

Finding Our Place 1 Peter 2:13–17 (NKJV)

13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

One of the passages that parallel this one is found in:

Romans 13:1–7 (NKJV)

1 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

Why does Peter and Paul have significant passages among their writings on this subject?

What is our place in this world?

We are to be in the world but not of the world.

So there might be a tendency for Christians to set aside earthly loyalties for heavenly loyalties.

But we must be in the world.

The question then comes, are we then subject to the ordinances of man and its governments.

As citizens of heaven, Christians submit wholly to divine authority, but the potential misapplication of that truth is that they can become indifferent and even disdainful toward the world in which they live, thereby forfeiting many opportunities for positive testimony. Believers' detachment from the world must be balanced by proper respect for and humble submission to all the legitimate institutions of human authority. *John F. MacArthur Jr., 1 Peter, MacArthur New Testament Commentary (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 2004), 143.*

I. For the Lord's sake.

A. 1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV)

1. ³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the

glory of God.

2. Regardless of our responsibilities in this life we are first and most of all servants of God and are here on His mission and not our own.

B. This is where salvation begins.

1. Acts 9:6 (NKJV)

- a. ⁶ So he, trembling and astonished, said, “Lord, what do You want me to do?” Then the Lord *said* to him, “Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.”

C. If your life is not where it should be then maybe you should determine to all for the Lord’s Sake.

II. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man.

A. Submit yourselves

1. This is something that we are very familiar with but usually we want others to submit to us or our ideas.
2. Submission does not come naturally to Adam’s race for that was our parents first sin, a refusal to submit to God’s simple will and to obey His simple command.
3. But in a functioning society everyone has a place.
4. It is a place of submission to someone.
 - a. Like the husband who put the sign on the wall which said, “I am the boss of this house and I have my wife’s permission to say so.”
 - b. One of the blessings of our government the way it was designed is that our governors are to submit to the will of the people.
 - c. Everyone in America works for someone, even if it is only for the customer and if you will not submit to the customer you will soon be out of business.

B. To every ordinance of man.

1. Generally speaking we are to follow this.
 - a. If we are taxed we should pay our taxes.
 - b. We should obey the laws of the land.
 - c. We should remember that is for the Lord’s sake.
2. But just because they are the government does not mean that they are right.
 - a. Dred-Scott decision of the supreme court in 1857 said that African

Americans were not nor could ever be citizens of the United States.

- b. Among constitutional scholars, *Scott v. Sandford* is widely considered the worst decision ever rendered by the Supreme Court. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Dred-Scott-decision>

3. Are there any exceptions?

- a. If there is a conflict between what God says and what government says we must follow our God.

- b. Acts 4:18–20 (NKJV)

(1) ¹⁸ So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. ¹⁹ But Peter and John answered and said to them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. ²⁰ For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.”

- c. Our government allows abortion but we can never be in favor of that.
- d. We can never support any type of injustice or unholy or sinful activity.
- e. We should never support anything that oppresses or injures others without just cause.

4. Remember that Peter lived in a godless society that demanded emperor worship.

- a. That was not to be submitted to and for that disobedience many Christians were crucified or thrown to the lions.
- b. So the idea is that if there is not a Godly good reason we are to follow the laws of the land.

III. The reasoning

A. Those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.

- 1. Any government is better than anarchy.
- 2. So in the old Soviet Union that we would not agree with in many areas yet they were a bonafide government that was due submission by the people.

B. Whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

- 1. This verse was used by many of the colonial loyalist to advocate they it

was unchristian to rebel against England.

2. But others saw government as servant of God that was serve the people, and if a government no longer served the best interests of the people that said government had lost its authority to rule.
3. But those early rebels understood that if they lost the cause, that they would pay with their lives.

C. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.

1. This is a general statement and is not absolute.
2. Many a corrupt government, because it is run by sinners operates for the benefit of themselves and their friends at the expense of the people.
3. That could be why many an Illinois governor has move from the Governor's house to the big house, if you know what I mean.
4. But this not only makes a statement but tells us what the purpose of government is to be.
 - a. To support the good deeds and punish the evil deeds.
 - b. When a government slips from that place it has lost the reason of its existence.

D. Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same.

1. In the old Soviet Union, even if you did what was good, if you were a Christian you would be persecuted.
2. Now they did not persecute Christians for being Christians but if you were a Christian, you would be fired from your job. They you would be arrested for not having a job.
3. Often times Christians were turned away from medical treatment and were allowed to die for lack of simple medicine like penicillin.
4. But Peter is telling us that regardless of how we are treated we are to do what is good, to be good citizens of the nation in which we live.

E. For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

1. Remember why we are doing these things.
 - a. For the Lord's sake so that He will not be blasphemed on our account.
 - b. I remember reading once how that some officials in the Soviet Union saw the damage they were doing to their own country by

persecuting Christians who were the most productive members of society.

2. We should never give the enemies of the Savior a reason to speak evil of Christians unless it is for the good we do and for our honesty.
- F. We as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.
1. Yes Christ has set us free.
 - a. But we are not to misuse that freedom.
 - b. Some people in the country use their freedom to bring themselves into bondage to other masters, such as sin or addiction or sexual perversion.

IV. Summation

- A. Honor all people.
- B. Love the brotherhood.
- C. Fear God.
- D. Honor the king.