

Submission: Pathway to Honoring God (Part 2)

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Date: 03 February 2025

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[0 : 00] We're back in 1 Peter chapter 2.

We're going to be looking at verses 13 to 17. When we begin this block of lessons, the topic is godly submission.

And my intentions originally were to cover six elements of godly submission that are contained in 1 Peter chapter 2 in one lesson.

Well, that didn't work out. Although we did cover two elements, we got two out of the way. We looked at the command for submission and the motive for submission.

So tonight we're going to pick it up in number three, and I do intend to get through all the next four. And the next one is the extent of submission.

[1 : 15] And 1 Peter chapter 2 verses 13 and 14. Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as one in authority or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.

There are three foundational teachings on a believer's responsibility to civil authority. And that was important to me because I was the police chief, and I basically represented the civil authority on the law enforcement side of the house.

These are contained largely in the book of Romans chapter 13, which I read last week. I want to do that again.

Romans 13, I'm going to read verses 3 and 4. For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.

Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval. Governments are established and exist for the following three reasons.

[3 : 02] 1 to restrain evil. 2 to promote the public good. And 3 to punish evildoers.

Now, 1 Peter 20 years after Paul wrote Romans, and I don't think there's any question, but that Peter gained a lot of insight in reading the inspired works of Paul and under the direction of the Holy Spirit, Peter says we are to be obedient to every human institution and government.

And let me assure you, on the federal level, we've got a lot of them. A lot of them. This is God's way of maintaining both peace and order in society.

Now, human organizations, if left unchecked, will drift toward disorder.

Why is that? Why would they do that? Because we're fallen creatures. We live in unredeemed flesh. And that happened all the way back in the Garden of Eden.

[4 : 23] This is how Jeremiah the prophet expressed it. Concerning the nature of man and thus man's problem, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick.

Same word in Greek for wicked. Desperately wicked. Who can understand it? But back to my main point. The Holy Spirit said, through the Apostle Peter, that we are to be subject to every human institution.

Well, how can he say that? Well, first of all, the Holy Spirit is God. And He cannot lie. It's impossible for Him to lie.

But for our purposes, we must emphasize that every human institution is ordained by God for His purpose.

That is why we are called on to submit to civil authority to include government, employers, and the family, the family unit.

[5 : 42] And in the near future, we will be examining all of these. But it does lead to a perplexing problem. Does the command to be subject to every human institution include or exclude include or exclude those authorities that make bad or unjust decisions?

And that point has been argued by theologians and others for generations. There is no language in the command to exclude those human institutions that make poor, unjust, or even at times corrupt decisions.

The Bible is silent on that. Now this is almost a sidebar comment, but we must admit that the Bible, particularly the Old Testament, acknowledges that corrupt rulers do exist.

Let me mention a couple of verses. One is found in Daniel, chapter 9, great chapter in that book, verses 11 and 12.

All Israel has transgressed your law and turned aside, refusing to obey your voice.

[7 : 20] And the curse and oath that are written in the law of Moses, the servant of God, has been poured out upon us because we've sinned against Him.

He has confirmed His words which He spoke against us and against our rulers who ruled us by bringing upon us a great calamity.

For under the whole heaven there has not been done anything like what has been done against Jerusalem. And then there's another passage found in the little book of Micah, a powerful book, Micah 7, verses 2 and 3, the godly has perished from the earth and there was no one upright among mankind.

They all lay in wait for blood and each hunts the other with a net. Their hands are on what is evil to do it well.

The prince and the judge ask for a bribe and the great man utters the evil desire of his soul, thus they weave it together. Now obviously, we have evil people in positions of power.

[8 : 38] But God also reserves the right to bring them into stern and even eternal judgment. Nothing's going to escape his eyes.

He knows. He hears every conversation. What true believers must recognize is that even though these institutions are imperfect and some may even be corrupt, God is the one who exercises sovereign and wise rule over nations and societies that make up those nations.

There's a lot of times we just have to leave that to God. Our submission to governmental authority applies to all levels of government.

Peter begins by stating that the king is one in authority. I rather imagine when Peter wrote this, there was a great outcry that went up when people sat down and read his letter.

The king over them in that day was the Roman Emperor Nero. And I don't think they get any worse than Nero. He was a deranged tyrant.

[10 : 00] He was a murderer. Remember, even an evil man such as Nero can be called on by God for a time to carry out fundamental purposes of the Roman government.

This reminds me of a very evil man. He wasn't alive in my lifetime, but he was in Oscars. And that was a guy in power in Germany named Adolf Hitler.

Hitler. Can anyone say anything nice about Hitler? Killed millions of Jews, millions of undesirables, gypsies, and whatnot.

Long after he killed himself and Germany lost the war that he led them in, people would say this though.

