

"The Believer's Duty"

Part 3

1 Peter 2:11-3:12

Introduction: Last week in our study of 1 Peter we were looking at how the believer is to live above the criticism that comes from the ungodly. This is only done when we live in submission to the authority that is over us.

"Submitting to Authority"

Notice 1 Peter 2:11-14

We are strangers in enemy territory, and we are called to live in such a way that the unsaved are silenced when it comes to being critical of how we live. In other words, we are called to submit to the governmental authorities that are over us. We are to walk in obedience to the laws of the government. Paul reminded the Romans of the same Truth.

Romans 13:1-5

Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

² *Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.*

³ *For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:*

⁴ *For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.*

⁵ *Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.*

Notice 1 Peter 2:15

There are two points to consider here.

1. It is the will of God for His children to submit to the authorities.
2. This is the means by which the believer is to combat those who slander us.

Now we need to stop here for a moment and consider the difference between the government of Rome under Nero and the government of the United States today. In New

Testament times under Roman authority the state was authoritarian. The ruler was an absolute ruler; and the sole duty of the citizen was to render absolute obedience and to pay taxes.

Romans 13:6-7

⁶ For for this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.

⁷ Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.

This was the situation in the Roman Empire but that is not what we are under today. We are under a Democracy and our government is not only a government OF the people, but it is also a government FOR the people and BY the people. God allowed the founding fathers of our nation to develop the Constitution, the Declaration of Independence and the Bill of Rights. The Preamble to the Declaration of Independence contains the entire theory of the American government.

"We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed,— That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

This is a shock to many people, but this document gives us the right to resist when the government becomes tyrannical. Now, I know there are people who would press back and say that Peter tells us to submit even if it is tyrannical. I say Peter is writing to people under an authoritarian government and it is not the same. God put our founding fathers in the position to establish this democracy and we have the right to stand for what God allowed them to establish.

Now just to confirm this even further let me support this thought with a few verses.

Daniel 2:20-22

²⁰ Daniel answered and said, Blessed be the name of God for ever and ever: for wisdom and might are his:

²¹ *And he changeth the times and the seasons: he removeth kings, and setteth up kings: he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding:*

²² *He revealeth the deep and secret things: he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.*

Psalm 75:6-7

⁶ *For promotion cometh neither from the east, nor from the west, nor from the south.*

⁷ *But God is the judge: he putteth down one, and setteth up another.*

These verses make it very clear that God placed the founding fathers in places of authority to establish what we have today, and I believe it is our responsibility to get involved in the government, to vote, to educate others and to pray for our leaders. If we just sit back and do nothing, we shall lose what our God has given to us as a nation.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

I exhort therefore, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men;

² *For kings, and for all that are in authority; that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

³ *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour;*

⁴ *Who will have all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth.*

The founding fathers are not living today but the government that they established is still in place and therefore we have the responsibility to do our part.

There are also times when we are required to live in disobedience to the government. These times come when the government commands us to live in a way that is contrary to the Word of God, or contrary to what God's Word commands us to do.

Acts 5:26-29

²⁶ *Then went the captain with the officers, and brought them without violence: for they feared the people, lest they should have been stoned.*

²⁷ *And when they had brought them, they set them before the council: and the high priest asked them,*

²⁸ Saying, Did not we straitly command you that ye should not teach in this name? and, behold, ye have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this man's blood upon us.

²⁹ Then Peter and the other apostles answered and said, We ought to obey God rather than men.

The apostles were told not to teach in the name of Jesus and because the Lord had sent them out to share the Gospel, they had no other option but to disobey the authorities. Now let us notice what the consequences of their disobedience was.

Acts 5:40-42

⁴⁰ And to him they agreed: and when they had called the apostles, and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go.

⁴¹ And they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name.

⁴² And daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.

This is what we also can expect as we walk in obedience to God's Word when it goes against the authorities. We can expect persecution and when it comes, we accept it as suffering for and with Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 4:12-16

¹² Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

¹³ But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

¹⁴ If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

¹⁵ But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

¹⁶ Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

Notice 1 Peter 2:16-17

As believers we are free people. We have been set free from the power and the penalty of sin. But our freedom is not a freedom to sin, but we have been set free to do what is right. This is something that was not possible before we were saved. We were slaves of sin, and we had no way to escape the slavery. But God in His grace and His power set us from sin. Now as believers we are to live as servants of God.

Romans 6:13-15

¹³ Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.

¹⁴ For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

¹⁵ What then? shall we sin, because we are not under the law, but under grace? God forbid.

We are now free to live a life pleasing to the Lord. Let me show you what Paul wrote earlier in Romans.

Romans 5:19-6:2

¹⁹ For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

²⁰ Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound:

²¹ That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

¹What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound?

² God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?

There are believers who know that they are secure in Christ and so they see use God's grace as a license to sin. Paul tells us that should never be the case. We are saved to SERVE not to sin.

There are some who see their position in Christ as an excuse to live above the laws of the government.

I have known churches who decided to enter into a building project, and they did not believe they needed to follow the building codes. They did as they pleased without getting the proper permits or the proper permission to build. They found out really quickly that they too had to abide by the laws. One of the churches contacted me when we started with our addition to warn me about how difficult the authorities were to deal with. I found out the difficulties they were having were due to the fact that they did not honor the authorities.

Notice 1 Peter 2:17

Here in this verse we see "submission" defined in a practical way.

1. Honor ALL men.

Notice the words of Spurgeon:

"Honor even the poorest of men. Remember that they are men. Even though they are sunken in vice or crime, honor the manhood that is in them, however much you may detest their crimes. "Honor all men.""

This is a difficult command to fulfill when dealing with sinful people. No matter who we are dealing with we must remember that even the most corrupt person in society is made in the image of God. Therefore we are to honor all men.

Matthew 7:12

¹² Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

2. Love the brotherhood.

This is a command to love our fellow believers.

John 13:34-35

³⁴ A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

³⁵ By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

3. Fear God.

This is not speaking of living in terror and dread but to fear God is to have a reverence for God. Notice the words of an unnamed writer:

"Fear does not mean terror to the believer but conveys a sense of awe and reverence. Reverence is the combination of admiration and fear, awe and dread, wonder and terror. It's an emotion that we were made to experience. It is only when God is given his proper place in the center of our heart and spirit and mind and strength that all other things take their proper place."

When God is allowed to occupy His proper place in our hearts then our relationship with our fellow man will all be in the proper order.

4. Honour the king.

When I read this fourth command, I am reminded that the king was covered under the first command. But this is Nero we are talking about. Based upon what he did to the believers it seems as if Peter feels the need to be sure they understand that EVEN the immoral Nero is to be honoured.

So too are we to honor Joe Biden. We certainly do not agree with all he does but there are two things to remember:

- a. He is made in the image of God.
- b. He has been placed where he is in the white house by God.

Conclusion:

In verses 12-17 God is mentioned 5 times. We are to glorify Him, we are to submit for His sake, we are to walk in His will, we are His servants, and we are to fear Him. Submission to the authority is not about us but it is all about glorifying God with our lives.