

## Study 15

# 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)  
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3. Peter also gives a reason for submitting. What is this reason? (vs. 13)  
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## 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 show his loyalty to Saul by not killing him.

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

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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)

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6. The Apostle Peter wrote his epistle at a time when Christians were increasingly looked at with suspicion. How does he advise believers to conduct themselves in First Peter 2:13-15 and what does he say this will help to achieve?

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While Peter was urging followers of Christ to be loyal, law-abiding citizens who submitted to the State, this injunction did not over-ride the believer's obligation to obey God even though a government authority may forbid it.

7. Read Acts 5:25-33. This is a narrative about the author of First Peter. Discuss how he 'submitted' to the ruling authorities. (Note also his message to those in authority and discuss what this reveals about his heart.)

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## AVOID ANTINOMIANISM!

The New Testament was written in Greek. The Greek word for "law" is *nomos*. Thus, the English word, *antinomianism* means *against the law*. The epistle of James was written very early in the first century to address this emerging problem within the Church. It arose out of a misunderstanding of God's grace. If salvation was all due to God's grace and not at all determined by our *good* works, they reasoned, then neither would our bad works (sin) disqualify us from salvation once we had received God's saving grace.

8. Reading First Peter 2:16 and discuss how Peter responded to this still present heresy some twenty years later.

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It is perhaps difficult for us Westerners to appreciate everything the New Testament teaches about being in a New Covenant community (the local church). Our individualism is a dominant cultural trait and is reflected in our action-hero movies, our pop idols, and our shallow obsession with "celebrities". This all makes it very difficult for us to appreciate what the New Testament describes of the church *community*.

9. Apart from honouring the King, how does First Peter 2:17 effect how we as believers relate to one another within our local church? What does this verse teach us about resolving conflict with another believer in our church fellowship?

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*Amen.*