

Led by the Spirit - Part 4

SUBMISSIVE

1Peter 2:13-17

(Please open your Bibles to 1Thessalonians, chapter four)

STIMULATE

** According to verse four of our study last week, if we are living out each day in a "**Sanctified**" manner, what will we know how to do?

We will "...know how to possess [our] own vessel in sanctification and honor..."
(1Thessalonians 4:4)

** We looked at three steps by which we could ensure our "**Sanctified**" lifestyle each day. Let's review those three steps:

Romans 6:10-13 - "...present yourselves to God and your members as instruments of righteousness to God."

Romans 12:2 - "...do not be conformed to this world"

Romans 13:13-14 - Avoid sin and "make no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

** As we walk each day being "**Led by the Spirit**", which of those three steps should we be applying to our lives?

Obviously, all three! If our goal is to honor the Lord and to allow His Holy Spirit to lead us through our day, we must be committed to doing our part in obeying His expressed will for our lives. cf. 1Corinthians 15:10

MOTIVATE

** In the first three parts of our series entitled "**Led by the Spirit**", we have learned that for Christians; the expressed will of God is for us to be **Saved**, **Spirit-filled** and **Sanctified**. All three of these expressions of God's will for our lives deal with the heart of the believer. As we look now to the forth expression of God's will, which ensures our hearts that we are indeed living each day "**Led by the Spirit**", we come to the first one which can actually be measured by the unsaved world around us. The Bible tells us that it is God's will for all Christians to be **Submissive**. How does our obedience to God's will in this regard effect our witness for His glory's sake? For the answer, please join me now in Peter's first epistle, chapter two and verses 13-17.

Read passage (V.13-17)

Opening Prayer

Submissive

INVESTIGATE

V.13 ** As a backdrop to our study for today, we need to be reminded of why Peter was writing to these Christians who were “scattered” throughout Asia Minor. In His compassion, Peter had four main reasons for writing this epistle, they were:

- 1) To encourage Christians in the trials they are presently encountering. (1Peter 1:6)
- 2) To prepare them for coming trials. (1Peter 4:1-2)
- 3) To give them the divine perspective of life. (1Peter 3:17 and 1Peter 4:19)
- 4) To equip them to endure suffering without wavering in their faith. (1Peter 4:12-16)

** With so much compassion and concern for their welfare, is Peter now asking them to submit here in verse 13?

No - this is a command, in the aorist imperative. Peter is calling for a sense of urgency and wants them to obey immediately!

hupotagete - or “be subject”, James Moulton, in his book “A Grammar of New Testament Greek”, states that the verb here has a middle force or voice and may be translated “submit yourselves” or “put yourselves in the attitude of submission to”.

** So who is being called upon to accomplish this command for a submissive attitude?

All Christians! We are to submit “ourselves”, this is a voluntary acceptance of a position of obedience to a God ordained superior authority.

** What is the motive given by Peter here in verse thirteen which should compel us to obey this command?

We obey...”for the Lord’s sake”

This is why being submissive has been called the defining characteristic of a Christian.

** To whom are we to be in submission according to Peter?

“...to every human institution...”

** Of course we should do this based simply upon Peter’s command, but can you think of another reason from Scripture for us to submit to the government?

Romans 13:1-2 - Let every person be in subjection to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Therefore he who resists authority has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves.

** Is this referring to organizations like labor unions or the Red Cross?

No - those are not governmental authorities, but merely voluntary organizations established by man.

** Well, if Peter was instructing Christians in his day to be in submission to the government; to whom was he asking them to submit?

Rome! At the time ruled by an emperor named Nero (from 54-68 A.D.).

** Before we go any further in our study of the call for Christians to be “**Led by the Spirit**” by living out a “**Submissive**” lifestyle; is there ever a time when we would not be in submission to the government?

Yes - Humbly and respectfully, we are to refuse to submit when man’s law contradicts with God’s authority expressed in His Word. cf. Acts 4:18-20 and Acts 5:27-29

** So the submission Peter is calling for would be applied under ordinary circumstances and calls Christians to actively support civil government in its promotion of law and order. Peter now gives some examples of who we are to be in submission, what is the first example?

“...to a king as the one in authority...”

Remember Romans 13:1 - “...there is no authority except from God, and those which exist are established by God!”

** Who was the king at this time?

As we have already said, Nero was the emperor of Rome and as such was viewed by all to be “the king”. cf. John 19:15 and Acts 17:5-7

V.14 ** What is the next example of whom we are to be in submission?

Governors who have been “sent” by the king. They represent his God given authority and it is from him that they have gained authority over the people.

** What is their two-fold function according to Peter?

As they represent the king (and by default, God Himself), they are to:

- 1) Bring about “punishment of evildoers”
- 2) Proclaim “praise of those who do right”

** Which of these preoccupations took up most of the governor’s time do you suppose?

Without question - punishment of evildoers!

The United States Department of Justice reports that in 1980 over 1,842,000 individuals were under “correctional supervision”; which means they were either on probation, in jail, in prison or out on parole. By 2001 that number had increased 357% to over 6,592,000 individuals.

