

Good Citizenship

1Peter 2:13-17

We live in a fallen world. It's definitely not a perfect world by no means. When Adam and Eve sinned in that beautiful garden, everything began to fall apart. God told Adam, "in the day that you eat.... die" With sin came death and the curse. Before the fall of man, we see how everything was good. God made a perfect world. He created the trees, the mountains, the animals...all that he made was good. It was "very good".

The devil deceived Eve. She took of the forbidden fruit and ate. She gave it to her husband and he ate. The story of the Bible is the story of redemption. It's the redemptive story of God sending His own Son, the Lord Jesus Christ to redeem us from the curse.

Peter speaks of how we were redeemed (1Peter 1:18)

Born again v.23

Christ is the living stone, a stone of stumbling for all who choose to disobey the word.... He goes on to say, Once you were not a people (2:10)....

Called us to "do good" the greatest evangelistic impact comes from Christians who not only talk the talk, but they walk the walk...

We are not of this world.... When we were born we became members of this world. When we were born again, we became members of another world....a heavenly world. This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through....

vv.11-12 do good deeds...

key verse v.15 that by "doing good"

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

Doing Good - This is the main point in our current study of 1Peter, chapter 2. Backing up to verse 11 - "Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;" (KJV) That means, we are aliens... we don't belong to this world. Our true citizenship is in Heaven from where we wait for the coming of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We still have remaining sin and we must keep it in check. The flesh wars against the Spirit, and we will battle against our flesh until the Lord comes. *Doing Good* before an unbelieving world is the most

important way to witness for Christ. Keeping our conduct honest among the Gentiles (that is the unbelievers) is critical in having a strong gospel witness. They will speak evil against you, but seeing your good deeds may have an impact on them. They will glorify God when God visits them with saving grace.

This is the first part we looked at in this subject of "Doing Good". There's the importance of keeping watch on the desires of the flesh that wars against the soul. That's the Battle on the inside of us. Then there's the importance of keeping watch on our Daily Conduct, or Behavior among unbelievers. That's the Battle on the OUTSIDE of us.

Now, we are going to get more specific.

1. In vv. 13-17 Our conduct among those who rule over us. Doing Good with our Authorities.
2. In vv.18-20 Our conduct among those who employ us. Doing Good with our Boss.

Later on, we'll consider our conduct in the home with the relationship between husband and wife. This will be in chapter 3.

I. Submission to Governing Authorities 1Peter 2:13-17

Read vv.13-14

Every human institution - every human authority - let me bring in Romans 13:1

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.

HUMAN AUTHORITY – This is not an invention of humans. This is designed by God for our own benefit. God instituted governing authorities for good reasons. God is the ultimate authority. He is sovereign ruler over the universe. He has delegated authority to human institutions so that our world will not fall into total chaos. Someone has to keep law and order. Someone has to be the governor over a state; a president; a Supreme Court with judges; a police force; an army; military force; national guards... you can't defund the police and expect things to get better. You remove the power of the authorities and you are inviting criminals to take over.

A Christian must be "subject" to every human authority that's been placed over them. We are citizens of heaven, that's true. Heaven is our permanent home. We, however, our temporarily citizens of this world. We are the citizens of the United States, the state of Tennessee, Lewis, or Lawrence county. We are to be subject to those in authority over us, whether it's the emperor as supreme, in our case, the President of the United States, or the governor of the state of Tennessee.

A. Reasons for our Submission WHY?

- (1) Promotes a Good Witness for Christ. **For the Lord's sake** (see v.13) Be subject for the Lord's sake. If God's people are to be a good witness for Christ, it requires we be in subjection to the governing authorities. What kind of witness would we be if we refuse to

obey the laws of our state? For example, the state says you must pay your taxes. Refusing to pay your taxes would not be a good witness for Christ.

READ – Romans 13:1-7

Jesus example.... Fish... paid the tax...

Matthew 17:24-27 Jesus demonstrated His omniscience to Peter.... He knew there was a certain fish that had this coin in its mouth. Jesus demonstrated His omnipotence....He brought the fish to Peter's hook. Jesus demonstrated His Identity as Lord, as King of kings; and Lord of lords...He is exempt from paying taxes because He is the sovereign King of all creation...

Jesus humbled himself. He did not come to be SERVED; but to serve, and to give His life to save sinners. Jesus submitted Himself to the human authorities who required of him to pay taxes.

This is the EXAMPLE Christ set for us.

It's not good when the testimony is given about certain people who call themselves Christians, and many of them are called preachers, who have found shady ways to avoid paying taxes.

