

## How to Handle Relationships in Stressful Times Pt. 1 1 Peter 2:13-20

ETS: Peter commanded his readers to submit to authority—even if that authority is evil

ESS: Christians are to submit to authority so as to not hinder our testimony

OSS: I want people to understand what submission to authority looks like

PQ: Are you submitting to those over you?

UW: Submitting

### ME

I remember in the early **1980's** visiting my **grandmother** in Alexandria and she was talking about getting cable TV.

- Because we lived in Chattanooga at the time, I remember hearing about a graduate from **McCallie School** in Chattanooga who was making a **BIG NAME** for himself in the new field of cable TV.
  - His name was **Ted Turner** and we was the founder of **CNN**.

Prior to CNN, the news came on at 6:00 pm at night on three main networks: **NBC, CBS and ABC**.

- I remember Dad sitting in the living room at night watching the news—which I could not understand

why anyone would want to watch the boring news instead of cartoons!

On **June 1, 1980**, CNN (Cable News Network) was launched

- CNN was the world's **first 24-hour television news network**.

Nowadays, there are a lot of 24 hour news networks.

In the last 20 years we have also had the rise of **Social Media**

- Everyone has a **platform** opportunity on social media
  - A lot of people use **social media** to give their **thoughts** about everything.
    - IN fact, most are **bolder** on social media than they'd be in real-life.

All this has set the stage for a **growing division** in America (and other countries too).

- There is a lot of **ugly talk** on social media against governmental leaders
- There is a lot of **misinformation** on social media and by **media** in general.
  - In fact, it is growing increasingly difficult to figure out who is actually reporting the truth!

## WE

One **real struggle** for believers is: HOW to do we respond to each other in these **stressful** times?

- HOW do we respond to governmental leaders with whom we disagree?
- HOW do we respond to people who are espousing things which are condemned in Scripture?
  - One mark of being in the “**end times**” is we are going to **increasing** see “**evil called good and good called evil.**”
  - Another mark of the **end times**, is the **increasing** number of “**scoffers and mockers**”

**Satan** is the “**god of this world**” and the world system is under his sway.

- Satan is also the “**father of lies**” so we can expect to see a **world system**—including **governments**—that **promote** the **lies** of Satan.
  - Unfortunately, we are seeing more and more of the lies of Satan being presented as “**Good**”.

*The BIG question is: HOW do we respond to each other when we are under stress?*

We are **returning** to **1 Peter** and we are going to examine a series of relationships. We are going to see:

- How do we respond to **leaders**?
- How do we respond to **casual relationships**?
- How do we respond to **work relationships**?
- How do we respond in **marital relationships**?

Why is this important?

- It is **important** that we respond **correctly** because our **TESTIMONY** of Christ's changing power is at stake!
- Remember, we still have **SELF**—who wants to be at the **center**!
  - **SELF** is going to want to **respond differently** than Christ is calling us to respond!

This week, we are going to look at “How do we respond to leaders” and “How do we respond to casual relationships”

## GOD

Context:

- People who are “scattered” due to their faith
- Believers
- Persecution is occurring and greater persecution is coming
- Nero is the Emperor

**1 Peter 2:13-17** “Submit to every human authority because of the Lord, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority <sup>14</sup> or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good. <sup>15</sup> For it is God’s will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good. <sup>16</sup> Submit as free people, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but as God’s slaves. <sup>17</sup> Honor everyone. Love the brothers and sisters. Fear God. Honor the emperor.”

Trigger word: **Submit!**

- Don’t you just RECOIL when you hear that word?
  - We are naturally **REBELLIOUS** people so the idea of “**SUBMISSION**” really grates us!

This is the 1<sup>st</sup> time Peter uses the word “**SUBMIT**” but it is NOT the LAST time!

- **V. 13** “Submit to every human authority because of the Lord”
- **V. 16** “Submit as free people”
- **V. 18** “Household slaves, submit to your masters with all reverence”
- **3: 1** “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands”

- 3:5 “For in the past, the holy women who put their hope in God also adorned themselves in this way, **submitting to their own husbands**”

Now, I know that the word “**submit**” is a hot topic in our culture.

The word “**submit**” comes from a **military term** which means to “**to place under rank.**”

- To place “**under rank**” does not in imply **inferiority**
  - **Ex. Christ** submitted to His earthly parents when He was a child.
    - Does that mean He was inferior to them?  
No.
  - **Christ** submitted to the will of God the Father.
    - Does that mean He was inferior to them?  
No.

