

SUBMISSION TO AUTHORITY

First Peter 2:13-17

When Pilate asked Christ “*So you are a king then?*” Christ had just told Pilate of His kingdom (Jn. 18:36-37). The occasion for Him doing so, was in total submission to Pilate’s authority. Christ’s reason for doing this seems to suggest that we are just strangers on this planet, and as such we should respect its authority. Christ said that if this was not the case, His followers would have taken up arms and resisted rather than submit to it (Jn. 18:36). So, even though it cost Christ His life, He lived a life that reflected submission to the authorities of this world. This was consistent with His teaching also.

1. Note the following instructions from Christ-
 - a) Matthew 23:3 _____
 - b) Matthew 22:21 _____

2. To whom does Peter say that Christians should submit? (1Peter 2:13-14)

3. Peter also gives a reason for submitting. What is this reason? (vs. 13)

OLD TESTAMENT EXAMPLE

Clearly the greatest example of submission to authority in the Old Testament is David. Despite a corrupt, evil king, David recognised that it was God who placed people into positions of responsibility. He often referred to Saul as *the Lord’s anointed* (1Sam. 24:6). As such he refused to harm or even speak against Saul. On several occasions David had opportunity to kill him, but chose to rather to show his loyalty to Saul, by not killing him.

4. Why did David submit himself so thoroughly to King Saul?

The nations of the world relate to each other on a daily basis through their embassies. Their embassies are headed by ambassadors. These ambassadors represent the country which appointed them. If someone slanders the nation’s ambassador, they were slandering the nation which he represented. Also, if someone slandered the nation which the ambassador represented, they were also slandering the ambassador. In a similar way, God has appointed ambassadors.

5. To what extent (in what areas; “spiritual” only?) has God appointed leadership? (Rom. 13:1-5)

6. Why does Scripture say to submit to authorities? (Rom. 13:5)

From these Scriptures we know that God appoints even secular authorities. How much more can we assume that God appoints leadership for His Church? Also how much more should we submit to His authority in His church (Heb. 13:17).

7. What instructions does Paul give the Corinthians in First Corinthians 16:15-16?

8. Just as the Old Testament furnishes an illustration of David submitting to someone who was largely unworthy of his loyalty, it also gives another example of this kind of submission in Genesis 16:9. Who was told to submit to whom, and why would this have been difficult?

God can tell His people to submit to all levels of authority, because ultimately He is in control. Even when leaders and authorities act foolishly, corruptly, or brashly, God is able to make the end result glorious. Examples of this include:

Character	Difficulty	Reward
Israel in Egypt	they could have attempted to sneak out of Egypt- rather God instructed Moses to seek the permission of the Egyptian authorities	They were led by God and established into their own land.
David	treated harshly by Saul	Appointed by God to be King of Israel

SILENCE THE FOOLISH

By submitting to authority, we are silencing the enemies of the gospel from accusing us of being traitors to either our country or community. This is just another way that our actions speak louder than our words. It is a clue also into how our evangelism can be given impetus. It is reasonably important to convey to our community that we are also one of them. If we live as an isolated community within a community we risk becoming antagonistic toward the authority of the community in which we live. The curious thing about what Peter is saying, is the fact that it is Peter who is saying it. Like any loyal Jew, he probably would have resented the Roman occupation of his home-land. Later in this epistle he derogatively refers to Rome as “Babylon” (1Peter 5:13). Yet he tells the believers to submit to Roman authority. It’s worth noting that a large segment of the church have traditionally viewed Peter as the most authoritative apostle. Yet this leader of the first apostles has more to say about submission, than he does about prouting about his own authority!

9. Jesus had something to say about the kind of authority His leaders were to have. How could we describe it based on Matthew 20:26-28?

LIVE AS FREE MEN

Slavery was conspicuously accepted as normal during the first century. It was a privilege to be a *freeman*. Slaves could not come and go as they pleased. They lived for their masters. They were at his beck and call, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. To be a freeman meant that you had a degree of control over your lives. A freeman would do things because he wanted to do them. It was his choice. Peter tells the believers (many of them were undoubtedly slaves) to live as freemen. Their walk with the LORD was to be a matter of free choice. It was not to be motivated by the fact that someone was watching over their shoulder.

10. What were we once slaves to? (What have we been freed from?) (Rom. 6:6)

11. Who are we slaves of now? (Eph. 6:6)

SHOW RESPECT

“Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king”, is how Peter finishes this section. Today there is sore lack of respect. Children don’t respect parents. Youth don’t respect the elderly. People generally don’t respect authority. But we need to be a people of respect, love and honor. We should do nothing that needlessly presents a stumbling block to our community being evangelised.

Amen.