When Christians act in ways that are HOSTILE toward the government.... This does not promote the cause of Christ. **be subject for the Lord's sake....**

(2) Upholds the Purpose of Government. (see v.14)

(a) Punish – those who do evil

(b) Praise - those who do good

This is what good government does. That is, they suppose to do this.... We must pray for our leaders....depending on who's in charge... So often, it seems... the governing authorities PUNISH those who do GOOD; and PRAISE those who do evil..... So much corruption.... So many who make decisions are PAID OFF.....

1Timothy 2:1-4

First of all, then, I urge that supplications, **prayers**, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, ²for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. ³This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, ⁴who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth

This is GOOD.... To pray for those in LEADERSHIP positions.... That we may lead a peaceful and quiet life.....God desires all people to be saved.....

(3) Silences the Critics (see v.15)

The unbelieving world.... By nature.... Throws criticisms at Christians..... we don't need to add fuel to the FIRES of criticism....

To Silence the critics.... "doing good"

B. BASIC Rules to follow in being submissive (vv. 16-17)

1. Use your freedom responsibly.

v.16 we are free in Christ.... we are free to proclaim the Gospel.... but don't use that freedom as a cover up for evil.... Don't retaliate in a vengeful way.... You have freedom, but use it in a godly way.

2. Live as slaves of God.

Don't be slaves to a Political Party. Don't be slaves to some Christian organization that's pushing legislation through state legislatures..... REMEMBER – we are SLAVES to ONE... to God.

3. Be respectful.

- a. **Honor everyone** – v.17 even to those you disagree with.... We don't give honor to sinful behavior....we can honor someone when they do something right....even though they may not be a Christian
- b. **Love the brotherhood** - if there's one group that needs to be together it's the church of the Lord Jesus.... so much division among Brothers and Sisters in Christ....Not talking about FALSE believers... Fake Christians.... But those who truly know the LORD....we must love the brotherhood.... The people who love Jesus who happen to be different with us doctrinally...they are NOT our enemies....
- c. **Fear God** we live in a very hostile world.... Hostile to what's biblical.... Godly... our fear MUST not be toward people....toward ungodly leaders... we must FEAR one ..that's God, our Heavenly Father..
- d. **Honor the emperor** - even when we disagree with his policies.... Honor his positions....

Matthew 22:15-22 Render to Ceasar

Daniel 6:10, 19-23 King Darius

¹⁰ When Daniel knew that the document had been signed, he went to his house where he had windows in his upper chamber open toward Jerusalem. He got down on his knees three times a day and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as he had done previously.

¹⁹ Then, at break of day, the king arose and went in haste to the den of lions. ²⁰ As he came near to the den where Daniel was, he cried out in a tone of anguish. The king declared to Daniel, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?" ²¹ Then Daniel said to the king, "O king, live forever! ²² My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me, because I was found blameless before him; and also before you, O king, I have done no harm." ²³ Then the king was exceedingly glad, and commanded that Daniel be taken up out of the den. So Daniel was taken up out of the den, and no kind of harm was found on him, because he had trusted in his God.

Acts 12:5 Prayer for Peter

⁵ So Peter was kept in prison, but earnest prayer for him was made to God by the church.

Acts 16:25-26

²⁵ About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, ²⁶ and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.

Acts 5:17-29 we must obey God rather than man

What if you are NOT released from prison?

PETER...will be martyred.....

Emperoro Nero came into power in 54 AD at age of 17.

Was a lunatic homosexual.

14 years later at age of 31 committed suicide

During his reign Peter was martyredYet, Peter writes.... Be subject to authorities....

In 1660 John Bunyan was a preacher who would not conform to the ways of the STATE church...the King demanded he stop preaching out in public... he refused...

While there...wrote 60 books Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners....and Pilgrims Progress..

He was locked up for 12 years...

II. Submission in the Workplace

1Peter 2:18-20

- A. Respecting Good and Bad Bosses

- B. Enduring when treated wrongly.

- C. Remember – God is watching you.

Next Time....

Because you are a Christian, you are a target for persecution. Many Christians today are being persecuted by their own government. There are Christians persecuted in the workplace simply because of their commitment to Christ. How is a Christian to respond to mistreatment? We

suffer, not because we actually did something wrong. We suffer because we are a follower of Christ. There is the ministry of suffering. How do we deal with suffering in this way? That's the subject of the next section.

Matthew 17:24-27

²⁴ When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the tax?" ²⁵ He said, "Yes." And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?" ²⁶ And when he said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the sons are free. ²⁷ However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself."

