

HONOR GOD, SUBMIT TO YOUR LEADERS

FEBRUARY 25, 2024

WORSHIP

We Praise You, Lord of
All Creation, Whom Shall
I Fear, King of Kings

WELCOME

Share one experience of
disobeying someone in
authority over you. What
were the consequences,
or the lessons learned
from that experience?

WORD

ROMANS 13:1-7

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God. ² Therefore whoever resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. ³ For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; ⁴ for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. ⁵ Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. ⁷ Render to all what is due them: tax to whom tax is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor.

Living for God is our best response to what God has done for us (**Romans 12:1-2**). One of the ways to honor God is to submit to leaders (**Romans 13:1**). To be "subject" (hupotasso) means "to be under" or to choose to submit to an authority that God has placed over us. The same word is found in **Ephesians 5:22-23**, **Ephesians 6:1-2**, and **1 Peter 2:18**. God calls us to submit to authorities He placed over us. This submission is not only for government officials. These authorities include parents, husbands, teachers, organizational leaders, government leaders, church leaders, etc.

Biblical submission is exemplified in being obedient (Joseph); being respectful (Moses, John the Baptist); making wise appeal (Daniel); being supportive (Naaman's slave girl, Paul); and being humble (David, Jesus).

But why would we submit to authorities when some of them are abusive, selfish, hurting people, lacking integrity, unreasonable, difficult, and irresponsible? Yet, God tells us to submit to these leaders.

If we are struggling with this today, the readers of Paul's letter also struggled. **Romans 13** was written by Paul in 57 AD when the leader was Emperor Nero. He was not a wicked emperor during that time, but he was on his way to becoming one. In 64 AD, he became known for the burning of Rome to rebuild it to his liking. He treated Christians badly. He hated, blamed, and persecuted Christians. Peter had the same message as Paul to Christians in **1 Peter 2:13** which was written around 64 AD.

Here are the reasons why we submit to our leaders:

I. SUBMISSION TO GOD (**Romans 13:1**)

Romans 13:1 says there is no authority except from God. God placed and established authorities. We submit to God when we submit to our authorities. God's commands to submit come with phrases "as to the Lord" (**Ephesians 5:22**) and "in the Lord" (**Ephesians 6:1**) because it's hard to submit to unreasonable leaders. Sometimes even when the leaders are not difficult, we do not like to submit because we want our own way.

Submission to God's appointed authorities is a sign of trust and humility before the Lord. If we really know God, we will be at peace in submitting to our authorities. God can change hearts (**Proverbs 21:1**). He will rule over all (**Isaiah 9:6**). He will bless (**Jeremiah 22:4**) or discipline (**Jeremiah 22:5**) leaders. God will judge wicked leaders in His time and according to His ways. Leave room for God's vengeance. Submission is not a sign of weakness. It is victory in God's economy.

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II. PROTECTION OF GOD (Romans 13:2)

God appoints leaders to protect us from evil and discipline those who are evil. If there is no authority, the world is going to be chaotic. Whoever resists authority is opposing God and will be punished (v.2). God calls us to submit because God still uses leaders to punish and discipline evildoers (1 Peter 2:13-14).

God usually protects through authorities and disciplines through authorities. Most of the protection and discipline we received is because of authorities. **Jeremiah 43:10** shows how God used Nebuchadnezzar to punish the Israelites because they were disobedient. God is calling the Israelites to be humble and submit. Those who did, like Daniel, were blessed.

III. GUIDANCE FROM GOD (Romans 13:3-4)

God appoints leaders to guide us to the right path. God wants leaders to help subordinates to do what God wants them to do. Even if the leader is not a believer, God can move the heart of the leader to guide us.

We should not be afraid of authorities if we are doing good. When we submit and do good, naturally we will receive praise from these authorities (v.3). God uses leaders to protect us from doing something wrong and to guide us to the right path so that God will bless and reward us (v.4). God guides us through authorities.

When we humble ourselves before our leaders, God lifts us up. We can never go wrong with humility.

IV. AMBASSADORS FOR GOD (Romans 13:5-7)

We submit to reflect Christlikeness to our leaders. Through our submission, they can see Jesus in our lives, and they will see the difference. It is necessary to be in subjection to leaders. It is God's design, and it is for our conscience (v.5). Practical examples how to submit to authorities were given in vv.6-7. Submission is the will of God. This will silence the ignorance of foolish people (1 Peter 2:15). As a bondservant of God, honor all people whether you like them or not (1 Peter 2:16-17).

The way we respond to our authorities can win not only them to Christ but also the people around us. Christianity spread all over the Roman empire and all over the world because people witnessed how Christians started loving one another and submitting to authorities.

The will of God for us is to submit to authorities and in doing so we prove that it is good, acceptable, and perfect (Romans 12:2). When we honor Christ by honoring His appointed leaders, God honors us.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

What makes it hard for you to submit to your God-given authorities?

2. Setting It Right.

How has God challenged your view of submission?

3. Living It Out.

What comfort and assurance can you claim as you take the challenge of submission?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for people who are struggling with submission to authorities and those who are in authority to have a personal relationship with God through Christ. Think of three (3) authorities in your life who are not believers that God has used to mold your character. Take time today to let them know of their impact in your life. Share about Jesus, our Ultimate Authority, who gives us our God-appointed leaders for different times and areas of

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God's provision for families deeply affected by inflation.
- War in Ukraine to end; loss of lives prevented; escalating tension in East Asian countries to stop.

III. Church

- That CCF Members would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCFE Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Retreat Center and Shelter

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE

ROMANS 13:1

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