Well, he got the trains to run on time. Trains were horrible in Germany. And Hitler said, he called them all in one time and said, if you don't get these trains schedules and run on time, I'm going to start executing you guys.

[11 : 15] Well, they fixed the problem. You know, that's like, I visited Scotland twice with my wife. You can set your watch on a train. I'm serious. They come in and people get off and they take off and you can set your watch by them.

Next, Peter mentions governors in the hierarchy of leadership. A governor is a person that has a lower level of authority and operates under the king.

Now, we don't have a king in America, but we do have governors, don't we, that run various states. Now, years before Peter wrote his two letters, he was taught a very great lesson about the role of government.

The specific lesson that Peter was taught was on the use of capital punishment. And first, let us establish that we even have capital punishment, and we do.

These are God's words. Genesis 9, verses 5 to 6, And your life blood, I will require a reckoning for your life blood.

[12:35] From every beast, I will require it and from man. From his fellow man, I will require a reckoning for the life of man. Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man, shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.

And there's the explanation, really, for capital punishment. When you destroy a human life without due process, you've touched the glory of God.

Because he's made every person, even the unsaved, uniquely in the image of God. And so, we do have due process.

You can go through trials and it takes about 18 years to execute someone. I worked on eight capital murder cases in my career as a police officer in Fort Worth, a detective.

And one of them was acquitted. Seven of them got the death penalty. One of those, the Supreme Court altered to life without parole.

[13:48] So, he didn't go through execution. As far as I know, he's still there. But the other six received the death penalty and all six of those have been carried out.

So, someone asked me what time, do you ever feel bad about that? Not in the least. I felt bad about his victims. I felt bad about, in one case, the seven people he killed, including five women and two 18-month-old babies.

But I never did, and neither did I have any question about guilt. If I'd had doubts, I would have gone to the district attorney, my boss, and told him, look, I feel bad about it.

I don't feel comfortable with this. But we're thorough in those capital cases. So, I'm confident those guys did the crime, they had to do the punishment.

So, the Lord established capital punishment. And we see that establishment of capital punishment way back in Genesis. And the truth is, that verse, that passage has never been rescinded.

[15:03] We still have that. In our country, 27 states have capital punishment. 23 states do not.

Can you guess who leads the nation in executions? It'll be easy to guess. Texas. It always worries me, my wife's a Texan.

Texas leads it. Since 1977, Texas has executed 586 people. Since 1977. Oklahoma's number two. We've carried out 123 since 1977. Some other states that are close to us, Missouri being one, lead in a lot of executions.

When Jesus was arrested in the garden, Peter and the other followers of Christ witnessed something very amazing. We have to consider this and factor this in.

[16:11] Jesus said in the hearing of Peter, He said, and He's talking to Judas, friend, do what you came to do. Of course, that was to turn Him over to the authorities.

Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized Him and behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear.

That had to be painful. And then Jesus said to Peter, put your sword back in its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.

Do you think that I cannot appeal to my father and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? A legion with six thousand. So that's a gaggle of angels.

One time, one angel killed 185 battle hardened, I think they were Phoenician soldiers in one night. He killed 185 of them with the jawbone of a, the Bible says an ass, a donkey.

[17:31] But most conservative states, you know, what did Jesus do here in this passage?

He affirmed in the hearing of Peter and others, the Roman government has the right to use the sword and if Peter used it on anyone, they could use it on him.

Only the government has been given the right to use the sword to punish those who break the law. Believers are not permitted to carry out vigilante justice.

Now, I must add here, most conservative states, including Oklahoma, recognize the right of citizens to be secure in their home.

If someone breaks in, threatens to use deadly force on your family, you can use deadly force on that person.

[18:40] If you're in fear of your life, of the life of your wife or child, and that actually happened in our community when I was police chief, and actually it was the principal of one of the high schools in this region, man, and a guy, it was really sad once we got it all figured out, but he was heavily intoxicated, he thought he was coming home, he wasn't even close to his house, and he broke in, and then he was walking down the hallway, going into the bedroom of his 16-year-old daughter, and

this guy grabbed his gun, and he kept telling him, don't do this, don't do this, and he did, he went in there, and finally he shot him, and killed him, and I talked to him, other officers, he was distraught over this, I said, hey, this guy left you no choice, you know what he's going to do in there, he wasn't expecting to see your daughter, that's for sure, so it has happened, but it happens like in our town, very limited basis, very limited, so this is not complicated, the role of government is clear, the government is to create fear that restrains evil, if I do this crime,

I'm going to have to do some time, I might even have to sit on death row, for the next umpteen years, and ultimately be executed, the role of government is to punish those who do wrong, now let me add to you, police officers are not to punish, we're to arrest and get them into the court system, it's judges and juries and lawyers and all that that do that, but at times if we have to use deadly force, and we've had to do that quite a bit in the last few years, then we have to do that, we have to be able to justify it, it is the role of government to protect those who do right, or do righteously, who obey the law, when you see a police officer driving in a police car at two o'clock in the morning, that is what the officers are doing, they are protecting that neighborhood from attacks by criminals, if you see an officer out while you're getting ready to eat turkey on

Thanksgiving or open gifts on Christmas or whatever, that's what he's doing, or she, they're out there protecting your family. So what about the reason for submission?