Matthew 22:15-22

¹⁵ Then the Pharisees went and plotted how to entangle him in his words. ¹⁶ And they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are true and teach the way of God truthfully, and you do not care about anyone's opinion, for you are not swayed by appearances. ¹⁷ Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?" ¹⁸ But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹ Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰ And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" ²¹ They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." ²² When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

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. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ 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, ⁴ for 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. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay 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.

The word "silence" is to gag, muzzle, restrain, strong word. It means to stop the mouth so there's nothing to say, just gag them. "Doing right" literally in the Greek is the "well-doing

Proverbs 24:21, "My son, fear the Lord and the king." "Do not associate with those who are given to change, for their calamity will rise suddenly. And who knows the ruin that comes from both of them."

Here's a summary of where we've been so far, and I say it because it is essential launching pad for what's coming. Here's what we've seen.

1. We were chosen by God (1 Peter 1:1; 2:9).
2. We were ransomed by the blood of Christ (1 Peter 1:18–19). God paid an infinite price to rescue us from sin and from former desires which we had in ignorance.
3. We were born again on the basis of that ransom (1 Peter 1:3, 23) and we were brought by that new birth out of darkness into light as the essential meaning of the new birth. You were dead in darkness (1 Peter 2:9). You are alive seeing.
4. We have been given fire-tested faith (1 Peter 1:7, 21). I think faith is the fruit and product instantaneous, simultaneous, with new birth. In that faith, we are given inexpressible joy and living hope.
5. The Spirit is now sanctifying us (1 Peter 1:2), thus making us exiles and aliens here (1 Peter 1:1; 2:11). You were born at home here. You are second born into exile status. If you haven't

been born again, this world is your home and it's your end home, meaning there's no heaven. There's only extension and worsening in hell. But if you've been born again, you wake up and say, "Oh, my king is not President Obama. It's Jesus. Oh, my home is heaven. It's not Alabama." That's what the new birth does.

6. From these new passions in sanctification, we are called to be holy, as he is holy (1 Peter 1:15), and love each other earnestly from the heart (1 Peter 1:22)
7. And in this way, lead the Gentiles to glorify God (1 Peter 2:12).

Living Beautifully Amidst Opposition

Let's make sure you saw that in the text. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles, beautiful or honorable so that when they speak against you, which they may start to do, your prayer and your hope is that they wouldn't wind up saying, "You're evildoers," which is what's happening right now in America, right?

We are evildoers for taking certain stands. Not just, "You shouldn't have that." "That's a stupid opinion. That's evil. Your view is evil." That's what we're dealing with, and will deal with more for the time being anyway, and our goal is not to become jaundiced and mean-spirited and ugly and combative. Our goal is that they would see our good deeds and glorify God.

In other words, in the very moment when Christians are being regarded as evildoers, they should intensify their good deeds. We'll come back to this because this is huge now because I think what the rest of 1 Peter is an unpacking of *how* this happens. What does that look like as citizens? What does it look like as wives and husbands? What does it look like as slaves in that setting? What does it look like as church members and people in the wider culture?

That's what the rest of 1 Peter is. Is how do you live a life of conduct that is beautiful? I said the word *kalos* there is lovely, beautiful, honorable and use these good deeds so that this speaking against you turns into glorifying God. How do you do that?

Christians in a Persecuting Culture

So this is a book that cares very much about its pagan culture coming to see the light. It's a book that's very bleak about the present culture. They're mainly persecutors. They mainly regard you as idiots for not coming to the party anymore. That's what we'll see in 1 Peter 4.

But the goal is not to say, "Fine, we're idiots, but we're going to heaven and you're going to hell." It does say that, but not the idiot part. The attitude issue that we're dealing with I think in church today, in evangelicalism, is dealt with pretty significantly. Here we are on our way to heaven rejoicing and we want people to go with us who presently are scorning us. If you don't want people to go with you who are presently heaping scorn upon you, you're probably not a Christian.

To be born of God is to love like God — to love your enemies. Love your enemies. Pray for those who persecute you. Do good to those who hate you. And the best good you can do for them is the kinds of behaviors that would possibly bring them to glorify God on the day of visitation.

Frankly, I don't know for sure what "the day of visitation" refers to there. The two possibilities that are usually considered is second coming or the day when he shows up in their conversion, and the word visitation in the New Testament could go both ways. I incline to the latter, namely, that I think the day of visitation here is when God visits them with his Holy Spirit, lifts the veil, helps them to see the wonderful light and they switch calling you evil and now glorify your God. I think that's the day of visitation, but the other would not be wrong.