**FACT:** *ALL humans* are created “**in the image of God**”

- ALL humans—**male, female, black, white, rich, poor,** etc. are all **created** in the **image** of God.

**FACT:** ALL humans have the **same intrinsic, built in, core value** because *ALL Humans are created in the image of God.*

**PROBLEM:** When you *remove God* and insist human beings (and all creation) are the result of **mindless, chaos** which because of **time** and **chance**—*you have no intrinsic, built-in value!*

- If we are **meaningless masses** which take up a brief time what gives us our **value**?
  - Work?
  - Money?
  - Fame?
  - Government?
  - Opinions?
  - Academic Achievement

*When these things become the **source** of our value/worth, then we start thinking of people as “**Superior**” to other people.*

**PROBLEM:** We hear the phrase “White Supremacy” used in our culture.

- What is a “White Supremacist”?
  - A “White Supremacist is a person who believes that a white person is superior to people of color: superior in intellect, ability, value, etc.
- White Supremacy is **not Biblical** b/c the Bible teaches that **no one** is **superior** – except God!

WHY is there “White Supremacy” or “Racism” or any type of “Supremacy”?

- Because of the LACK of biblical teaching that **ALL** are created by GOD in the IMAGE of GOD!
  - When we stop TEACHING and PREACHING that ALL are created in the IMAGE of GOD, then **materialism** and **humanism** will move in to try to fill the **vacuum!**

The word “**submit**” comes from a **military term** which means to “**to place under rank.**”

- To place “**under rank**” does *NOT* imply **inferiority** *b/c no human is INFERIOR to another human—Just as Christ was not INFERIOR to the Father!*

**Submission** has to do with **order** and **authority**, *not value*.

- For example, the **slaves** in the average Roman household were **better** in many ways to their masters, but they still had to be under authority.
- The **buck private** in the army may be a **better person** than the five-star general, but he is still a buck private.
- Even **Christ** Himself became a **servant** and submitted to **God’s will**; yet He was God.

*There is nothing degrading about submitting to authority or accepting God's order.*<sup>1</sup>

Too often we react to a word such as “**submit**” as being **repressive** and **archaic** without realizing that ALL of **believers** (men included)-- if we are going to follow Christ's example--**must submit**.

- We all, who are Christians, must **submit** to the **Lordship** of Christ
- We are all told to **follow Christ's example** and **submission is part** of Christ's example.

WHO are WE (Believers) to **submit** to?

**1 Peter 2:13-14** “**Submit** (i.e., place yourself under) **to every human authority** (WHY?) **because of the Lord...**

- Christ submitted Himself to do the **will of the Father**
  - The Will of the Father was for Christ to **die** for our sins
    - If Christ had not “**Submitted**” to the Will of the Father, we'd be lost in our sins! ***We'd have no hope!***

**Christians are Commanded to Submit Because of Christ**

---

<sup>1</sup>Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (1 Pe 3:7). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

Christ gave us the example of submission!

- He **submitted** to the **authority** of God the Father

WHO are Christ-followers to “Submit” to?

- ...whether to the emperor as the supreme authority **14** or to governors as those sent out by him to punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good.”

A role of Government is to “punish those who do what is evil and to praise those who do what is good.”

- **PROBLEM:** What if the government is NOT doing what it is mandated by God to do?

PETER didn't put a “Option clause” in this verse!

- He didn't say “If you agree with the emperor (President) or the governors then submit to them.”
  - He said to “Submit” to them.

**Nero** was the emperor when Peter wrote these words. In his book “Nero,” Edward Champlin wrote:

- “Nero **slept** with his mother and later **murdered** his mother
- Nero **married** and **executed one stepsister**,
  - **executed** his *other* stepsister
  - **raped** and **murdered** his **stepbrother**.

- In fact, he executed or murdered most of his close relatives.
- He kicked his pregnant wife to death.
- He castrated and then married a freedman.
  - He married another freedman, this time himself playing the bride.
- He raped a vestal virgin.
- He melted down the household gods of Rome for their cash value."

Nero **blamed** the **Christians** for the **burning** of **Rome**.

