

Keeping Your Eternal Perspective

Video Bible Study | First Peter 2:13-17 | 6/26/20

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. ¹⁵ For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. ¹⁶ Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

(1 Peter 2:13–17)

“What Do I See?”

1. Verse 13 contains the main verb (action) through vv.13-16. What is it? How does this command make you feel?
2. Who are we to submit to?
For whose sake?
3. Verse 15 has more to say about God's view of this matter. What do we learn about God's view of our submission in v.15? What is purpose for it?
4. Today's passage is five verses long. In how many of these verses does “God” or a synonym for God appear? How might this impact our interpretation?
5. What does v.16 teach us about the freedom we enjoy?

Other major New Testament passages on our relationship to the government include Romans 13:1-7 & Titus 3:1-2.

“True liberty, according to the New Testament, means that there is freedom to do what is right” – Thomas Schreiner

6. Verse 17 is a rapid-fire list of commands. How does what we learned so far bring out a specific application to each command?

Application: How will I apply this passage to my life?

Digging Deeper: “Can Christians Participate in Civil Disobedience?”

“We believe the Scripture teaches that we are to submit to government even if that government does not function entirely (or even primarily) by biblical principles (Romans 13:1-7). That principle is explicit in Peter's message to servants (1 Peter 2:18-19), which directly follows his more general comments regarding government (1 Peter 2:13-17). And that epistle teaches the same thing over and over again in varied ways: Submit even if you suffer, because in doing so you identify with Christ and are blessed (cf. 1 Peter 2:21-24; 3:1-2; 4:12-14; 5:9-10). There are times when we must obey God rather than men, but we believe that we should disobey the authorities only if they command us to do something directly against God's law (e.g. Acts 5:29 and its surrounding context).

That is a fine distinction, but it is precisely where the issue lies. If we say that Christians are only required to obey their government when it is functioning by scriptural principles, we then nullify the teaching of Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 in just about any age of history—especially the time during which those passages were written! The Roman government was as corrupt and godless as any in history, and yet Paul and Peter told Christians to ‘live in subjection,’ ‘submit to every ordinance,’ and ‘honor the king.’

So we believe that civil disobedience is justified only when government compels us to sin, or when there is no legal recourse for fighting injustice. The reason we draw the line there is simply because all the scriptural examples of civil disobedience fall squarely into those two situations. Any other kind of activism has no precedent in the Word of God and violates the spirit of Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2.” – John MacArthur (gty.org)