

"The Believers' Submission To Governing Authorities"

I Peter 2:13-17

1-5-2022

INTRODUCTION:

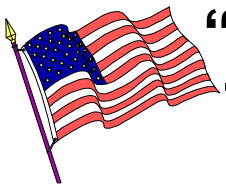
***Believers are expected to yield to governing authorities.**

I. *Submit to Governing Authorities that you may:*
<u>PLEASE</u> your Lord by doing His will (v. 13-14)

II. *Submit to Governing Authorities that you may:*
<u>MUZZLE</u> the criticizers of Christianity (v. 15)

III. *Submit to Governing Authorities that you may:*
<u>NOT EXPLOIT</u> (abuse) your freedom in Christ (v. 16)

CONCLUSION: Verse 17



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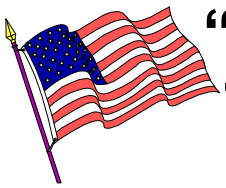
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I. *Submit to Governing Authorities that you may:*
_____ your _____ by doing _____ (v. 13-14)

II. *Submit to Governing Authorities that you may:*
_____ the _____ of Christianity (v. 15)

III. *Submit to Governing Authorities that you may:*
_____ (abuse) your _____ in Christ (v. 16)

CONCLUSION: Verse 17



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INTRODUCTION:

Submission to authorities is the theme of I Peter 2:13-3:7 -

--Citizens are to submit to the authority of government (2:13)
--Servants are to submit to the authority of their masters (2:18)
--Wives are to submit to the authority of their husbands (3:1)

All of life is structured around a "chain of responsibility" (cp. Mt. 8:10).

Three basic divinely established institutions to provide structure (order) and safety (protection) to society:

1) The Home (I Cor. 7:2ff; 11:3; Eph. 5:22-6:4)
2) The Government (Rom. 13:1-f)
3) The Church (Heb. 13:7, 17, 24; I Peter 5:1-5)

These institutions involve submission and authority.

An "AUTHORITY" is someone with a position of oversight.

The position of authority is ultimately given by God (Rom. 13:1).

This position of authority is one of service (an "authority" is a servant) (Rom.13:4)

This position of authority is to provide leadership, and/or protection for the well being of the one(s) served.

The one who holds such a position of authority is responsible to God and will answer to God (cp Heb. 13:17).

The one who is expected to submit to the authority will also be accountable to God for how he/she responded to the authority.

Without authority you have no:

1) Order (no structure, no chain of command)

2) Direction (each does what is right in his/her own eyes)

3) Protection (each is out for their own protection)

Submission to authority is a most basic and vital part of a well-structured and orderly society.

Without submission, anarchy rules; people's rights are violated unjustly by the insubordinate; lawlessness takes over; society crumbles.

Authority means "the right to rule; the power to act, decide, command, and judge. . . It is the right to set policy" (Fugate)

Note: Such authority is not without controls or limit. Every authority is ultimately under God's authority (Ps. 47:2, 83:18, 115:3)

GOD

Governs

Society	Church	Children
through	through	through
Government officials	Church leaders	Parents

Authorities are God's tool to get His job done; they function in a mediatorial sense.

***Believers are expected to yield to governing authorities.**

I. *Submit to Governing Authorities that you may:*
<u>PLEASE</u> your Lord by doing His will (v. 13-14)

V. 13

***"Submit yourselves"* =** "Allow yourself to be subject under" (the authority of governing authorities)

"Hupotasso" = to take your place in rank; to get in proper line; to be where you are supposed to be.

Many stubbornly refuse to place themselves in a position of respect and obedience to any authority.

***"Every ordinance of man"* =** Every position of authority instituted (by God) for man's benefit.

God is speaking about <u>human institutions of authority</u>. In context, governmental institutions of authority are the emphasis.

"Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesars" - Mt. 22:21

"For the Lord's sake" - Of course, <u>everything</u> we do should be for the Lord's sake (for His glory); but one particular area is the matter of submission to authority and in particular submission to government.

Everything we do should have God in mind. He is our motive. Col. 3:23 - *"And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men."*

Those who have no respect for authority, have no respect for God who instituted authority.