- He burned many Christians alive as torches to light his gardens at night.
- **Thousands of Christians were starved to death, burned, torn by dogs, fed to lions, crucified, used as torches and nailed to crosses.**
  - He was so bad that many of the **Christians** thought he was the **Antichrist**.
  - He even **tortured** and **killed** the **apostle Paul** and the **apostle Peter**.
    - **Paul was beheaded and Peter was crucified upside down.**" [Source: Patrick Ryan, Listverse, May 30, 2012]

I think it is “safe” to say that Peter *did not agree* with Nero’s lifestyle and antics—yet, he called on believers to “submit” to Nero as the Emperor!

Why should we “place ourselves under the authority of the President or Emperor”?

- Because God **allowed** them to be put in this **position**
- Because God will hold them **accountable** for their actions
- Because **Christ submitted** Himself

Why should we “place ourselves under the authority of the President or Emperor”?

- **15** For it is God’s will that you silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.

Believers are being watched!

- As the world becomes more **pagan**, *believers are going to stand out more!*
  - *Biblical believers are the NEW COUNTER-CULTURE in America!*

*Peter knew that “All eyes” were/are going to be on followers of Christ!*

- **1 Peter 2:12** “Conduct yourselves honorably among the Gentiles, so that when they slander you as

evildoers, they will observe your good works and will glorify God on the day he visits.”

### *Christians Must be Role Models*

Peter states in v. 15 that Christians are to “do right.”

- Why? To “silence the ignorance of foolish men.”
  - People often attack that which is different.  
Often we are leery of those who look different than us, or who talk different than us or who act different than us.

Peter knew that the **culture** was **watching** the Christians with a **leery eye**. They were wondering what they were up to.

- Why would someone **break from the norm** and **profess that Jesus Christ—a Jew from Galilee—was humankind’s Messiah?**
- Why would many of these people **give up their homes, their way of living** and even their **families** to follow Jesus?

People were suspicious of Christians!

- Those Christians had to be plotting some sort of government overthrow.

- After all, it was no secret that the **Jews** wanted to break away from Roman. They had tried several times.
  - Maybe these Christians—which came out of Judaism and were considered a “Sect” of Judaism—were part of the plot!

Peter tells the Christians and us, that we are to “do right.”

- He tells us in v. 15 that “doing right” is God’s will for us.

What Peter commands next seems **confusing**...

**1 Peter 2:16** “Submit as free people, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but as God’s slaves.” (CSB)

- What does this statement mean?

**FACT:** Believers are “Adopted into God’s family” thus we are “Citizens of Heaven”

- Believers are NOT “Citizens of earth”—our **allegiance** is ultimately to God and His kingdom.

**TEMPTATION:** “I am NOT a citizen of earth, BUT a citizen of heaven and I don’t have to “Submit” to a human authority! “I can do whatever I FEEL God wants me to do.”

- **PROBLEM:** When believers start acting on **FEELINGS** and **JUSTIFY** it as **coming from God**.

**BACKGROUND:** **Galatians 2:7-8** “On the contrary, they saw that I had been entrusted with the gospel for the uncircumcised, just as Peter was for the circumcised,<sup>8</sup> since the one at work in Peter for an apostleship to the circumcised was also at work in me for the Gentiles.”

- **Paul** was the Apostle to the **Gentiles**—his focus was sharing the Gospel in Gentile cities
- **Peter** was the Apostle to the **Jews**—his focus was primarily on sharing the Gospel to the Jews.

According to Peter, this letter is addressed “To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen.” (**1 Peter 1:1**)

- In the **Book of Acts**, many **Jews** came to **Jerusalem** for **Passover**—which was one of the three feasts in which Jewish men over the **age** of **20** were required to attend.
  - Jesus was **crucified** right before the Passover started on the “**Day of Preparation**”
  - Jesus rose from the **dead** on **Sunday**
  - Jesus **taught** His **disciples** for the next **40** days

- Jesus **ascended** to Heaven
- The **disciples** went to an **upper room** in **Jerusalem** per Jesus' instructions to wait for the coming of the **Holy Spirit**
- On the **Day of Pentecost**—which was 50 days after the Passover—the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples
- The **disciples** immediately went outside and began to **preach** about **Christ** and His resurrection.
- Many **Jews** from **other cities** were still in Jerusalem and they **heard** the Gospel and **believed**.
  - Those **new Jewish believers stayed** in Jerusalem as part of the early church
- Sometime later, in **Acts 8** **Stephen** was killed for preaching the Gospel
  - **Result:** Many **Jews fled** from Jerusalem back to **their home cities** where they began to share the Gospel and form groups.
- Peter's letter is **targeted specifically** to the **Jews** who had ben dispersed and were "[living] abroad in **Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia**"

The Jewish people regarded **freedom** as part of their **birthright**.

