

Submission shines – Submission seems like a bad word. Every day we live under authority:

- Government laws, workplace policies, family structures, and ultimately God Himself
 - For many, submission feels like surrender, obedience feels like weakness
- But what if Christian submission is not about losing freedom... but displaying faith?

Peter writes believers living under pagan government—not perfect one, not a friendly one

- This is true of us as well...is there anyone in here that just loves everything government
- Pew Research = 55% 119th Congress Protestant | 240 of 535 don't share our worldview

Commands: Live humble obedience to our government in a way that magnifies Christ
How do Christians live faithfully under imperfect authority w/o compromising allegiance to God?
When we submit for Lord's sake, live Gods servants, we show world our highest King is Jesus
Your response to earthly authority reveals your reverence for heavenly authority...read text

¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶ Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

1 Peter 2:13–17, God calls His people to submit to human institutions

- Not because every ruler is righteous, not because every law is perfect,
 - Not because government is ultimate—because Christians belong to a higher kingdom
- Our submission on earth becomes a testimony to heaven

Christians are citizens of heaven, while we are here, our conduct should influence earth

We don't submit because Caesar is Lord—we submit because Jesus is Lord

- Big Idea - Respect human institutions to project heavenly influence
- In a culture quick to dishonor, outrage, and rebel, Christians are called to stand out
 - By showing that true freedom in Christ produces humility, order, and godly influence

When we respect structures of society, we put gospel on display before a watching world

1. Submit to Human Authorities (13-14)

¹³ Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

a. **Starts off with a command:** Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution

Greek "be subject" military term = "arrange under." – Know your rank | Private vs Sg. Major

Unlike the military...this is a voluntary choice to recognize an established order

- Crucially, Peter gives us **motivation:** "For the Lord's sake." - Lord establishes the order
- It's not about the person in office...it's about who is on the throne

Submission isn't based on whether we like leader, agree with platform...particularly moral

Act of worship: When we obey earthly authorities...acknowledging God is the Sovereign

b. **Recognize Government's God-Given Role** – It has been said the government = Deacon

whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him

Peter leaves no loopholes. He covers the "supreme" authority and the local "governors."

Modern context, extends from federal government to local city council...law enforcement

Conservative theology teaches that **human government is a divine institution**

- While specific leaders may be ungodly, the *office* of authority is ordained by God
 - In order to prevent anarchy and restrain the fallen nature of man
- sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. **Two Functions**

i. **Justice:** To be a terror to those who do wrong...to be God's arm of Justice in this world

ii. **Order:** To recognize and protect those who live uprightly

There is a difference between Supporting and Submitting

⇒ **Supporting a candidate = voluntary endorsement**

Choosing vote for, promote, publicly align...believe best represent certain values or policies

- Support is a matter of **preference, prudence, and conscience.**
- Scripture does not command believers to support all earthly rulers

⇒ **Submitting to authority = God-ordained obedience**

Means recognizing legitimate governing authority and obeying laws unless they require sin

Obeying laws - Paying taxes - Respecting office and order - Praying for leaders

What submission does NOT mean: Blind loyalty - Moral agreement - Silence about injustice

- **Paul** respected Roman authority, even under Nero, but still confronted sin
- **Jesus** acknowledged Caesar's authority but did not politically endorse Rome

Takeaway - Give proper deference to those God has raised up

God has allowed or ordained every agency so respect the position even when cant person

2. **Silence Foolish Accusations (15)**

¹⁵ For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

God's will believers honorable conduct will muzzle ignorant criticism & magnify holy witness

Christians always under suspicion...tell someone you're a Christian...immediate suspicion

- Is this person: Going to Judge me? Preach at me? Are they going to be weird?
- Peter's day, believers falsely accused of rebellion, social disruption...not worship Caesar
 - **The Hypocrisy Gap** – Contrast of Christian teaching...Prominent Preachers Kenneth
 - **Perceived Intolerance** – Certain groups or lifestyles that are not welcome in Church
 - **Historical Trauma** – The Crusades or the Spanish inquisition...forced conversions

Now...while some of this is true...it does not mean that Jesus is wrong...humanity is flawed

Look at how Peter puts it... **the ignorance of foolish people**

Refers to the unfounded accusations and misunderstandings that non-Christians hold