Our God ordained governing authorities truly have their hands full, just dealing with the criminal element of the human race. We can be certain that the same was true of Peter’s time as well.

** If we feel that those same “governing authorities” are too busy to avenge our personal loss or injury, are we to take the law into our own hands?

No - Our calling is to submit to the authorities, not to replace them or to do their God given job. cf. Matthew 5:38-39, Romans 12:17-19 and 1Peter 2:23

V.15 ** According to this next verse what is the will of God?

“...by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

** What is the right thing Peter wishes for us to do?

Be “**Submissive**”! Remember verse 13.

** How does this “put to silence” their ignorance?

Be being totally submissive to governing authorities (obeying the law), we remove their opportunity to make any valid claims against our lifestyle or our beloved Savior.

Special note: The term used for put to “silence”, means to tie shut, or to muzzle, a vicious dog. To stop the mouth of the objector so he is unable to say anything further against God or the gospel of Jesus Christ. All see - Matthew 22:23-34

V.16 ** Back in 1Peter 2:16, how does Peter describe believers in the Lord Jesus Christ?

As “free men”!

** In what sense have we been made free?

We are free from sin. It no longer masters us.
cf. John 8:31-36, Galatians 5:1 and 5:13

** How are we not to use our freedom?

“...as a covering for evil...” We must not say that because Christ paid for my sin, I can do what ever I want. I do not have to obey man’s laws. cf. Romans 6:1-2

** How are we to use our new freedom in Christ?

“...use it as bondslaves of God”. (Romans 6:22)

** What is a “free bonds slave”?

As Christians we are voluntarily submissive to the right Master. Our relationship to God as “bondslaves” means we belong completely to Him and are bound to do His will with a joyful heart. It is not only our position but it is also our personal preference.

V.17 ** Peter tells us specifically what to do as God’s bondslaves which will silence foolish men. Let’s look at the four imperatives given by Peter and learn how to apply them to our “**Submissive**” lifestyles.

1) Honor all men - Funny question, who does that include?

All men!

** Why would the Lord want us to behave in a manner that would honor all men?

Our respecting the lives of others can open the door of their heart to hear the gospel. We need to respect those to whom we are giving the good news about Jesus Christ.

cf. 1Peter 3:15

** How do unsaved men and women feel about others?

They can only view others through their selfish hearts and as such, they do not truly care for them.

** How does God feel toward all men?

He loves them and wants them to be saved! cf. John 3:16 and 2Peter 3:9

** Alright then, who are we to be like?

God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ; which is why we are to “honor all men”.

2) Love the brotherhood - lit. “the brotherhood keep on loving.

** Can anyone remember another portion of Scripture which was dedicated to encouraging us to love the brethren?

1Peter 1:22 - “...fervently love one another...”

Romans 12:10 - “Be devoted to one another...”

Hebrews 13:1 - “Let love of the brethren continue.”

** What impact would the body of Christ have upon the unsaved world around us if we fulfilled this command?

John 13:34-35 - “By this men will know...”

3) Fear God - The commentator D.Edmond Hiebert compares this fear to Proverbs 1:7 and 8:13. It is an awesome, reverence and fear.

** Hiebert states the phrase “fear God” as, “God keep on revering”. What impact would the fear of God have on the believer’s walk?

A four-fold impact:

Philippians 2:12-13 - obey and workout our salvation

2Corinthians 5:11 - we persuade men regarding Christ

2Corinthians 7:1 - we are perfecting holiness

Ephesians 5:21 - we are “subject to one another”

4) Honor the king - Remember who the king is for the recipients of Peter’s letter, the emperor Nero.

** Are we still to honor the king, even if he (like Nero) hates Christians and was willing to kill them?

Yes - Our God is sovereign and has placed His authorities over us for His purpose. Ours is to trust and obey. cf. 1Timothy 2:1-2

These four imperatives then give us the environment in which we are to fulfill God’s expressed will for our lives by becoming more “**Submissive**”.

EXTRICATE

** Let's review the list Peter has given to us today, which his readers and we ourselves would be wise to carefully fulfill.

We are to:

- 1) submit to every human institution
- 2) act as freemen (not enslaved to sin)
- 3) be bondslaves of God (joyfully)
- 4) honor all men
- 5) love the brotherhood
- 6) fear God
- 7) honor the king

DELINEATE

** How is this passage applicable for us today?

- 1) We have governing authorities.
- 2) We too, live for the Lord's sake.
- 3) This is still the expressed will of God.
- 4) Men are still foolish.
- 5) We must obey the four imperatives of verse 17.

EVALUATE

** Understanding what the expressed will of God is and desiring to live each day being "**Led by the Spirit**", I must ask myself if there is an area of my life that is not in submission to the governing authorities which Christ has sovereignly placed over me.

ACTIVATE

** We have said before that obeying our gracious Lord will always come down to a decision on our part to submit to the authority of His Word in our lives. Let's pray and ask the Lord to show us if there are areas we need to improve on this next week as we walk with Him.

Having done that, may He help us to make decisions which will honor His glorious name.

Closing prayer