We don't submit to an authority merely to please that authority, nor to avoid trouble from that authority, but we do so to please God who ordained the positions of authority in this world.

The Lord instituted government.

"The powers that be are ordained of God" (Rom. 13:1)
It is God who established the principle of government ("authority") in the past.

Contrary to the humanists of today, our law system did not originate over a "millions of years" evolutionary process. But God established law.

A detailed system of law existed even before the Mosaic Law, as evidenced by the archaeological finding of "hammurabi's Code of Laws." Hammurabi, who reigned from 1728 - 1686 B.C. (at least 3 centuries [300 years] before the Law was given to Moses) wrote down many laws strikingly similar to the Law of Moses.

It is important to note that:

1) God ordained (appointed) the fact of government, not necessarily the forms of government that exist today.

   EX: of inferior forms of government:

   --Communism - A forced redistribution of wealth (taking it from those who earned it and giving it to those who did not). No one owns private property.

   --Totalitarianism - Dictatorship (EX: Hitler); the state has total control over everything in a society.

2) God instituted the principle of law and justice, not necessarily the specific laws that a given government might legislate.

   EX: of inferior laws:

   --Legalized abortion (freedom to murder)

   --No Bible reading in public schools (viewed as unconstitutional)

   --Murderers gaining freedom (EX: Charles Manson getting weekend passes)

   --Compulsory education (the education of children is the responsibility of the parents, not the state)

   --Social Security (government becoming a provider of goods and services [seeds of Socialism])

   --Certain "Anti-discrimination" laws - forcing an employer to hire homosexuals, etc.

Despite the growing inadequacies in our crumbling government, praise God some element of justice remains.

Bad government is better than no government.

If there were no government authority, there would be anarchy and lawless, wild, uncontrollable, barbaric behavior.

Society would be like a roller coaster off its tracks, like a river over its banks, or like nuclear waste outside of its container.

There must be law and order, restraints, enforced boundaries.

By submitting to government you are submitting to God.

"For the Lord's sake - cp. v. 15 - *"This is the will of God"* (it's what He desires). Cp. v. 16 *"As servants of God."*

***"King"* =** emperor (Ex: Nero). (This would apply to our President today).

V. 14

***"Governors"* =** Appointed rulers under the head of the government (those who enforce the law under the king - Ex: police officers).

The reason God mentions the "*governors"* (steps down from the Emperor) is because He wants us to know it is our responsibility to submit not just to the man at the top, but to all who are under his chain of command as well.

According to God's Word, the role of government is simply two-fold:

1. ***"The punishment of evil doers"***

2. ***"The praise of them that do well"***
   (the recognition of law-abiding citizens)

Government was never intended to be a provider of goods and services (former Congressman Lawrence McDonald).

Government has no business (under God) being involved in:

1) Public welfare (taking money from those who earned it and giving it to those who did not)

2) Public education (this is a parental responsibility that is most effectively taken care of through home or private education under the direct supervision of the parents)

3) Public health care

4) The control of our children

5) The control of our churches (dictating what they can and can't preach and teach)

6) The control of our business (dictating who they must hire)

Government is becoming a bigger and bigger monster today, with its tentacles wrapping around more and more, gaining more and more control - ever so smoothly and slowly, pulling more and more taxes from the wallets of its citizens to satisfy its ever-increasing appetite.

"Punishment" - lit. to work out the right; to mete out justice. To see that justice is upheld and carried out. To see that wrong doers bear a penalty that matches the crime.

"The punishment of evil doers" - The importance of law and order -

What would society be like without laws?
(ex. no traffic laws; no anti-theft laws; no laws against bodily injury; no prisons etc.)

Have you ever imagined what life would be like in NYC if there were no laws?

The existence of law is a clear testimony to one fact: "Man is depraved."

The humanistic teachers of today can call man "good" all they want; however, all the evidence shows just the opposite! (Rom. 3:10, 23).

Law would not be needed if there were no such thing as sin.

If man were flawlessly perfect (as originally created) there would exist no need for law.
However, because man is (due to fallen nature) rebellious, we need laws.

Because man is selfish (often at the expense of others), we need laws.

Because man is greedy, we need laws against stealing.

