

1Pet 2.18-21—Submitting to God-given Authority

It is Our Duty to Submit to Authority, v.18

- I. Servants, be subject to your masters. Peter addresses those in servitude, under obligation to another, bound by contract to render service and obedience to another. In one way or another, that's *all of us*.
 - A. God not only cares about who we are, but what we do. And every relation in which He's placed us, is a relation in which we have the opportunity to glorify Him and bear witness to His Lordship over our lives.
 - B. In every relation we stand, we ever remain the Lord's servant, Col 3.22-24.
- II. The master has no right to command anything that's inconsistent with God's law. But however far his authority extends, so far must the servant's obedience, and honor, extend (cf. "in everything", Col 3.22).
 - A. We can respectfully make known our opinion and respectfully ask to do it our way; but in the end we must do our best to do what we're told, respectfully, faithfully, diligently, and cheerfully, striving to be a good servant before the Lord.
 - B. It's *not* better, in God's mind, to ask forgiveness than permission.
- III. Our submission is to be rendered with all respect, or fear, cf. v.17.
 - A. We're to obey our earthly masters out of a fear, not of man or even of punishment, but of God, who calls for the obedience, 2Cor 7.1.
 - B. When we sin against authority, whether parents or masters or governors, it evidences *a lack* of the fear of God, cf. Gen 39.8-9.
 - C. However difficult it is to submit to authority, the greatest help toward it is to keep God before our eyes and walk all the day long in the fear of Him, striving to please Him in our human relationships and obligations, Ecc 12.13; Col 3.22.
 - D. This reminds us that our obedience as servants isn't limited or determined by our master's character, but by God's Law.
- IV. What if our masters are harsh, cruel, unkind, and even inhumane?
 - A. However wrong or harsh the master may be, it gives no servant (or citizen or child or wife) the right or justification to return in kind and sin against him, Rom 12.17-21.
 - B. Our Lord knows how *hard* this is. He walked this way before you.

- 1. Why? Because it was His Father's will, Lk 22.53-54; Jn 19.11.
- 2. So look to Him for grace, for help, for patience, and for peace.
- V. We can endure sorrows, suffer unjustly, and be patient under the rod, when we are mindful of God, v.19.
 - A. The idea here is bearing up under a hard condition for conscience sake; i.e. because the Lord's called us to it. Being mindful of God, His command that we submit, and His promise of grace to enable us in it (Phil 2.13; Gen 46.3), we can endure patiently.
 - B. And as we do, we'll find the burden easier to bear and the yoke lighter to carry.

The Motives in Support of It, vv.19-21

- I. Your patient submission under hard and unjust treatment is pleasing to God. When God sees your suffering and knows that it's for His sake and the sake of His gospel, He rejoices over you with singing and rewards you with grace and strength and joy, Mt 19.29.
- II. If you disobey and disrespect your masters and are justly punished for it, it's not only a disgrace to your profession of Christlikeness, but a dishonor to Christ Himself, who will often leave you to suffer in that condition as a lesson to your disobedience.
- III. You were called by the gospel to follow Christ with a cross on your back, Mk 8.34-35.
 - A. Grace doesn't often change your situation, because the Lord knows what you need to become like Christ; but grace always works a change in your heart and teaches and enables you to live in a suffering condition if that's God's will for you, Jn 16.33.
 - B. Pray for change and wait upon God to know His will. But in the meantime, expect all the grace you need to serve God right where you are, 1Cor 7.20-24.
- IV. Our response to unjust suffering is one of the most powerful testimonies we can give to the world.
 - A. Patiently enduring unjust circumstances shows the watching world that we're willing to serve and submit to those in authority over us because we're doing it for the Lord's sake, Col 3.22-24.
- V. Christ has borne all the wrath due for your sins. So whatever suffering you face for His sake will all be turned to good, Rom 8.28.
- VI. Christ's example is your pattern. He's shown you how to suffer unjustly under harsh and unkind authority and now He walks with you in your suffering to strengthen and enable you to follow Him.