The Christian Mindset

Okay, that's the summary and here we are at [1 Peter 2:13](#) finally. So let's read the paragraph and then talk about a few things in it.

"Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution." Now I'll just make a few comments as we go and then I'll come back for other things. Literally, it is every human creation, not that human created it, but that it could refer to anything God made that's human. Human person, human club, human church, human government. Just keep that in mind that that institution here may not be limited to government, though that's clearly the focus.

I'll tell you where I'm going. I think when Peter's done with all of his illustrative settings of how to behave in a fallen and persecuting culture, it's the same message to every group, and he's applying it in different ways. So let's just watch what that message is.

"Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to the emperor as supreme." This word supreme here, *huperechó*, is the same word used in [Philippians 2:3](#) where he says, "Count others more significant than yourselves." Count others superior, count others supreme to yourself. Which is what clues me in that he's taking broad Christian mindsets and applying them to specifics. There's a sense in which a Christian in relating to anybody should regard them as higher, and "I'm your servant." Anybody I meet. My default disposition to you should not be pay attention to me. "I'm your superior. Serve me." That is totally contrary to the spirit of Christ.

The default disposition should be: I regard you as more significant than myself. I just choose to. You may have not got a stitch of education. You may be poor. I may have money and lots of education and my default disposition should be I'm here to serve you, which means I'm here to put you up and me down. Now here he's just saying, "Okay, if that's true, generally, we got an emperor. Let's do that to him."

"Whether it be to the emperor as supreme or to governors as sent by him." And in the same thing that we see in Romans 13, to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good, which they don't always do, which raises a question and a problem.

"For this is the will of God that by doing good" — I'm going to circle "for the Lord's sake" and "will of God." "This is the will of God that by doing good" — takes you back up to that behavior that we're talking about that he's going to illustrate now — "that by doing good, you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people."

And by that he means people who say, for example, "Christians are cannibals because they eat human flesh at their sacred meals." That was one of the first century criticisms of Christians. The word got out. "This is the body of Christ, I eat it." "They're cannibal." And you should so talk and live as to say that's not true. Put that straight. And of course a hundred other things that get wrong about Christians.

Living as Free People

"For this is the will of God that by doing good, you should put to silence the ignorant of foolish people. Live as people who are free." That's going to be the most important thing in this paragraph, I think. "Live as people who are free. Not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil." When it says live as people who are free, it means when you submit to the emperor and his governor it's not because they're your master, you don't have but one master. You're in exile here. You're free.

Which raises of course, the huge question, "Well, if I only have one master, he's in heaven and Nero is not my master and Pilate is not my master, then I could do whatever I want here. I don't have to keep the law, the speed limit. I don't have to pay my taxes. I don't like what they're doing with them anyway and therefore I'm free."

And so he says, "Whoa, whoa, whoa. Wait a minute. Not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil." He knows our hearts. Our hearts are selfish, our hearts are rebellious, our hearts are covetousness. Our hearts are self exalting, self-aggrandizing. And therefore, he's got some very clear guidelines for what he means with this freedom. But get the mindset clear. You are not the servant of this government in America or any government.

You are free. You belong to another country, another regime, another president, another Lord. And the question is how to use your freedom?

Specifics of Christian Conduct

"Live as servants of God." That's yellow so we can see all these references here. Servants of God. So now you're free vis-a-vis president, Senate, supreme court, legislature, Congress, House Representatives, state governments, police, you're free.

Now, what are you going to do? You're going to serve God. You're going to walk through life not saying, "What's expected of me? What's expected of me here in Alabama? What's expected of me in America?" You're going to say, "What does God expect of me?"

That's what I'm seeing happening here. Now he gives some specifics of what that would imply. "Honor everyone." Whoa, that just kind of knocks you back seat and say, "Hey, I thought I was free and now you're making me a servant of everybody's honor?" Yes. That's what serving God will do.

"Love the brotherhood." There's a special affection for the people of God that you don't have for the world. "Fear God. Honor the emperor," and the fact that honor everyone, honor the emperor, same

word here, shows that it is a general principle that has specific kinds of application in different settings. Like if President Obama came to my house, just knocked on my door and showed up one day, "Whoa, what is this about?"

As many of his policies, like on pro-life issues as I abominate, I would treat him with incredible deference. I would honor him. Not just honor him the way a neighbor, like if a neighbor knocked up, I'd try to honor them, but the honoring of the mailman or the honoring of a neighbor and the honoring of the President of the United States is culturally appropriate different.