In 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 15 we read this, for this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

Well, if we could silence every foolish person, it would be, not much noise, you know. Why is it important for believers to do right on these issues?

[22 : 05] we're to do so because doing right is the will of God. He wants us to do the right thing. And by doing right, we silence the ignorance of foolish men.

The word silence in the Greek language, it means to muzzle someone. someone. It can also mean to restrain or make speechless.

Peter also uses an interesting word when he talks about the ignorance of foolish men. in the original language it speaks of someone who lacks spiritual discernment.

It means terms that are senseless and without reason. It could even mean that the foolish man speaking in such terms has a lack of mental sanity.

He's gone off his rocker. Now we know that the Christian faith has always had detractors. We have them in this day.

[23 : 19] It happens today. It happens in this town. You can muzzle them by following the counsel of Paul in the book of Titus. Titus chapter 3 verses 1 to 3.

Paul says to Titus, all you got to do remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities to be obedient to be ready for every good work to speak evil of no one to avoid quarreling to be gentle and to show perfect courtesy toward all people for we ourselves were once foolish disobedient led astray slaves to various passions and pleasures passing our days in malice and envy hated by others and hating one another these passages describe virtuous conduct and good citizenship this is how church members should conduct their daily lives in this fallen world but it is especially important that church leaders engage in such conduct themselves and Paul spoke of such conduct in 1st

Timothy 3 7 he says this moreover he must be well thought of by outsiders so that he may not fall into disgrace into a snare of the devil this type of conduct is especially important for those who are serving in leadership in the church a pastor elders when you do the right thing you silence critics you may also open a path to introducing Christ rejecters to the gospel to the good news I want to hear more about why you are the way you are or what you believe and we're also going to look at the attitude of submission 1st Peter chapter 2 verse 16 live as people who are free not using your freedom as a cover up for evil but living as servants of God here we are commanded to have the right attitude for

Christians living in submission to the Lord that is how we maintain credibility with those who reject Christ the right attitude according to scripture is to act as free men and this begs a question what does the Holy Spirit mean by free men let me throw in a couple examples all of this is the result of the redemptive works of Christ the fact that he is the savior he came to seek and save the lost and we have great freedom in Christ we are freed from sin's condemnation guys you ever do business with that there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in

Christ Jesus Romans 8 1 you're beyond condemnation we are free from the law's penalty Jesus paid the price you don't have to pay it twice we are no longer in bondage to Satan we are free from the world's control over us and we are free from the power that death has over us our death is just changing addresses on the mailbox we just simply change addresses but this all comes with a warning anyone free in Christ and I would suggest that's every true believer in the world must not use their spiritual freedom as a covering for evil that's that's a disconnect you can't do that and one of the evils would be refusing to submit to government officials that are over us we have government officials over us today we had them over us six months ago even now we've had a change in government according to

[28 : 33] Peter a truly righteous attitude will cause genuine believers to use their freedom as bond slaves or bond servants of God and let me give you an example when a slave is saved he becomes a freed man of Christ he's free in Christ but now that he is in Christ he is also a slave to Christ it sounds like an oxymoron how can you be free and a slave well the Lord's got that all worked out so now that we are in Christ we are a slave many times in scripture we are referred to as slaves of Christ *doulos* but do not associate that status with those in the mid 17th century in America where we had slavery and we fought a civil war over it slaves who were kidnapped in

Africa and brought to America as slaves were treated sinfully I think there are many former slaves that are in heaven today and I think there are many former plantation owners who owned them and beat them that are probably in hell today I'll leave that to God here's how scripture puts it for he who is called in the Lord as a bondservant is a freed man of the Lord likewise he who was free when he called is a bondservant of Christ and actually the word bondservant doesn't even appear it's slave *doulos* *doulos*!

starting with my great grandparents on two slaves in Kentucky a man by the name of Louis Grisard my dad knew him and a woman and the only name she had was Mammy and she was referred to as Mammy and my great grandmother fed her breast she fed my great grandmother this black woman and when she died my grandmother grieved over that woman that was like a mother to her well when Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation my great grandparents called in Louis and Mammy and said President Lincoln has signed the Emancipation Proclamation and we want you to know that you're free to leave you're no longer slaves and so Mr.

