

1 Peter 2:13-17

Verse 13

Submit – The word is *hypotasso* which is a compound of *hypo*, to place under, and *tasso*, which means order. It means to “order under” another. It is a Greek military term describing voluntary submission to the commands of another. It implies a conscious, willing subjection to another person’s authority. *hypotasso* is used 6 times in 1 Peter.

- 1 – Submission to human government (2:13).
- 2 – Servants to masters (2:18).
- 3 – Wives to husbands (3:1, 5)
- 4 – Angelic realm to Christ (3:22).
- 5 – Young men to elders (5:5).

Submit yourselves for the Lord’s sake -

This recurring theme of submission is *for the Lord’s sake*. This is the basis for our submission. It is our means of glorifying His Son who also submitted to unjust authority (2:21-23). Also, since God established authority (Romans 13:1-7) He is pleased when we submit.

Verses 13b-14

To every human institution...

- whether to a king as the one in authority* – In Peter’s time this would be Nero.
- or to governors as sent by him* – Those under the king’s authority.

For the punishment...praise – Paul explains the purpose of government in Romans 13:1-7.

Verse 15

For such is the will of God – Submission and exemplary conduct, *doing right*, by believers is God’s way of stopping the *ignorance* and *slander* of foolish men.

You may silence – The word literally means “to close the mouth with a muzzle”. Note 1 Timothy 5:18 and Matthew 22:34.

Verse 16

Act as free men – We are free because God has accepted us in Christ. We are free from guilt and the ruling power of sin. However we are not free to do wrong! True freedom in the Christian life comes from submission to the Lord.

Do not use your freedom as a covering for evil – True freedom is always concerned for others (Galatians 5:13-15, 1 Corinthians 8:9, 10:23-24), and with pleasing the Lord (1 Corinthians 10:31-32).

But as bond-slaves of God – Willing servanthood is what makes us truly free (Galatians 5:13).

Verse 17

Four injunctions summarize our social obligations:

- 1 – *Honor all men* – Literally, “*all honor*”. All people in general.
- 2 – *Love the brotherhood* – There is a higher obligation to fellow believers.
- 3 – *Fear God* – We honor and love God but we also fear Him (1:17).
- 4 – *Honor the king* – The king is singled out again for emphasis. However the king falls in the category of “*all*” in that he is honored but not necessarily loved or feared.

Observations:

Civil submission is not conditioned on our government’s modeling Christian virtue or morality. We are not obligated to follow laws that conflict with His clearly revealed will (Daniel 6, Acts 5:29). We do not have to keep silent in the face of obvious social and political injustices (Mark 6:17-18). We should wisely and prayerfully approach our responsibility to submit to human government.