

### **To Submit or Resist**

Submitting to government, and principles of resistance

#### **Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.**

- Let's begin with our own observations. Was there a moment where God spoke to you, showed you something new, or reminded you of a familiar truth through the message this week?

#### **Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.**

- Peter taught us that Christians are kingdom citizens, but also ambassadors for Christ upon the earth. How a Christian interacts with the world around us reflects on Jesus. One expectation that Peter had for Believers is that we would be good citizens. In verse 13-14, Peter admonished us to submit to the ordinances of man and to those who make them. We do this for the Lord's sake. Is a Christian really required to keep laws that we don't like, and do we really have to show honor to authorities that we can't stand?
- When Christians obey the law it reflects well on Jesus, but when they don't...not so much. Sometimes though, a person might try to justify their rebellion by covering it with a spiritual wrapper. When Christians do this, they may convince themselves that they are on a righteous crusade, but the world might see it as rebellious and evil, which reflects on Jesus. There have been times when believers have acted like their rebellious streaks were spiritual when they were actually acts of frustration, anger, or resentment. How can we make sure that we're pushing back against culture in a Godly way, and not falling into the trap of putting a "Jesus stamp" on our own thoughts, movements in the culture, or the influence of special interest groups with which we agree?
- Another principle that Peter gave us this week is the principle of honoring the authorities that God has set in place in our government. It can be hard for us to accept that, especially when those in authority seem so far in opposition to the teachings of the Bible, and our values. King David had something to teach us about this principle. Let's read 1 Samuel 24:6-8 and glean from an Old Testament example of a man of God under the authority of a wicked king. What lessons can we learn from David's situation?
- Finally, we discussed principles of resistance...times when the right thing to do is to resist the government. Christians are permitted to resist, and must resist, whenever the government compels us to violate our obedience to God. Pick one or two of these questions and discuss as a group:

- When we look at the examples of civil disobedience in scripture, what can we learn about how to resist?
- What's the difference between resistance and rebellion?
- What do we mean when we speak of being "compelled."
- How do the examples of civil disobedience that we discussed in the message inform our view of riots, violence, and other destructive acts of civil disobedience that have become more and more common in our culture today?
- Is there any Biblical support for anarchy?
- Can a Christian be civilly disobedient and at the same time submitted to the Bible?

**Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:**

- Romans 13:1-7
- Acts 5:27-29, 40-42
- Matthew 20:25-28

**Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?**

1. Let's get real...sometimes we're prone to let a dishonorable statement slip about a leader whom God has allowed to rule...or we fudge on a clear principle of the law. As the Holy Spirit works in you, is He bringing to mind any area where there's a need for repentance and a course correction?
2. We've seen so many examples of civil disobedience in just the past few years...from racially motivated riots, to responses to tragedies or injustices in our nation, and even some that have resulted from political division. Regardless of where you personally land on each of those issues, how would God have us as Christians to evaluate what we've seen...and what we've perhaps participated in?