Because man is perverted, we need laws against rape and incest.

Because man lies, we need laws against fraud.

Because man is vengeful and cruel, we need laws against murder, attempted murder, and physical abuse.

"Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions" (Gal. 3:19) *I Tim. 1:9-10 - "Knowing this, that the law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be nay other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine."*

"For by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Rom. 3:20) (in a lawful society, man is made aware of his sinfulness and need for salvation).

"The law entered that the offense might abound"
(Rom. 5:20, cp. 7:7).

Romans 13:1-7

Four Reasons from **Romans 13:1-7** why you should obey governmental authority:

I.	**Reason # 1 - We should submit to the law:**	**TO HONOR GOD (v. 1-2)**
II.	**Reason # 2 - We should submit to the law:**	**TO AVOID PUNISHMENT (v. 3-4)**
III.	**Reason # 3 - We should submit to the law:**	**TO KEEP A CLEAN CONSCIENCE (v. 5)**
IV.	**Reason # 4 - We should submit to the law:**	**TO FULFILL AN OBLIGATION (v. 6-7)**

Capital punishment -

Government has the authority (under God) to practice corporal punishment upon criminals.

Capitol punishment is Biblical. It is not murder because murder is an indivdual taking the life of an innocent person. Capitol punishment is the law taking the life of a guilty criminal.

Gen. 9:6 - "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man."

Num. 35:33 - "So ye shall not pollute the land wherein ye are: for blood it defileth the land: and the land cannot be cleansed by the blood that is shed therein, but by the blood of him that shed it."

Acts 25:11 - "For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar."

Why should government **praise those who do right**? As an incentive for the rest of society. To help motivate others to follow suit.
Unfortunately, it is rare that you hear good reports about God-fearing, law-abiding citizens.

In our USA governmental structure, we have a voice, and it is perfectly lawful to voice our views and exercise our rights to vote. But if we were under a government which did not allow such a voice and vote, we would be expected to obey it even if we didn't like the laws.

Is it ever justifiable to disobey the government?

There are times when it is right to break the law.

When is it okay?

*When man's law conflicts with God's law. [when government imposes a law that will violate a Biblical conviction]

Three Biblical examples of when Christians can disobey government:

1. When it interferes with your prayer life (Dan. 6)

2. When it interferes with your worship (Dan. 3)

3. When it interferes with your witnessing (Acts 4:19-20)

"We ought to obey God rather than men." (Acts 5:29)

Examples of situations when it is right to disobey the law:

When the law forbids evangelism
church attendance
Bible reading and prayer
Child discipline

The reason for separation of church and state is:

1. To keep the church from becoming political, and the state (government) from becoming a religion (EX: the corruption of a "state-church")

2. To safeguard the state from telling the church who or how to worship. The state is never to impose (force) a belief or practice on the church.

The same man who wrote these words once told a council: *"Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. . . we ought to obey God rather than men."* (Acts 4:19-20; 5:29).

Note: Daniel in disobeying a law in Babylon did so with respect and honor for authorities; he was not belligerent, proud, obnoxious, but he humbly stood his ground, and God honored him (Dan. 1).

We must respect those in authority, because we respect their position (office) of authority and not necessarily because they have a character, politics, or practices worthy of respect.

II. *Submit to Governing Authorities that you may:*
<u>MUZZLE</u> the criticizers of Christianity (v. 15)

***"For"* =** Because. Peter gives a practical reason for the command of submission to government.

"This* (so) *is the will* (desire) *of God" - God's will for Christian citizens is submission to governing authorities (even pagan ones!).

But why? Answer: For <u>testimonies'</u> sake! (cp. v. 12)

God desires that His children by doing right (***"good")*** would ***"silence"*** (lit. muzzle; verbally restrain or gag!) the deliberate ignorance of foolish (senseless, reasonless) men.

It is as though the pagan critics were like a pack of yelping (barking), snapping dogs who needed to be muzzled (Wiersbe, p. 405).

"The ignorance of foolish men" - They were without true knowledge as evidenced by their accusing Christians of being:

1) <u>Atheists</u> (because they didn't worship the Roman gods)

2) <u>Immoral</u> (because they continually gathered together for breaking of bread and prayer, etc.)

