1 Peter 2:12-25

I. Sumit to the government (13 - 17)

II. Sumit to masters (18)
I. Sumit to the government (13 - 17)

Discussion Questions

* What does it mean to submit? What is the difference between (if any) between and obeying?
Why are we supposed to submit? It says for the Lord's sake.
What good does it do God if we obey the government ?
* What if your government is not a democracy? What if it is not a good government ?
* Why does God establish authority? What is the purpose of earthly government? Do you ever complain about the government you are under? Do you pray for its leaders? How often? Do you give thanks for the government you have? How often?
* What specific steps can you take to be a better citizen?
* To what "ignorance of foolish men" is Peter referring in verse 15?
* Are we free? What does the phrase mean "act as free men" means? What can you do to honor the people around you?

Cross - References

1 Timothy 2:1-3 - I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession, and thanksgiving be made for all people — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior.

John 8:32 - Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.

1 Corinthians 7:22 - For the one who was a slave when called to faith in the Lord is the Lord's
freed person; similarly, the one who was free when called is Christ's slave.

2 Thessalonians 3:7-9 - For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without praying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, laboring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate.

Teaching Points

1. We are to submit for the Lord's sake. Submitting is beneficial for us since if we submit for the government, we will avoid punishment and live a stable and secure life. Yet this is not the reason we are commanded to submit.

We are to submit for God's sake. When we submit to the government, we are being model citizens, good testimonies. Our obedience reflects on God and brings Him glory. Imagine what would have happened if the early New Testament church refused to obey governments. The world governments were already afraid of and suspicious towards believers. If believers refused to obey the governments they would have been labeled as dangerous revolutionaries. The church would seemingly never have been accepted into society. It would have been endlessly persecuted.

Beyond that, people would be afraid to become Christians since Christians would have been viewed as very extreme.

If you live in a country without religious freedoms, authorities may call believers in to question them at police stations. At that time, if you have followed Peter's instructions you can truthfully say that you desire to be good citizens and in, fact, are commanded to by God. The government truly does have nothing to fear from us.

2. We are commanded to submit to every human institution. This refers to all authorities God put over us. This is the clear rebuttal to the common argument. "What if the government in my country is bad?" Well, the authorities in every country are bad. Every person is a sinner. Every government has its own weakness and shot comings.

As bad as they are, the world would be a much more wicked place with no human governments. See how bad Israel got when there was no king during the time of the Judges when each person did "what was right in his own eyes." This was a land where most people had knowledge of and claimed to believe in God. Even a bad king like Saul whose heart wasn't fully God's improved the situation.

3. God has appointed governments (Romans 13:1) to punish evildoers and praise those who do right. Sometimes the government's standards are wrong. This appears to be more and more common in the modern world. Yet in general, most laws are good laws and are intended to limit wrongdoing. Murder, assault, theft, drunk driving, speeding, not paying back debt, breaking contracts etc. is all illegal.

4. Our actions are scrutinized by the world. In the early NT church, Christians were also heavily scrutinized. Leaders wanted to see if they would revolt against governments or spark uprisings. There were many foolish people who, in their ignorance of the basic tenets of Christian beliefs, have leveled such accusations against believers ( the Pharisees false claim that Jesus wanted to be the king instead of (Caesar comes to mind). Peter exhorted the believers to silence such ignorant criticism by being model citizens.

5. In general, most of us probably don't go out breaking the law every day or committing crimes. So, what can we do to be better citizen?

We can pray more for authorities in charge, either governments, our teachers, our bosses, our parents, our church leaders, etc. it is so easy to find fault with people in leadership. Kids find fault with parents. Employees find fault with bosses. Wives find fault with husbands.
We all find fault with the government . But instead of criticizing, which has no positive impact, let us get down on our knees and petition for God to show His mercy and grace to our leaders.

It is likely that much of the time Daniel spent praying, he prayed for the Babylonian leaders. He lived in an evil country with pagan leaders. Yet he was able to influence the country for good from the inside. His testimony eventually helped to convict Nebuchadnezzar and seemingly bring him to God.

I confess that too often I complain about leaders. I spend far too little time praying for them and thanking God for the good they have done. I imagine for a bit that you are the authority /leader. Then think how you want those under your leadership to treat you. Now switch that around and treat your leaders like this.

6. Act as free men. We are free from sin.

Galatians 5:23 - Gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

There is no law against the fruit of the Spirit. We shouldn't have the attitude that "I am free! I obey God only. I'm not going to listen to you!" 'This is prideful and arrogant and disobedient to God. Our freedom is not an excuse for license.

Illustration: Imagine that you are serving a life sentence for a crime you committed. Twenty years into the life sentence you despair of ever seeing the light of day. One day a visitor comes to your cell . It's the first visitor you have had in 20 years. It is the person you committed the crime against. He has come to say that he has forgiven you, dropped the charges, and appealed to the judge for mercy. He has come to say that as of right now, you are a free man. You can leave the prison. You now have a new life.

What are you going to do with your new life? Will you turn a new leaf? Will you take advantage of this unforeseen opportunity to show love and kindness the people around you, to show your gratitude and appreciation to the person who forgave you? Or will you rub your fingers and start devising new schemes and then go right back to your former way of crime?

As much as I would like to say that everyone will choose the first path, many do not . Many criminals get freed from prison and go right back to their crime. Some professing believers use their freedom in Christ as an excuse to sin as well. I hope each of us will use our freedom to serve God faithfully each and everyday.

II. Submit to masters (18)

Discussion Questions

* How does this verse apply to us today in the modern world?
* How should we treat our employers ? What if the way they want to run the company and the things they want to do are ridiculous ?

Cross - References

Cross - References

III. Suffering for righteousness