

Responding to Grace: Submission to Authority
1 Peter 2:12-17

The Command

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The Command for Submission

1 Peter 2:13–14 **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.

Be subject (hypotassō): to subjugate; place in submission,

All authority is given from God.

Daniel 2:21 He changes times and seasons; **he removes kings and sets up kings**; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding;

John 19:7–11 The Jews answered him, “We have a law, and according to that law he ought to die because he has made himself the Son of God.” ⁸ When Pilate heard this statement, he was even more afraid. ⁹ He entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, “Where are you from?” But Jesus gave him no answer. ¹⁰ So Pilate said to him, “You will not speak to me? Do you not know that I have authority to release you and authority to crucify you?” ¹¹ Jesus answered him, “**You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.** Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin.”

Romans 13:1–2 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

All authority whether given to the state, home, or workplace is from God.

Proverbs 24:21–22 My son, fear the LORD and the king, and **do not join with those who do otherwise**, ²² for disaster will arise suddenly from them, and who knows the ruin that will come from them both?

Jeremiah 29:4–7 “Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, to all the exiles whom I have sent into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ⁵ Build houses and live in them; plant gardens and eat their produce. ⁶ Take wives and have sons and daughters; take wives for your sons, and give your daughters in marriage, that they may bear sons and daughters; multiply there, and do not decrease. ⁷ **But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.**

1 Timothy 2:1–2 First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ² for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.

"When God wants to judge a nation, He gives them wicked rulers." - John Calvin

Proverbs 29:2 When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan.

Jeremiah 29:11 For I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.

The Motive for Submission

1 Peter 2:13–14 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.

Believers actually obey earthly authority to honor God's sovereign authority

MacArthur, John F., Jr. 2004. [1 Peter](#). MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Publishers.

1 Peter 2:12 Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Matthew 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

The Extent of our Submission

1 Peter 2:13–14 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.

Institution (ktisis): creation, what has been made

Romans 13:3–4 For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer.

Matthew 26:50–52 Jesus said to him, “Friend, do what you came to do.” Then they came up and laid hands on Jesus and seized him. ⁵¹And behold, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest and cut off his ear. ⁵²Then Jesus said to him, **“Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword.”**

Ephesians 6:12 For **we do not wrestle against flesh and blood**, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.

1 Peter 2:23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

In Scripture, the believer’s submission to human authorities is always partial and proximate; blind obedience is never required.

Doriani, Daniel M. 2014. [1 Peter](#). Edited by Richard D. Phillips, Philip Graham Ryken, and Daniel M. Doriani. Reformed Expository Commentary. Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing.

Acts 5:29 But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men.

The Reason for Submission

1 Peter 2:15 For **this is the will of God**, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.

1 Peter 2:15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should **put to silence the ignorance of foolish people**.

Ignorance (agōsia): willful ignorance

Foolish (aphrōn): senseless; without understanding

Submission is the great apologetic for the gospel.

Helm, David R. 2008. [*1 & 2 Peter and Jude: Sharing Christ's Sufferings*](#). Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

Titus 3:1-3 Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, ²to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people. ³For we ourselves were once foolish, disobedient, led astray, slaves to various passions and pleasures, passing our days in malice and envy, hated by others and hating one another.

The Attitude of Submission

1 Peter 2:16 Live as people who are **free**, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God.

Free from sin

Romans 8:1-2 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. ²For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death.

Free from the penalty of the Law

Galatians 3:13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree”—

Free from the bondage of Satan

Colossians 1:13 He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son,

Free from the world's control

Galatians 5:1 For freedom Christ has set us free; stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.

Free from death

John 11:25 Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,

1 Peter 2:16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom **as a cover-up for evil**, but living as servants of God.

Cover-up (epikalymma): that which causes something to be known as or to appear to be other than it really is, thus causing its true nature to be unknown—‘means of hiding, pretext, means of covering up the true nature of something.’

1 Peter 2:16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but **living as servants of God**.

Galatians 5:13 For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, **but through love serve one another**.

Freedom in Christ and citizenship in the kingdom of God in no way permit believers to abuse or disregard the standards of conduct God has established for them on earth.

MacArthur, John F., Jr. 2004. [1 Peter](#). MacArthur New Testament Commentary. Chicago: Moody Publishers.

The Application of Submission

1 Peter 2:17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

John 13:34–35 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. ³⁵By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

Romans 13:1–7 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

²Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer.

⁵Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God’s wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.