So I think that's what's going on with the same word in everyone. And then the emperor. Why would you need to say it about the emperor if you already said it about everyone? And the answer is because each sphere — it doesn't mean you're cowing.

This is why I said this is probably the most important thing right there. You're never cowing to anybody. When I show special deference to a president or a mayor or just somebody who has some office, I'm not cowing like, "Whoa, I have to be so careful here." I'm just trying to display an appropriate honoring to their office. The Bible tells us to take these things seriously, these distinctions, these roles.

Rendering to Caesar

Okay, there's the overview and I circled those things in yellow just to draw out how prevalent God is in your life in civic culture, your life, obeying for the Lord's sake, doing the will of God or being free, but servants of God, fearing God. What's the command of Jesus behind all this, do you think?

I'm thinking of [Mark 12:17](#): "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." How does that come out here? What do you make of that? I personally think Peter probably reflected long on that and that's reflected here.

When I hear Jesus say render to Caesar the things that are Caesars, like he took a coin, said. "He's got Caesar's picture on it. Render to Caesar the things that are Caesars." And just when the people think they've got him who want to argue for the liberation of Palestine from Caesar: "Good. He's a compromiser with Caesar because he just said render to Caesar. He's a compromiser. He's a sellout. We want liberty for the Jewish nation, and he's saying, just bow to Caesar."

Render to God

As soon as they start thinking that, he tosses in, "And render to God the things that are God's." And then they say, "Well, how do those fit together?" And surely one way they fit together is the way this is working. Render to God the things that are God's. Tell me the things that are God's. What's a word for it? His. All. Everything. Everything is God's. Okay, there's nothing left for Caesar *unless* God tells you a few things to render to Caesar, and then for God's sake, you're rendering them to Caesar and there's no contradiction between the two.

You are totally giving everything to God. He owns everything. He owns the world. He owns your life. He owns your mind. He owns your heart. He owns all the money. He owns all the banks, he owns all

the universities. Everything is God's. Render to God's what is God's. Live in the awareness that everything belongs to God for the glory of God.

Now, once you've got that settled, render to Caesar. What? Well, what this text says. For the Lord's sake, because you've already rendered to God, the things that are God's. Now, for God's sake, do serve God. And the way God says to serve him is honor everybody. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor with his appropriate honor or subjection.

Now, isn't it remarkable that this word and this word are so in tension? They're in tension, but they're not in contradiction. Be subject. You are free. Free people don't subject. Don't submit. Yes they do. But they submit totally differently. When you submit to the speed limit, you should be worshiping God.

This is convicting because none of you do keep the speed limit. But on your best days when the peace of God is reigning in your heart, and you're not anxious about getting there 30 seconds earlier. Do the math sometimes, folks. Going 65 in a 55 for five miles gets you there 30 seconds early. Is it worth God's disapproval?

Okay. It's not about speed limit, but sort of. Because the governors are sent by him to punish. They just give nice big fines to people who break the speed limit. Now, my point is, you can rationalize that whatever way you want, but my point is, if God gives you the grace to submit to the speed limit, you shouldn't be doing that because of the Alabama legislature. You should be doing that because of God.

For the Lord's sake subject, submit. For the Lord's sake. If you're doing it for the Lord's sake, it's worship. If you're doing it for the Lord's sake, you're saying something about the Lord. And I hope it's not he's going to rip me. Well, He's a hard taskmaster. This yoke is hard and this burden is heavy. If that's the way you talk, you're probably not a Christian. His burden is light. His yoke is easy. When he says keep the speed limit, it's because it's a testimony of how free you are. You're not craving.

Why do people break laws? Cravings. "Got to have it my way. Don't like the stupid speed limit." Thirty-five for goodness sakes. It's all selfish. It's all ego. It's all non-freedom. You're not free. You're not free. When you break the law, you're into your cravings. "I got to get there. I got to be first. I hate being late. Everybody's passing me." That's all ego. That's all cravings. That's all desire. You're not free. You're in bondage. The free man cruise control 55, worshiping Jesus. Happy, peaceful, get there whenever He says. Long traffic jam. Patience is the gift of the Holy Spirit.

I assume you're laughing because it's so rare. It's just wonderful. True. It's just true. Those are little teeny immediate illustrations from our lives of the big issues of when they want to kill you or take away your bakery business or your floral shop. So we submit for the Lord's sake to every human institution who are sent to punish those who do evil and praise those who do good. And sometimes they get it exactly backward.