

“Be Model Citizens!”

I. **INTRO:**

- A. Recap the *general counsel* given in vs.11,12.
- B. It was said of the popular 19th cent. English author *William Arnot*,
 “His **preaching** is good. His **writing** is better. His **living** is best of all.”
- C. By faith he made his home in the promised land like a **stranger** in a **foreign country**; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of the same promise. For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God. Heb.11:9,10
1. **Abraham**, like so many OT saints, lived in this world like a **foreigner**.
 2. **Noah**, **didn't fit** into this world of wickedness.
 3. **Moses** too, lived the life of a **sojourner & wanderer**.
 - a) Moses even named his 1st son *Gershom*, which means *foreigner*.
 - b) A constant reminder that he was “**a stranger in the land**.”
- D. You & I live as Christians *away from home*.
1. We're **temporary** residents here & actually *eternal residents* of another land.
 2. We live in the midst of a **pagan culture**, surrounded by **pagan people**, who embrace a **pagan philosophy**, a **pagan way of life**, & a **pagan attitude toward believers**. (Chuck Swindoll)
 - a) But God has placed us here as **ambassadors** of a *different kingdom* & to lead others to that **better city** whose architect & builder is God!
- E. Peter lays out some **keys to living as Christians in a hostile world!**
1. **But Peter didn't know of the day we're living in!!!** - **No**, he just wrote during the time of **Nero Caesar**, who was growing literally **insane** & very **anti-christian!**
 - a) *Nero was known for his **tyranny**, **brutality**, & brief but horrific **persecution of Christians in Rome**.*
 2. Peter's counsel **doesn't sound strange** it sounds **radical!**
It doesn't sound natural it sounds **supernatural!**
- F. **Outline: Respecting Civil Authorities & Respecting Everyone.**
1. **How do you deal with authority?** Some **Fight**; others use **Flight** (And there is a time for both); Peter lays out *another road/a higher road* **Faith** for the believer.

II. **MODEL CITIZENS! (13-17)**

- A. For the Lord's sake, we are to show **respect & submission** to the following parties:
- B. **CIVIL AUTHORITIES!** (13-16)
- C. We're not to flaunt our God-given freedom & live by our own rules, **but** serve the good of others & thus serve God.
- D. (13) **Submit** - This attitude is peculiarly & essentially Christian.
1. It did not enter practically into the life of the non-christian world, at that time, or before, the time of our Lord.
 2. *Humility* & *submission* were thought **low & unworthy** of human nature.
 3. *Hypotasso* = Hypo(under) taxis(order) *to place under, subject, submit, rank under.*¹
 - a) A *Gk military term* describing voluntary deference to the commands of another
 - b) It implies a conscious, willing subjection to another person's authority.
 - (1) **The theme runs through Peter's letter:** all must submit to human governments; servants to employers; wives to husbands; & younger men to their elders.
 - c) In other words, every aspect of life is to be conducted w/**order**, not *disarray*.
- E. (13b) **Every ordinance of man** - [police & fire, bldg code, federal/state/city, CC&R's, parents, pastors]
1. **How far are we to submit?** - Up to the point at which it becomes **sin** to obey.
 - a) Render to Caesar our *civil obedience*.
 - b) **When then is civil-disobedience?** When its a sin against God.
 - (1) **OT ex:** Hebrew mid-wives asked to do **genocide** against lil Heb boys;
NT ex: Peter, in Acts 5 was asked **not** to speak about Jesus, he responded, **"We ought to obey God rather than man."**
 2. **Come on Lord, why???**...for the Lord's sake...
- F. (13c) **For the Lord sake** - Our relation to Him affects everything!
1. Col.3:17 **And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**
 2. For the Lord's sake includes these 3:
 - a) **To obey Him** - because God ordained these powers.
 - b) **To Imitate Him** - because when He was on earth He submitted to them.
 - c) **To glorify Him** - This spirit of submission *cannot* fail to bring glory to Him(repeat)
- G. (15) **Here is the will of God** - i.e. The purpose.
1. **By doing good** - it s the proof of our Christian profession & the best testimony of our Master.

¹ Charles Swindoll: James, 1 & 2 Peter; pg.176.

H. (16) **Not using liberty as a cloak for vice** - *Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.* (ESV)

1. **Freedom** is what Christ was/is all about :

a) Gal.5:1 **It is for freedom** that Christ has set us **free**. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.

b) Jn.8:32 **Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.**

c) Jn.8:36 **If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.**

2. Gal.5:13 **For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.**

a) Stott, “Christian freedom is freedom *from* sin, **not** freedom *to* sin!”

b) Christian freedom is not the freedom to disregard the needs of others.

(1) Leon Morris, **Any man wrapped up in himself makes a very small parcel!**

c) It’s a freedom to **love & serve**. A freedom to **walk & live** in the Spirit.