- **John 8:33** “We are descendants of Abraham,” they answered him, “and we have never been enslaved to anyone. How can you say, ‘You will become free’?”

The Jews claimed that **God was their ruler** and would NOT acknowledge the **Emperor** as their ruler.

- **They’d pay taxes to Rome**, but they were trying to find ways out of that dilemma. (See Matthew 22:17)
  - There were constant uprisings against Rome by the Jews.

**Peter** is writing **primarily** to **Jewish** Christians!

- As **Christians** they have been **set FREE** from the **LAW**
  - As **Jews**, they still have the **mindset** that *no one is going to rule over us.*

**Peter’s Command:** *“Don’t use your freedom as an excuse to do evil such as...*

- *Not paying taxes*
- *Not honoring governmental leaders*

**Reminder:** *We are “Slaves of God”*

- *God is our Master*
  - *God commands us to “Submit to governing authorities”* unless they are commanding us to do something contrary to God’s Word

The only examples we have in Scripture of when it is okay to DISOBEY those in authority over us is when we are COMMMANDED to DISOBEY God.

- Ex. Peter and John in Acts 4 are brought before the “rulers, elders, and scribes assembled in Jerusalem” and they were commanded o they called for them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. Acts 4:19-20 “Peter and John answered them, “Whether it’s right in the sight of God for us to listen to you rather than to God, you decide; 20 for we are unable to stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”
  - To stop preaching and teaching about Jesus would be to **disobey** God!
    - Therefore, Peter and John (and the rest of the believers) used their “**FREEDOM**” in **Christ** to preach about Christ.

Our **allegiance** is **first** to **God** and *then* to those in authority over us. **However**, we are **not** to use our “**Freedom**” in Christ as a “**Cover up for evil**”

**Christians are Called to Submit Because of Christ**

We are Christ’s representatives!

- We are **Christ's hands and feet**
- We are **Christ's mouthpiece**

We claim to be Christians—Christ-followers—therefore, we need to make sure our actions represent Christ.

The **greatest temptation** to **destroy** our **testimony** for Christ occurs when we are under **stress**!

- The greatest temptation to **“Lash out”** at others is when we are under stress!
- The greatest temptation to **revert back** to our old ways, before Christ, is when we have ungodly leaders.

WE need to do what Peter is commanding because of Christ!

Look at what else we are to do because of Christ's example:

**1 Peter 2:17** **“Honor Everyone”**:

- What a **testimony for Christ** to those outside the church when you have respect for other people—including those who are
  - Of a **different political** belief
  - Of a **different perspective**

- Of a **different intellectual level**
- Of a **different ethnicity**

I follow a lot of people from left-wing to right wing both political and theologically on Twitter.

- One thing I often see BOTH sides doing is mocking people due to immutable characteristics (e.g, color of skin, big nose, looks, etc).

**Immutable characteristics** are things **beyond** a person's control.

- Mocking someone's immutable characteristics is NOT "**honoring**" them.

I also see a lot of people mocking political and religious leaders they don't like

- *Admittedly, I've struggle with wanting to using "Labels" for political leaders I don't like. I've been **convicted** about that so I've determined to refrain from calling a political leader a derogatory name.*

Is it wrong to voice a **disagreement** with your leaders? No  
Is it wrong to **point out inconsistencies** or problems with their policies? No.

Is it wrong to **take a stand against leaders** who are do harm by their policies? NO.

Is it wrong to **refuse** to do something demanded by a leader that is contrary to God's Word? No.

We **can** and *should* do those things **but** without being *disrespectful*.

“Love the brothers and sisters.”

- What a **testimony for Christ** to those outside the church when Christians actually show love toward each other.
  - Even in our **small fellowship**, we have disagreements but in spite of our disagreements, we must “**Love one another.**”
  - We all have **different personality** types and, if we allow those **differences**, we can become **hateful** to each other, but we are called to “**Love one another.**”
- It is a **powerful testimony** of the power of Christ when we can come together and, in spite of our differences, we love each other!

Online Bible Study: Andy and I are defending our views

- Both of us have expressed our love for the other and are showing respect for each other despite our differences.

