

The Christian vs. The State: Whose Rules Do We Play By?

I Peter 2:13-17

Series: Standing Strong In The Storms of Life Part I – Part 7

Introduction From 2:11-12, what does “this good life” look like that will turn our critics into Christians?

Text and its Structure

- v.13 The Command: “Submit yourselves (for the Lord’s sake) to every authority instituted by men ...”
- The Motive: “for the Lord’s sake”
- v. 14 Scope of the Command: “... to be king (emperor), as the supreme authority or to governors who are sent thru him ...”
- Purpose of Civil Authorities: “to punish those who do wrong and commend those who do right.”
- v. 15 Reason for the Command: “...because it is God’s will...”
- Result of Obeying: “... that by doing good you should silence (muzzle) the ignorant talk of foolish men.”

The Burning Questions

This Command Raises What about our freedom in Christ? Why should we obey man’s rules?

- v. 16 The Answer: “As free men you should never use your freedom as a

'cover-up' (cloak or excuse) for doing evil; but you are at all times servants of God.

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| v. 17 | The Summary | 1. | Respect (honor) all men (everyone) |
| | (2 couplets) | 2. | Love the brotherhood of believers |
| | (4 commands) | 3. | Fear God |
| | | 4. | <u>Honor</u> the king |

- **Main Idea – “A good Christian will be a good citizen”**

Notes

Key Definitions

Submit - A Greek military term meaning “to arrange (troop divisions) in military fashion under the command of a leader.” In non-military use it was a “voluntary attitude of giving in, cooperating, assuming responsibility, and carrying a burden.”

Basic Outline

- I. The Requirement of Submission to Human Authority (v.13-14)
- II. The Reason for Submission to Human Authority (v.15-17)

Personal Notes and Application

Discussion Questions

1. What concept or truth from this message and/or passage was most helpful to you personally? Why?
2. How does this passage (2:13-17) relate to last week's passage concerning "enhancing our image in the 90's" (I Peter 2:11-12)?
3. What is the believer's motive for submitting to authorities from v. 13 and from v. 15? How could this "help us" in situations where submission is difficult?
4. Is there any authority (law, etc.) set up by men that you have a difficult time submitting to? List the reasons that are hard for you to comply with this authority (or law); then list how God might be able to enhance His reputation through your submission.
5. Are there ever times when as a Christian you should not submit to human authority? Develop if you can, come basic guidelines that a new Christian could understand in knowing then and when not to submit to human authority.
6. How should the fact that we are "free men" affect how and when we submit to others (and rules and regulations established by men)?
7. Read Acts 4:18-20 and Acts 5:27-29, 41,42. How does Peter "model" for us the key balance between "fearing God" and "honoring men?"
8. Is there any area of your life with regard to the state, laws, or human authority that you need to either submit (with regard to behavior) or submit (with a more gracious attitude) in order to "silence" the accusations of critics against the Lord and His church?