christ done on our behalf (**1 Peter 1:18-19**), we are free…
   1. Free from the condemnation of sin

**Romans 6:7***—for he who has died is freed from sin.*

**Romans 8:1-2***—Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.****2****For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.*

* 1. Free from the penalty of the law

**Galatians 3:13**—*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”*

* 1. Free from the power of Satan

**Romans 16:20**—*The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.*

**Colossians 1:13***—For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son*

* 1. Free from the control of the world system

**1 Corinthians 9:19***—For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more.*

**Galatians 4:3-5***—So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world.****4****But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law,****5****so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.*

* 1. Free from the power of death

**Romans 8:38-39***—For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers,****39****nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, will be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

**1 Corinthians 15:54-56***—But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying that is written, “Death is swallowed up in victory.****55****O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?”****56****The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law*

1. However, we are not to use our freedom as a covering for evil
   1. *Covering*—placing a mask or veil over something[[7]](#footnote-8)
   2. *Evil*—malignity, malice, ill-will, desire to injure; wickedness, depravity[[8]](#footnote-9)
   3. Evil comes from vengeance, bitterness, hostility, and disobedience

**Genesis 6:5***—Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

**Genesis 8:21***—The Lord smelled the soothing aroma; and the Lord said to Himself, “I will never again curse the ground on account of man, for the intent of man’s heart is evil from his youth; and I will never again destroy every living thing, as I have done.*

**Proverbs 6:14***—Who with perversity in his heart continually devises evil, Who spreads strife.*

**Matthew 12:35***—The good man brings out of his good treasure what is good; and the evil man brings out of his evil treasure what is evil.*

* 1. Do not let our liberty or freedom in Christ become license to do wrong
  2. The idea is a veil or mask
     1. Do not put on the “mask of freedom” to cover wickedness
     2. Christian freedom is never to be used to cover ungodly license and ungodly license is violating the law of God. [[9]](#footnote-10)

1. Instead, we are to use our freedoms as *bondslaves of God*
   1. *Bondslaves (doulos)—*a slave; one who gives himself up to another's will those whose service is used by Christ in extending and advancing his cause among men[[10]](#footnote-11)

**1 Corinthians 7:22***—For he who was called in the Lord while a slave, is the Lord’s freedman; likewise he who was called while free, is Christ’s slave.*

* 1. We are delivered from the bondage of sin
  2. We become slaves of righteousness
  3. We are now free to be a slave of Christ (that’s wonderful freedom)
  4. That’s a glorious trade!

**Romans 6:16-22***—Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness?* ***17****But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed,****18****and having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.****19****I am speaking in human terms because of the weakness of your flesh. For just as you presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness, resulting in further lawlessness, so now present your members as slaves to righteousness, resulting in sanctification.****20****For when you were slaves of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.****21****Therefore what benefit were you then deriving from the things of which you are now ashamed? For the outcome of those things is death.****22****But now having been freed from sin and enslaved to God, you derive your benefit, resulting in sanctification, and the outcome, eternal life.*

1. **The Point**: freedom in Christ and citizenship in the kingdom of God in no way permit believers to abuse or disregard the standards of conduct God has established for them while they represent Him on earth
2. **The application: honor (2), love and fear**

**1 Peter 2:17**—*Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.*

1. There are four practical applications in life to the request
   * + 1. *Honor all people*
          1. Why? Because every person is made in God’s image

**Genesis 1:26**—*Then God said, “Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over the cattle and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”*

**Genesis 9:6b***—…For in the image of God He made man.*

**James 3:9b***—…and with it we curse men, who have been made in the likeness of God*

* + - * 1. To honor people is to honor the God who made them
        2. Christians are not to discriminate against any person—regardless of race, creed, nationality, socio-economic status, etc.

**Colossians 4:1***—Masters, grant to your slaves justice and fairness, knowing that you too have a Master in heaven.*

**Romans 2:11***—For there is no partiality with God.*

**Ephesians 6:8-9***—knowing that whatever good thing each one does, this he will receive back from the Lord, whether slave or free.* ***9****And masters, do the same things to them, and give up threatening, knowing that both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.*

Cf. **James 2:1-9**

* + - * 1. To be clear: that does not mean that we accept every person’s behavior, attitude, or position. We are discerning on their bad behavior and erroneous ideologies. It does mean that we nevertheless show proper respect knowing their Maker as well as their lost condition.
      1. *Love the brotherhood*
         1. The love for fellow believers ought to be overwhelmingly obvious
         2. The Apostle whom Jesus loved had much to say about it; and he got if from The Master

**John 13:34-35***—A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another.****35****By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”*

**1 John 3:23***—This is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He commanded us.*

**4:7***—Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.*

**4:21***—And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.*

**5:1***—Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.*

* + - 1. *Fear God*
         1. We are to have a very healthy fear of God. Why?

