

FREE FROM ACCUSATION

1 Peter 2:13-17

God's people should be known for their submission to government authority.

There should be no cause for accusation of rebellion or insurrection.

People who recognize God's authority demonstrate that by submitting to the authority He established in the world.

Four spheres of authority God has established:

Submission to authority of the state 2:13-17

Submission to the authority of the workplace 2:18-25

Submission to the authority of the home 3:1-7

Submission to the authority of the church 5:1-7

Each of these spheres contains a **lesson concerning submission** in general—basic principle to help us to **better understand the nature of the biblical concept of submission.**

1st two make no reference to someone in that place of authority—Peter assumes it isn't likely many will find themselves in that position.

That's part of what the whole persecution issue is about.

2nd two assume many people in these places of authority will be listening.

He has a special word for them about how to use that authority as God's children.

CALL TO GOOD TESTIMONY IN MIDST OF SUFFERING 2:11-4:11

Main principle: **Christian hope should make a difference in our lives, even when suffering.**

Peter emphasizes principle by calling on reader to maintain a good testimony, even if it causes him to suffer.

Importance of good deeds 2:11-12

– Initial summary statement.

“Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. 12 Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.”

Importance of submission 2:13-3:7

Peter is specifically interested in **the testimony of God's people before recognized authorities.**

In world characterized by rebellion and lack of respect for authority, it's hard to submit to authority when those in command abuse privileges.

Nevertheless, it's precisely that **submission to authority in midst of persecution that demonstrates that we're suffering on account of God and not for evil deeds.**

SUBMISSION IN THE SPHERE OF GOVERNMENT 2:13-17

“Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority,¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.¹⁶ Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God.¹⁷ Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.”

1st sphere of authority: government.

We should submit to authority and do good so that we give no occasion for anyone to accuse us of rebellion.

“Submit yourselves . . . to every human institution”

ktisis => create, found > founding, foundation

> that which was created (established)

authority created (established)

Use of this term reminds us: *the Creator placed them there!*

Hodges – "Christians ought to be the best citizens of any land. Their patriotism and respect for the law has far deeper roots than that of unbelievers. They submit to authority "for the Lord's sake." Thus a lawless Christian brings reproach on the Lord's name."

Definition of Submission

Word used is military term: hupo = under; tasso = to appoint, order, or arrange => SUBMISSION => "Sub-ordinate"

Basic idea: it's necessary that there be order.

We submit to authority to allow for ordered carrying out of God's purposes in world – we place ourselves under authority to another that God has established in that position of authority.

We submit for God's sake **2:13** *"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake"*

by God's will **2:15** *"It is God's will that by doing good ..."*

as God's servants **2:16** *"Live as servants of God."*

Disobedience and submission

It's possible to obey and not submit.

"Standing up on the inside."

Obedying the traffic officer, as long as he's holding the radar gun on us.

It's possible to submit and not obey.

Occasion for disobedience –

We should submit to governing authority until it becomes sin to obey them.

Then God's law comes first.

Daniel and his 3 friends – Dan. 1, 3, 6 (as well as Dan. 11-12)

Apostles – Acts 4, 5 (4:19; 5:29)

They never rebelled, nor denied the authority of the governing.

Swindoll: "These powers may have the right to establish codes and regulations [e.g., building codes, seating capacity, fire codes, parking rules, etc.], but they do not have the right to

dictate what we can preach in our pulpits or teach in our Christian schools. When they cross that line, they transgress the boundary of their God-ordained authority (Acts 4:5-20)."

At that point we have to obey God rather than man.

No animal provides a more striking example of obedience than the Australian sheep dog. When it comes time to move the sheep from one pasture to another, these skillful herders work in perfect harmony with the shepherd to get the reluctant animals moving. The shepherd rides out into the field on horseback, the dogs trotting happily alongside. Then he gives a command, and the dogs begin to move the sheep. A steady stream of whistles and calls gives the dogs their orders, and they respond in perfect obedience. The shepherd, surveying the entire flock, sees the sheep that are lagging behind or straying. His clear, short commands convey his desires to the dogs, and they bring them into line through their unquestioning obedience.

Even the sheep dog works within the bounds of its divinely given nature. If the shepherd calls on it to fly, it must look at the shepherd quizzically. God never made the sheep dog to fly. So too the child of God, while submissive to government authority, must live within the bounds of the nature God has given to him. We may suffer affliction for not obeying the command, but we must live in accordance with our new nature, while submitting to the authority that God has placed over us.

Conditions and submission

This is an unconditional submission.

No exceptions are made for those who abuse their authority. Peter assumes that authorities *will* abuse their authority.

Our submission is "for the Lord's sake" – 2:13 – *Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men.*"

It's not for man's sake; not because they merit it.

This isn't a kind, benevolent dictatorship that gave birth to our modern system of justice.

This is Nero's Rome, where Christians are sacrificed to animals or burned at the stake.

Should Christians then pick up arms and defend themselves? No!

On account of the Lord—the One who establishes every human authority—we're to submit. NOT because they merit it!