What does it look like to Love the brothers and sisters?

**1 Peter 2:1** “Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all slander.”

- Showing **respect** for each other
- **Bearing** each other’s burdens
- **Caring** for each other
- **Praying** for each other
- **Speaking** the truth to each other out of love
- **Encouraging** each other in our spiritual walk

“fear God”

- What a **testimony for Christ** to those outside the church when we respond to God with **awe and reverence**.
  - **Awe and reverence** is acted out by **obedience**.
    - You will not respect people until you reverence God!

If you cannot see yourself as a “**Slave of God**”, you will likely not follow His commands to “**Honor**” others!

“honor the king.”

- What a **testimony for Christ** to those outside the church when you show the respect that is due for our

government leaders-*even those with whom you have disagreements.*

- Even if you do not *like* the president, he is still “Your President”

## WE

WHY did Peter feel like he has to give these **commands** to believers?

- You and I know that there are a lot of **non-believers** who are **model citizens** solely out of **duty** for their country.

WHY did Peter feel like he has to give these **commands** to believers?

- Because they are **facing hostility** from the **government** and its leaders and when we are under pressure we have a tendency to “**lash out**” by
  - Determine what we will and will not do, by calling names, etc.

If there is a time when most Christians “**blow their testimonies**” it is in those moments of **distress**.

- It is one thing to display **excellent behavior** when things are going good; it is another thing to have excellent behavior when things are going bad.

I debated whether to tell this story, but I will. After I attended college for a year-and-a-half, I moved to Indianapolis to do some private music study. I lived in Indianapolis for a year. My teacher got me a job with a heating & Air Conditioning distributor. I did all the UPS shipments and checked in all the incoming goods.

Across the room from me was a guy named Doug. Doug was not a believer. There were several other guys who were not believers who regularly hung out in my area. I tried to do my best to live out my Christianity. We had a lot of discussions about Christianity. I took a lot of kidding. They were always trying to fix me up with someone or telling me about their latest adventures.

Profanity was the norm and I heard lots of it. Fortunately, I never had a problem with it. Whenever I would drop something or pinch my finger I would respond without using profanity. However, during that time, I did not have a home church and did not know many Christians in the area. Over time, I found myself starting to slip.

I will never forget the day when I was up on the fork lift stacking 50lbs cans of freon when one slipped and landed on my toe. Without thinking, I said a curse word under my breath. However, when I looked up, there was Doug laughing at me.

Suddenly, I realized that I had hurt my testimony in Doug's eyes. I am still pained today when I think about that moment of weakness.

I'll admit that it is hard to display excellent behavior when things go bad.

- The reason I blew it was because I was **not** firmly hooked into a church at the time—I was drifting from church to church.
  - I did not have other believers to lean on and receive support. **However, the main reason I blew it was because I had taken my eyes off of the ultimate example of Jesus Christ.**

Before the **break for Easter**, I spent **4 weeks** talking about HOW we do all these things!

- Remember, we have to give Christ control of **SELF!**
  - **SELF** wants to do the opposite of these things—*especially when under pressure.*

HOW we do these things?

- Admit that SELF doesn't WANT to do these things!
- Admit YOU need CHRIST to be in CONTROL
  - To allow **Christ to be in control** requires DAILY **"Dying to SELF"**

- To allow **Christ to be in control** requires **DAILY Humility** and **Submission** to God as a “**Slave to God**” —it is a CHOICE!
- Claiming your **IDENTITY** in Christ
  - Peter told us that part of our identity is we are “**SLAVES to GOD**”!
- Claiming the **POWER** of Christ
  - Through Christ, YOU have the POWER to say “**NO**” to **SELF’s** to **DISRESPECT** those in authority over us.
  - Through Christ, YOU have the POWER to say “**NO**” to the **temptation** to using our **freedom** in Christ as a way to **justify** evil.
  - Through Christ, YOU have the POWER to LOVE those different than us!

YOU

### PQ: Are you Submitting?

- Are you honoring the leaders God has placed over us?
- Are you honoring those different than you?
- Are you loving your fellow believers?

Is your reaction to others harming or exalting Christ?

Next week we are going to continue to look at relationships.

- The relationships we talked about here were long-distant or somewhat infrequent, but about what relating to our spouse or employer while under duress?
  - WHY and HOW do we submit to them?
  - What does submission look like in a marriage relationship or in a workplace situation