**Deuteronomy 13:4**—*You shall follow the Lord your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.*

**Psalm 111:10***—The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; A good understanding have all those who do His commandments; His praise endures forever.*

**Proverbs 9:10***—And those who know Your name will put their trust in You, For You, O Lord, have not forsaken those who seek You.*

**Ecclesiastes 12:13***—The conclusion, when all has been heard, is: fear God and keep His commandments, because this applies to every person.*

**Hebrews 12:9***—Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?*

**Revelation 15:***4—“Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify Your name? For You alone are holy; For all the nations will come and worship before You, For Your righteous acts have been revealed.”*

* + - * 1. Fearing Him means also that we trust Him—in all things

**Psalm 36:7***—How precious is Your lovingkindness, O God! And the children of men take refuge in the shadow of Your wings.*

**Proverbs 3:5***—Trust in the Lord with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding.*

**14:26***—In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence, And his children will have refuge.*

**16:20***—He who gives attention to the word will find good, And blessed is he who trusts in the Lord.*

**Isaiah 26:4***—Trust in the Lord forever, For in God the Lord, we have an everlasting Rock.*

* + - * 1. Despite the hard circumstances

**1 Peter 5:7***—casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.*

**Psalm 34:22***—The Lord redeems the soul of His servants, And none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.*

**2 Corinthians 1:10***—who delivered us from so great a peril of death, and will deliver us, He on whom we have set our hope. And He will yet deliver us*

**2 Timothy 1:12***—For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day.*

* + - * 1. Our response affirms our belief that He is sovereign

**Matthew 6:33-34***—But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.* ***34****“So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

**Romans 8:28***—And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.*

**Romans 11:33***—Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways!*

**POINT:** When we do what He says is right even when we do not understand, we demonstrate true faith.

* + - * 1. His perfect will in His perfect way

**The Perfect Wisdom of Our God** (Hymns of Grace, 25)

The perfect wisdom of our God  
Revealed in all the universe  
All things created by His hand  
And held together at His command  
He knows the mysteries of the seas  
The secrets of the stars are His  
He guides the planets on their way  
And turns the earth through another day

The matchless wisdom of His ways  
That mark the path of righteousness  
His word a lamp unto my feet  
His Spirit teaching and guiding me  
And O the mystery of the cross  
That God should suffer for the lost  
So that the fool might shame the wise  
And all the glory might go to Christ

O grant me wisdom from above  
To pray for peace and cling to love  
And teach me humbly to receive  
The sun and rain of Your sovereignty  
Each strand of sorrow has a place  
Within this tapestry of grace  
So through the trials, I choose to say  
"Your perfect will in Your perfect way"

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* + - 1. *Honor the king*
         1. Full circle back to **v13***—whether to a king as the one in authority*

**Proverbs 24:21-22***—My son, fear the Lord and the king; Do not associate with those who are given to change,* ***22****For their calamity will rise suddenly, And who knows the ruin that comes from both of them?*

* + - * 1. It likewise reiterates Paul’s words in

**Romans 13:7**—*Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.*

**Conclusion**

When we as His followers obey the principles of Peter’s counsel, it gives genuine credibility to our faith. May God grant us the grace and peace to follow Him in every way and give glory to His name.

**Source**

Most of the message and notes come from:

Nathan Busenitz & James Coats, God vs. Government: Taking a Biblical Stand when Christ & Compliance Collide

Richard W. DeHaan, Good News for Bad Times: 1 Peter

R.C.H. Lenski, The Interpretation of I and II Epistles of Peter, the three Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude

John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary, 1 Peter

John MacArthur, Submission to Civil Authority, Pt 2, April 9, 1989, [www.gty.org](http://www.gty.org)

Jerome H Smith, The New Treasure of Scripture Knowledge

[www.blueletterbible.org](http://www.blueletterbible.org)

1. God vs. Government: Taking a Biblical Stand when Christ & Compliance Collide, Nathan Busenitz & James Coats, 7. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Strong’s G5392 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. Strong’s G56 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. MacArthur, 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. Strong’s G878 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. MacArthur, 150. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. Strong’s G1942 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Strong’s G2549 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
9. MacArthur [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
10. Strong’s G1401 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)