

Peter and His Epistles
Lesson # 10: The Question of Submission
1 Peter 2:13-3:13

I. Introduction

Look at 2:12 and consider the “noble life style” among the pagans

II. Submission in general

- A. The concept: “To have an overwhelming desire to give of yourself to the other person for their benefit – no matter what it costs you”
- B. “Hypotasso”: It means to place in order, to place in an orderly fashion. It is a military term meaning to subordinate oneself to another.

It means to subject oneself to the divinely willed order of society. “The thought is that a Christian is one who does not seek his own interests but rather assumes a “voluntary ordination of himself to others.” (Expositor’s Commentary, pg. 233)

- C. The reason for the submission: “For the Lord’s sake” (vs. 13)

III. Submission to the Government – I Peter 2:13-17 (Titus 3:1)

- A. Peter’s view of government is not different to that of Paul’s. In Romans 13:1, Paul asserts that all powers are ordained by God. Peter agrees, he is just focusing on the human aspect of that government. His appeal is not a legal command, but it is an appeal based on a “gospel motive”...submit because it is for the Lord’s sake.

Note too, that there is no special form of government advocated in the New Testament.

- B. The MOTIVE: We are “free”...but slaves unto the Lord. See I Cor. 6:20 and 7:23
Believers have no will of their own, but obey only the will of our Master, God.
- C. The INJUNCTION: Honor all! (The brotherhood, God and the King) (vs. 17)

IV. Submission for slaves - I Peter 2:18-25

- A. Peter handles the issue of slaves in a slightly different manner than Paul. Paul dealt with the slaves towards the end of his list in Eph 6, Peter chooses to deal with this class first. Peter also uses a different word for the slaves; literally he calls them “house slaves” or house servants.
- B. The servant was to live in fear...not of his master, but of the Lord (I Peter 1:17)
- C. The MOTIVE: Look to Jesus for your example (vs. 21-25). Look at Matt. 11:29, 26:67, 27:31-44. “He entrusted himself to him who judges justly”. This is in the imperfect tense, signifying that it was a continual activity. Consider Isa. 53.
- D. The INJUNCTION: Christian slaves were to serve and obey, even those masters who were “crooked”/perverse/harsh.

V. Submission for Wives-I Peter 3:1-6 (Eph. 5:22, Col. 3:18, I Tim. 2:9-15 and Titus 2:4-5)

- A. “In the same way”...for the purpose of maintaining order. It is God’s will that every class and every situation have order. Although the order for the family was definitely “patriarchal”, remember that women are “heirs” with men of the gift of eternal life (see vs. 7). This “submission” is not signifying value or worth; it is outlining an appropriate structure for the home.
- B. This “manner of life” is inward, not outward (1 Sam. 16:7)
- C. The INJUNCTION: It is evangelistic-a means to bring an unbelieving husband to Christ.

Example: The mother of Augustine...”She served her husband as her master and did all she could to win him for you, speaking to him of you by her conduct, by which you made her beautiful.”

- D. The MEANS: The “divinely intended manner of life” was INWARD not OUTWARD (Consider I Sam. 16:7). It is the development of an inner spirit, a spirit of meekness. (Consider the only time Christ ever describes Himself-Matt. 11:29).
 1. The examples from scripture (vs. 5-6) that made themselves spiritually “beautiful” as they submitted to their husbands.
 2. Holy women of the past:”kept adorning themselves...” and “continuing in subjection to their husbands...” An ongoing commitment.

3. Sarah: She is singled out of history to illustrate this truth (see Gen. 18:12).

VI. Submission for Husbands - I Peter 3:7 (Eph. 5:25-33, Col.3:19)

- A. The MOTIVE: The husband in the same way is to foster the spiritual life of the home. He is to maintain Godly order and love his wife in the same manner as Christ loved the church- SACRIFICIALLY.
- B. The INJUNCTION: Take into consideration the differences between men and women. He is to respect his wife, in spite of her physical weaknesses.
- C. The PURPOSE: Make sure your prayers are not hindered. Do not upset the order in the home. Insure that God is honored in every way.

VII. Submission for all - I Peter 3:8-15

Peter finishes his discussion of the duties of all Christians with some practical advice for the entire community. (He quotes Ps. 34:12-16.)

- A. He lists 5 virtues for Godly living:
1. Live in harmony (see Rom. 12:16, Phil. 1:27)
 2. Be sympathetic (see Rom. 12:15, I Cor. 12:26)
 3. Love as brothers (see I Thess. 4:9-10)
 4. Be compassionate (see Luke 10:33)
 5. Be humble (see Phil. 2:6)
- B. And then gives them a command for dealing with those who are hostile to them – do not repay evil with evil (see Matt. 5:43-48).

VIII. So what?

- A. Peter is setting a pattern for relating to the hostile pagan society the first century Christians found themselves in. Much like in our own society, Christians must guard their tongues and focus on a life filled with “goodness”. There is an order to life. Christ is the head and those in “authority” create a structure for living.
- B. The “bottom line” to this entire discussion is found in vs. 15: BUT IN YOUR HEARTS, SET APART CHRIST AS LORD, not yourself!

Discussion Questions:

1. Why do you think our society is so opposed to any form of “submission?” How does the Western mind set of individualism affect the biblical mind set?
2. To whom should you be in submission to? Be specific.
3. Is it hard or easy to submit? What conditions affect your ability to submit?