3) <u>Usurpers of government</u> (disloyal to Caesar because they spoke of a *"kingdom"* to come)

(Lovik notes, p. 19)

While the eyes of gospel-ignorant and morally foolish men scrutinize your life, our conduct should muzzle their cynical criticism. Our submission to authority will restrain them from false accusations. The respect and honor we give to those in authority will silence their slander!

Of all people, Christians should be respectful, law-abiding citizens (like Joseph and Daniel). The world is watching! It is a major blow to our witness for a Christian to disgrace the Lord's name by shameful behavior. We are supposed to *"adorn"* the Gospel

(Titus 2:10; 2:7-8 - *"In all things shewing thyself a pattern of good works: in doctrine shewing uncorruptness, gravity, sincerity, Sound speech, that cannot be condemned; that he that is of the contrary part may be ashamed, having no evil thing to say of you.")*

--Do you feel deeply embarrassed when you receive a moving violation ticket?

--Does it bother you greatly to be caught red-handed in some criminal act (even minor infractions)?

III. *Submit to Governing Authorities that you may:*
<u>NOT EXPLOIT</u> (abuse) your freedom in Christ (v. 16)

"As free" - We are freed men in Christ; we are liberated spiritually; technically, we are citizens of a heavenly government and are under Christ's rule.

However, our freedom from the world's system does not give us license to rebel against the world's laws.

True, we are *"strangers and pilgrims"* (v. 11) here, but this does not mean that we can defiantly snub our noses at the "powers that be."

We are citizens of another government (a heavenly one), but we cannot use this freedom to disobey civil government here and now!

Salvation does not relinquish us from civil responsibility.

I once heard of someone saying, "I submit to Christ; I don't need to submit to any other authority."

"Those who demand freedom from all restraint have already become slaves to their own demands" (Anderson, RBP, p. 42).

"Sad to say, there are 'religious racketeers' who prey on ignorant people and use 'religion' to veil their evil actions." (Wiersbe, p. 405)

Just because we are free from the penalty of the law and sin does not give us the right to use such forgiveness as a cover-up (pretext, veil) for evil. To be saved does not mean that we can od anything we want. Reason: we are God's servants.

Gal. 5:13 - *"For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another."*

Cp. I Cor. 8:9

I may not be a slave to government, but I'm still a "bond servant" (slave) of God. (and He says to obey the government, even in a land of freedom, like America).

CONCLUSION: Verse 17

"Honor all" - Treat everyone with value, dignity and respect. (not only authorities, but everyone is worthy of honor).

The tense means to <u>begin</u> honoring; to start something you may not have been doing.

All men should be honored (regardless of race, sex, social status, color, etc.) because the human race was created in the image and likeness of God (Gen. 1:27; 9:6; James 3:9)

"Love the brotherhood" - Continue to have agape (Godly, sacrificial, unconditional love) for your fellow believers. Love shows respect; it also expresses the value you have for others.

We are to do good to all men but *"especially those of the household of faith."* (Gal. 6:10).

"Fear God" - we must continually live in reverence for God (*"holy and reverend is His name"* - Ps. 111:9).

Stand in awe of God! (Ps. 33:8 - *"Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.")*

The highest authority (God) deserves the highest respect.

Heb. 12:28-29
Eccl. 12:13 - "*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."*
Cp. Rev. 14:7

Having a "fear of God" is to fear <u>disobeying</u> Him and to fear <u>displeasing</u> Him.

"Honor the king" - Give respect to your governmental leader.

Peter is saying this in a day when the homosexual, madman, bloodthirsty corrupt Nero was in power! Peter "wrote this epistle about A.D. 63, just before the outbreak of Nero's persecution in 65) (Ryrie note, p. 1757).

Nero had no mercy on Christians; his government was very corrupt.

"Honor the king" - All who "fear God" will fear to disrespect that which God has ordained!

David had the highest reverence for the most personally unworthy king, Saul (SEE: I Sam. 24:10; 26:9, 11, 23; II Sam. 1:14, 16-27).

"My son, fear thou Jehovah and the king" (Prov. 24:21.

God commands us to pray for our leaders (I Tim. 2:1-2).