Grisard said could Mammy and I talk about this this evening and visit tomorrow with you all and I said well sure if you want to yeah we do so they met and they talked and the next morning they met with my ancestors and they said we would like to stay with your family we've always been treated like members of the family Mammy slept in the house Louis he had a wonderful room out back but it was warm in the winter and they opened the windows in the summer and so we would like to stay and my family told me well if you're going to stay that's fine you'll have the same work assignments but we will pay you for your work and they stayed with them until they died they stayed there and actually Mammy my great grandmother wanted to bury her in the family plot now this is Murray Kentucky they said absolutely not you're going to bury her in a white part of our cemetery so she got some guys some diggers and they went down at night they dug a grave and they buried her and they had a prayer service next morning she was buried never was a tombstone one of these days I'm going to get a tombstone and say buried near here is when we become slaves of righteousness that is the greatest privilege to be a slave to Christ in righteousness this is how Paul put it this is classic Paul Romans chapter 6 verses 16 to 22 do you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves you are slaves of the one whom you obey either of sin which leads to death or of obedience which leads to righteousness but thanks be to God that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed and having been set free from sin have become slaves of righteousness

[34 : 01] I'm speaking in human terms because of your natural limitations for just as you once presented your members as slaves to impurity and to lawlessness leading to more lawlessness righteousness so now present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to sanctification for when you were slaves of sin you were free in regard to righteousness but what fruit were you getting at that time from the things of which you are now ashamed for the end of those things is death but now that you've been set free from sin and become slaves of God the fruit you get leads to sanctification and its end is eternal life great passage by Paul in Romans chapter 6 in the

Greco-Roman world slave or bond servant was the lowest level of servitude didn't get any lower the joy for believers is that they are truly servants of Christ but they did not have the license to

disregard the standards of conduct God had established for them on earth they were still to be obedient to the government to not be lawbreakers we come to the last element of submission the application of submission and I'm just asking you brothers listen very carefully to this 1st Peter 2 17 honor all people love the brotherhood fear God honor the king that's loaded with dynamite Peter writing by inspiration of the Holy Spirit places the closing elements for submission to the government into four categories honor people love the brotherhood fear God honor the king well first of all we're to honor all people why do we do that because every person is uniquely created in the image of God in the first century most people viewed slaves as non persons without any rights Peter comes along and tells us that we should not treat anyone like that Paul did the same thing in Colossians in Colossians 4 1 masters grant to your slaves justice and fairness knowing that you too have a master in heaven as followers of Christ we are never to discriminate against anyone on the basis of race nationality or economic standing in that culture we are always to show the proper respect for individuals made in the image of God second we're to love the brotherhood we're to put on a display that we love our brothers in Christ

John was really good about writing about this in John chapter 13 verse 34 and 35 he says this a new commandment I give you that you love one another even as I've loved you that you also love one another by this all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love one for another that's the ultimate test for the believer do you have love for each other when we don't exercise love people can look at us and say I don't think you're a father of Christ and I don't think Jesus is the true Messiah if he love love love love each other and then 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 and then in 1 John 5 1 whoever believes that Jesus is the

Christ is born of God and whoever loves the father loves the child born of him and third believers are to fear God for us that's not cringing in the dark corner afraid that the boogeyman is going to get you that's not what that fear is fear means trusting the Lord unreservedly regardless of the circumstances and then finally we are to honor the king for what reason do we honor the king well the easy answer is because we're commanded to I'm going to add some extras but you don't really need it but let me be more specific and this brings us back to verse 13 that we've been studying for a couple weeks now so what is the answer why do we honor the king listen to the very words of God to find the answer be subject for the

[39 : 36] Lord's sake we do it for the Lord's sake he commanded us and we do it for his sake now you might be thinking well I'm off the hook on this command after all we don't have a king they have those in England we had a queen for generation or two now they have a king king Charles but the clear meaning here is to honor the person in charge it might be a king it might be an emperor it might be president it might be a premier it might be a prime minister or on the state level of governor regardless of your politics if you're a Christian you're commanded to honor in America's case it would be the president we can disagree with him we can vote him out of office but if we fail to honor him we're in sin now let me tell you I didn't honor the last president as much as I should have I didn't that's a confession but we're still to honor the person that's in that role

Romans 13 7 pay to all that is owed to them taxes to whom taxes are owed revenue to whom revenue is owed respect to whom respect is owed and honor to whom honor is owed the words of Peter and Paul are very similar because ultimately they come from the same author the author is the spirit of God now if for some twisted reason you don't trust the words of the two apostles I know you'll trust the words of Christ himself listen to what our Lord said in the sermon on the mount chapter 5 verse 14 to 16 you are the light of the world a city set on a hill cannot be hidden nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket but on a stand and it gives a light it gives light to all in the house in the same way let your light shine before others so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father who is in heaven well tonight we have completed our study on submission as it relates to civil government but guess what next week we're going to look at submission in the workplace you