3. **Q: How do you define freedom? How does God?**

a) We often see freedom as a **casting off of all restriction**. (i.e. American citizen’s burning their flag? **Or**, taking advantage of their “*freedom of speech*” & yet forgetting what won them the right to have it in the 1st place?)

b) **In contrast, God’s Freedom** is **purposeful, wise, & truly liberating**.

(1) **The Christian can live in open handed generosity, rather than** in grasping selfishness!

(2) **The Christian can live directed by God’s will, instead of** drifting in the whims of our desires!

(3) **The Christian can live reconciled** to God & agents of His **reconciliation, rather than** living divided & divisive lives!

(4) **The Christian can live to care for others, instead of** self-centered lives!

(5) **The Christian can live in community, & no longer** in isolation!

(6) **The Christian can live with transformed lives, & not** in rigid conformity to the world around us!

(7) **The Christian can live in holiness & love, instead of** unbridled individualism.

I. **EVERYONE!** (17)

J. **Msg - Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God. Respect the government.**

K. **Q: What can I do to affect my community?** (you asked for it...here you go!)

1. These 4 together create a tough balancing act.

- L. (17a) **Humanitarian!** – Honor all people!
1. Honor, value, esteem, respect. That's regardless of their faith, their godless lifestyles, or their attitudes toward Christians.
 - a) *Why everyone?* Each human has been created in Gods image!
- M. (17b) **Christian!** – Love the brotherhood/sisterhood unconditionally!
1. e.g. “a band of brothers/sisters”
 2. God's family members should have *Christ-like love* towards each other!
- N. (17c) **Divine!** – Fear God!
1. You'll never **respect** people, till you **reverence** God!
 2. Treat His will as Supreme.
- O. (17d) **National!** – Honor the king!
1. Same “*honor*” as above. The honor due to all is especially to be given to those who God has placed in authority.
 2. Honor the king, who may in fact hate **us**, hate **his own people**, & hate **God!**
 - a) Os Guinness said, “The problem with Christians in America is not that Christians aren't **where** they should be; the problem is that they're not **what** they should be right *where they are.*”
 3. Our civil submission is **not** conditioned by our government's modeling Christian virtue **or** reflecting Christians morality.
 - a) Even a percentage of the **taxes** that Christians paid supported the construction of **pagan temples** & funded **unjust wars**.
 - b) Peter, *shouldn't we refuse to pay taxes? Take up arms & resist our government?*
- P. **Turn to** Jer.29:4-14. 4 steps on how to live as foreigners:
1. **Accept It** v4-7; **Avoid False Hopes** v8,9; **Be Patient** v10; **Trust God** v11-14.
- Q. The Function of **Human Government** has a 3-fold principle:
1. **Protect** - to protect citizens & protect them from themselves.
 2. **Punish** - to punish bad guys, “they don't bear the sword in vain.”
 3. **Promote** - to promote the welfare of their citizens they oversee.
- R. Our responsibility to **Human Government**:
1. **Recognize** the power is ordained by God. **Pay** taxes. **Pray** for our leaders.

S. We at CM love our **country!**

1. We have a ministry, **Operation Military Assistance**, that ministers to those who are serving and have served our country.
2. We responded after **9-11** & sent around 10 teams of 100 people to ground zero to work the Red Cross Respite Center & provide other care.
3. We responded after **Katrina** with a number of teams to Mississippi, Alabama, & Louisiana.

T. We at CM love our **city!**

1. We were here to **welcome** our city as a church in 1985 (Murrieta city in 1991)
2. Our **first mayor** (Jerry Allen) was a member of our church.
3. We've had, & do have, city council members & other mayors that attend here.
4. We purchased American **Flags & poles** for both city hall buildings.
5. **We have helped on a number of city sponsored events including:** Veterans Day Parade; Push Cart Parade; Halloween 1 yr; Murr Fire Dept's annual BBQ.
6. Met w/former mayor Kelly Bennet regarding what needs to be done & community garden (future/behind *Alta Murr Sports Park*).
7. We've hosted for our whole City our **Harvest Festival** for 25 years.
8. We feed 80-90 families weekly for the last 3 years. **And** Oroweat & Albertson's partner with us.
9. We help with **benevolence** as we are able, & as appropriate, to our community, *not just members*.
10. We've provided much **counseling** referred to us by other churches even our city/county.
11. We've hosted community events here (use our venue).
12. We've welcomed **3 other church bodies** onto our property when they needed a home (Chinese; Filipino; Arabic). We consider them family. But we didn't birth em.
13. For at least a dozen years we called/set up local pastors to do the **invocation** for our city council meetings. That continues to this day.
14. I've been a **chaplain** w/MPD for 15 years. Also Chaplain Steve Wimberly.
15. We've put on a yearly **Tri-Tip BBQ** for both MPD & TemPD/Sheriff for a number of years.
16. We have provided both spiritual & practical ministry to the **elderly** in our community (Jr. High *AWOL*).
17. I am in discussions with some local pastors; city of Murr; city of Tem; Riv county; regarding long term strategic plan for the **homeless**.