- When unbelievers view Christianity through lens of fallen humans vs. Christ – Ignorant
- Christians have done a lot things wrong throughout history...Jesus never did a thing wrong
- Peter Gives a Command - that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people
- God's chosen strategy for confronting ignorance is not fleshly aggression but faithful action
- We don't give people more hypocrisy – more perceived intolerance – more trauma
- We silence by doing good - visible, practical, moral excellence

Respecting Authority – Loving Others – Serving Neighbors – Working Honestly – Reproach

When Christians live like Christ it draws people to Christ

Daniel in Babylon – Daniel was hated for godly integrity and uncompromising faithfulness

- Refused to Compromise Convictions: Kings food – False Worship – Stop Praying
 - His enemies investigated him, watched him, and searched for corruption
- Yet **Daniel 6:4** says 'they could find none occasion nor fault.'

- Daniel silenced foolish accusations through consistent faithfulness.
- The only charge they could make was his loyalty to God

When your life is blameless, the world must invent reasons to hate you

Takeaway - Give no excuse for the world to accuse

Display Discipline – Exercise self-control, humility, and obedience in everyday conduct so your life does not hand critics ammunition against Christ

3. Serve as God's Stewards (16)

¹⁶ Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

- In our modern world, we often define freedom as the absence of restraint
- the ability to do whatever we want, whenever we want, without anyone telling us "no."
- But To Peter, Christian freedom isn't a license to indulge; it's a liberation to serve

Christian freedom is not freedom to sin, but freedom to serve

"Live as free people" - Peter begins with declaration of status. Through Christ, you are free

- **Free from Mosaic Law:** You are no longer bound by a system of "earning" God's love
- **Free from Guilt:** The weight of past mistakes has been lifted
- **Free from Fear:** Even in face of Roman persecution...whatever modern...soul is secure

Peter warns against using grace or liberty as a "cover-up" for sinful behavior

"I'm free in Christ, so submission doesn't matter." - "God forgives me, so sin isn't serious."

That is counterfeit freedom; it is rebellion wearing religious language

Biblical freedom is not the right to do whatever you want—it is power to do what is right

Early Christians argued b/c "citizens of heaven," didn't have to obey "earthly" Roman laws

- You have to follow the law unless that law compromises God's commands
 - Paying taxes for things you disagree with – Covid...civil disobedience b/c we gather
- but living as servants of God - Height of Christian freedom is found in total submission to God

Think of a fish. A fish is "free" only when it is "bound" by the water.

- Take a fish out of water put it on the grass, "freedom" to go anywhere, but it will die
- Fish designed for water – We designed God - When we serve God, in our "natural element."

Takeaway - Give God's commands the highest priority

Supremacy Scripture = Highest Law Land | Surrendered Submission = Daily Yielding to God

4. Show Proper Respect (17)

¹⁷ Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Peter ends with Four Anchors of a Christian Life in a Hostile World

- a. **Universal Dignity:** "Honor everyone" - Sweeping command—there are no exceptions
- "honor" means to treat others as carrying value because they are made image of God
 - Does not mean affirming everything...does mean refusing contempt or dehumanization

The Christian cannot pick and choose who deserves respect

The cashier, the critic, the difficult coworker, the political opponent—all are included

- b. **Covenant Affection:** "Love the brotherhood" – Honor all...love the family of faith
- "The brotherhood" refers to the church—those who are united by faith in Christ

The church is not a club for preference but a family of devotion

- c. **Reverent Awe:** "Fear God" - At the center of all Christian ethics: reverence for God
- Not terror of punishment, deep awe, worshipful respect, submission to God's authority

When fear of God is rightly ordered, every other fear falls into place

- d. **Respectful Submission:** "Honor the emperor" - Peter returns to the public square

- The "emperor" This context was likely Nero—not a model ruler...**Worse than our worst**
- Peter still calls believers to show appropriate honor to governing authorities

Does not mean blind obedience, but it does mean respectful posture, not rebellious spirit

Christians can disagree w/o dishonoring – I do not agree w/ most of NM – Honor Positions

- We can be faithful citizens of heaven while still being orderly citizens on earth

Honor all people without exception - Love God's people with devotion

Fear God above all with reverence – Esteem human authority with respect

Takeaway - Give all honor by God's design | Not trust humanity...that we trust God

How do Christians live faithfully under imperfect authority w/o compromising allegiance to God?