

THE CHRISTIAN CITIZEN

I Peter 2:13-17

**The separation of church and state does not mean that
Christians should not submit to civil government.**

I. THE CALL FOR CITIZEN SUBMISSION (13-14)

A. SUBMISSION DEMANDED (13a)

1. The Obligation: Submit yourselves
 - You must submit and keep on submitting
2. The Subject: Every human institution
 - a. It does not matter what form of human government is in place
 - b. Every institution is to be obeyed
 - 1) No exceptions
 - 2) It does not include only the ones you agree with >
 - See Christ's example in Matthew 17:24-27
 - 3) Being a "dumb" rule does not suspend it or allow you to dismiss it
 - 4) You can respectfully request an exemption - See Daniel 1:8-16
3. The Reason: For the Lord's sake
 - a. On account of the Lord
 - b. We submit for the Lord and not because of the leader
 - c. Submitting to human government can be considered an act of Christian service
 - d. We do not submit for comfort or convenience but by sacred conviction

B. SUBMISSION DETAILS (13b-14)

1. To Whom? (13b-14a)
 - Kings and governors
2. Why? (14b)
 - a. These people are sent by God to maintain order
 - b. In Romans 13:4 they are called God's ministers
 - c. Christians benefit from a peaceful and orderly society
 - That's why Paul tells us to pray for these leaders in I Tim. 2:2

C. SUBMISSION DENIED?

- What about civil disobedience?

1. Examples of civil disobedience

- a. Not killing Hebrew baby boys - Ex. 1:17 and Heb. 11:23
- b. Not obeying the king's worship commands in Dan. 3:13-18 and 6:10-24
- c. Not obeying the council's command to stop preaching in Acts 4:18-20 and 5:27-29

2. Consider this: You can disobey and still submit!

- a. You submit by accepting the consequences of your disobedience
- See Acts 5:40 and II Cor. 11:23-25
- b. You do not reject or resist authority or claim that they have no power over you ... you submit

3. So, are there exceptions to submission? No!

II. THE NATURE OF CITIZEN SUBMISSION (15-16)

A. GOD'S WILL (15)

1. This is God's will for you

- It is always God's will for you to do good - See Titus 3:1

2. Doing right silences foolish men

- a. Doing good gags the godless ones! - See Matt. 22:15-22
- b. We are called to respect what is right in the sight of all men - Romans 12:17-21

B. GOD'S WAY (16)

1. Act as free men

- As free you have the resources to comply ... you can do this

2. But not as though free to sin

- a. Some seek to use their liberty as a means for claiming the right to do wrong
- b. "A Christian uses his freedom as tool to build with and not a weapon to fight with."

[Warren Wiersbe, I Peter, p. 60]

3. Rather as free to serve

- a. We are servants of God
- b. We have a different master and message, but submission is still required

III. A SUMMARY OF CITIZEN SUBMISSION (17)

A. OVERRIDING PRINCIPLE: Honor all people

- Take up once and for all this attitude of respect

B. SPECIFIC APPLICATIONS

1. Love the brotherhood
2. Reverence God

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C. CONTEXTUAL EMPHASIS

- Honor the king

IV. SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF SUBMISSION

A. HUMAN TENDANCY

1. People often seek to establish pecking orders and conduct power plays so that they can move higher on the ladder of success
2. By nature, we resist the authority of others and seek to be an authority over others
3. We tend to sinfully strive for power

B. BIBLE TEACHING

1. Yielding: Giving up position
 - See Phil. 2:5-8
2. Serving: Giving up prestige
 - See Mark 10:42-45
3. Lowering: Giving up pride
 - See I Peter 5:5

CONCLUSION:

The separation of church and state is a national value

The submission to government's authority is a godly value

- Are you following God's instructions?
- Are you truly a Christian citizen?