

Daily Devotional, February 8, 2021 Submission is Our Mission

For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right. It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. ²¹ For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 1 Peter 2:13-15, 21-23 (NLT)

At the root of all of our dishonoring of God lies rebellion—our rebellion against God Himself. In other words, our attempts to set ourselves up as our own gods, determining for ourselves what's right and what's wrong, claiming our own rights, through our lack of submission.

Finding salvation from this rebellion means, in part, the reestablishment of the correct order of submission to God's authority in my life. And part of that submission means to be a faithful witness to this world filled with many unbelievers, in the hope that they might also submit to God's rule in their lives.

So, how can I be a faithful witness as an obedient servant to God's authority? In the passage above, Peter writes that it begins with our submission to human authorities that God has established for us. And to illustrate how our submission should be demonstrated to these institutions, he gives the example of our Lord, Jesus.

When standing before the civil authorities of Rome and Judea, our Lord Jesus did not deceive, did not revile, did not threaten. Why did Jesus submit? Because He was submitting to the Father's will for His life, and was providing a model to the authorities, as well as to us, of His submission to His Father.

Consider when Jesus stood before Pilate. It is painfully obvious that Pilate himself was not in submission to God's will by honoring God's Son. Yet, it was God's will for Jesus to submit to Pilate's authority, because God had a greater purpose for everything that was about to take place. Through suffering unjustly at the hands of Pilate, Jesus bore the rebellion of unjust mankind in an act of God's redemptive love for rebels like us. The contrast between the self-serving Pilate, who had only minimal authority, and the Son of God, who had *all* authority is tremendous. We now despise the one who dealt unjustly, and we hold in highest regard the One who suffered unjustly in order to save the unjust.

So, how are we, as God's children, fairing in our submission to God? Are we respectful of human authority, demonstrating to them that we respect the positions they hold as having been instituted by God? Are we respectful of our government officials, of our employers, of our spouses, and all others we are to submit to? Do we serve them in quietness and submission in the role God has for us?

And what if they are unjust? What if they insult us? What if they speak evil of us? What if we suffer physical harm at their hands? Do we return evil for evil and insult for insult? Or do we treat them with kindness instead? In short, are we, like Jesus, willing to suffer unjustly to bring life to the unjust?

As difficult as it may be, this is what we have been called to. This is what living a Christlike life looks like. A life of humility and submission. An honorable life that in time, will silence our accusers and might inevitably move them to see Christ in us, and maybe, just maybe, might move them to follow our examples. Wouldn't that be honorable?

Prayer: Lord, I ask that you help me to submit to you in a greater measure. When I don't want to submit and I let my ego rise, bring me under Your control. Bring back to my memory the submission that I have given you. The submission that gives you total control. In my own strength, I am unable to give you the type of wholehearted submission that you require, but through Christ all things are possible. Lord, help me to submit to your sole desire. In and through Christ I pray, Amen.