Power of submission

Our submission silences the critics. 2:15 *"For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men."*

"Silence" => *fimoo* => silence, muzzle

Same idea as word in 1 Cor. 9:9 which talks about not putting a muzzle on an ox that is treading.

There are rumors about their strange doctrines and secret meetings.

Maybe they're going to overthrow government and set up "God's" kingdom on earth.

Christians could "muzzle" rumors by submission to government.

Scope of submission 2:16-17

Submission and freedom 2:16 *"Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God."*

Our freedom in Christ doesn't free us to do evil.

It enables us to be God's slaves

Gal. 5:13-14 "You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature, rather, serve one another in love. 14 The entire law is summed up in a single command: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

We're not to use our freedom as a cloak draped over the top of something so that no one can see that underneath we have concealed evil deeds.

We are free, but *not* to do evil.

We're free so that we can serve God.

Submission and our response to one another **2:17**
"Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king"

An appropriate submissive response is due to all.

First command, general–aorist–Do it!

As general principle, **honor all people**–have proper respect for each other.

Other three are specific issues, all present, continuing actions.

We're to continuously dedicate ourselves to an appropriate response to each category of people mentioned:

Continuously **love – our brothers and sisters in Christ**

Continuously **reverence (fear) – God**

Continuously **honor – the king**

Deal with each one appropriately in his own sphere of authority.

Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's.
 While we're to submit to those in authority over us, that doesn't mean we imitate them by looking down on others, or by mistreating them.

We are to honor both those above and below us on the social ladder.

What you owe to a king, you give to everyone.

What would God have us do differently this week as a result of this study?

Biblical Principles concerning Our Response to Government

The origin of government

God establishes them all Rom. 13:1-2 (3 X) (Dan. 4:17, 25, 27, 32, 37)

They're God's servants Rom. 13:4, 6

But, what about when they don't serve God in this way?

Believers in Rome and Babylon would have said the same thing!

Both persecuted God's people unjustly.

The purpose of government

To punish those who do evil. 1 Pet. 2:14; Rom. 13:4

To praise those who do right. 1 Pet. 2:14

To serve God in the administration of justice. Rom. 13:4, 6 (3 X)

And if they don't fulfill God's purpose?

This is their problem; not ours!

(In a democracy we can vote them out. But we get more of the same!)

Paul did use the legal resources available to him

Acts 22:22-29; 25:1-12

What human government ever has ruled justly consistently?

Rome certainly wasn't doing it (Acts 24:24-27)

Christians are still told to submit.

Our obligation to government

Rom. 13

Submit to the governing authorities 13:1a, 2, 5

An attitude—the opposite of rebellion.

Because of the punishment imposed.

Because of our own conscience

They have to live with their own conscience

We have to live with our own conscience.

It's our responsibility to submit, no matter what they do about their responsibility.

Do what is good 13:3b-4

Pay taxes faithfully 13:6-7a

Respect them 13:7b

1 Tim. 2:1-2

Pray for them individually 2:2a

Pray that we will be able to live in peace 2:2b

Pray that we will be able to live a godly life 2:2c

1 Pet. 2:13-17

Submit to every governing authority 2:13-14

Do what is right as God's servants 2:15-16

Our subjection and proper conduct is based on our relationship with God, not on the justice of the government.

Honor those in authority over us 2:17

Opposition to unjust governments

Example of the prophets

They denounce sin in high places (Amos, et.al.)

However, they do so before kings over Israel.

They profess to be part of God's people.

They never preach rebellion or disobedience to the king.

Among pagan nations

They announce divine judgment to come against nations whose sin became grossly exaggerated.

They never preach rebellion against the king.

Example of David with Saul

Saul, the unjust, tries to kill David.

He's been rejected by God.

David is anointed as king by God's messenger 1

Sam. 24:6-7; 26:9-11

This was a symbolic act announcing God's intention.

God uses pagans to attack Saul–David refuses to touch "the Lord's anointed."

Saul dies by committing suicide. He kills himself. David never touches him. 31:4

David condemns messenger who lies and claims to have killed Saul. 2 Sa. 1:14-16

Example of apostles Acts 4:17-21a; 5:28-33, 40-41

They have to obey God before men.

They never rebel against the government.

They do disobey and accept consequences submissively.

They praise God for being counted worthy of suffering for His name's sake.

Conclusions

1. God is sovereign.
He sets up kings and takes them down.
He judges the unjust in His own way and time.
2. God is big enough to accomplish His purposes by means of the most rebellious ruler.
3. God is able to use a rebellion to achieve His purposes.
4. God never blesses the rebellion of the rebellious.
5. Submission to authority is our responsibility—whatever the ruler may be doing wrong.
6. It is possible to submit to authority and still disobey an order issued by that authority.
This implies willingness to accept the consequences of disobedience.
There is no place for rebellion.

7. We're to pray for those in authority over us—whether good or bad—in order that God may accomplish His purposes through them.
8. We're to maintain our testimony unblemished by sin and rebellion—no matter what others may do about theirs. 1 Pet. 2:15-16