

1 Peter 2:13-17

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to the king as the supreme authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as those sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. ¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorance of foolish men.

¹⁶ Live in freedom, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. ¹⁷ Treat everyone with high regard: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Berean Study Bible

¹³ Submit to every human ordinance, for the Lord;
whether to the king as the supreme authority,
¹⁴ or to governors as those sent by him
to punish those who do wrong
and to praise those who do good.

¹⁵ Because, this is the will of God:
by doing good you silence the ignorance of foolish people.

¹⁶ Live in freedom,
Do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil,
but as God's slaves.

¹⁷ Honour everyone. Love the family of faith. Fear God. Honour the king.

My own translation

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The simple reason why there are stupid people. 1 Peter 2:13-17

"the ignorance of foolish people" 1 Peter 2:15b

What stupid people don't know. 2:15a "God's will"

God's will is you get saved. 2 Peter 3:9

God's will is you live holy. 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8

God's will is you say thanks. 1 Thessalonians 5:18

What stupid people don't do. 2:15b "doing good"

Smart people submit to authority. 13-14 "Submit..."

Smart people serve God in freedom. 16 "freedom... as God's slaves"

Smart people salute everyone in honour. 17 "honour everyone"

Living in a difficult place – with people. 1 Peter 2:13-17

Living with those above me. 2:13-14

Authority must be honoured. 13 “Submit to every human ordinance”

Evil must be punished. 14a “punish those who do wrong”

Good must be praised. 14b “praise those who do right”

Living with those below me. 2:15-16

I am to do good. 15 “this is the will of God... doing good”

I am not to take advantage. 16a “Do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil”

I am, first of all, God’s slave. 16b “as God’s slaves”

Living with those around me. 2:17

I am to be humble. 17 “honour... love... fear...”

I am to be generous. 17 “honour... love... fear...”

I am to be respectful. 17 “honour... love... fear...”

What smart people understand. 1 Peter 2:13-17

Smart people understand submission. 2:13

Submission is obedience, not subservience. 13 “submit to every...”

Submission is to primarily to God. 13 “for the Lord”

Smart people understand authority. 2:13-14

Authority must be legitimate. 13-14 “ordinance... king... governors...”

Authority must be balanced. 14 “to punish... to praise...”

Smart people understand God’s will. 2:15

God’s will is always beneficial. 15 “doing good... silence ignorance”

God’s will is always by active choice. 15 “doing...”

Smart people understand freedom. 2:16

Freedom always has limits. 16 “do not use your freedom as...”

Freedom always has purpose. 16 “as God’s slaves”

Smart people understand respect. 2:17

Everyone deserves respect. 17 “honour everyone”

Everyone gets different respect. 17 “honour... love... fear...”

What the world needs now. 1 Peter 2:13-17

"What the world needs now is love" 1965, lyrics by Hal David, music by Burt Bacharach.

The world needs me to submit. 2:13-15

I submit because the world needs order. 13-14 "human ordinance"

I submit because the world needs discipline. 14 "punish wrong"

I submit because the world needs help. 15 "doing good"

The world needs me to serve. 2:15-17

I serve because this is God's will. 15 "the will of God"

I serve because this is God's world. 16 "live in freedom"

I serve because I am God's slave. 16 "God's slave"

How to do God's will in a godless world. 1 Peter 2:13-17

"this is the will of God: by doing good..." 1 Peter 2:15

The command to do God's will. 2:13-14 (imperative voice)

The method of doing God's will. 13a "submit to"

The scope of doing God's will. 13a "every human ordinance"

The reason for doing God's will. 13a "for the Lord"

The consequences of God's will. 2:15

Consequences begin with action. 15 "by doing good"

Consequences do change actions. 15 "silence the ignorance"

Consequences may change attitudes. 15 "foolish people"

The companion of | compliment to | cooperation with God's will. 2:16-17

Live in freedom. 16a "Live in freedom"

Live in purity. 16b "do not use your freedom as..."

Live in humility. 17 "honour everyone..."

Smart people in a sea of ignorance. 1 Peter 2:13-17

How to cope with a government I didn't vote for. 2:13-14

One command. 13a "submit"

Many applications. 13a "every human ordinance"

Over-riding reason. 13a "for the Lord"

How to cope with people I don't want near me. 2:15-16

God's will keeps me active. 15b "doing good"

God's will keeps me attentive. 16a "not use your freedom"

God's will keeps me aware of myself. 16b "God's slave"

How to cope with all those other annoying people. 2:17

Be respectful of the image of God. 17a "Honour everyone"

Be devoted to the people of God. 17a "Love the brotherhood"

Be afraid of disappointing God. 17b "Fear God"

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To whom do I submit? 1 Peter 2:13-17

Submit to those in authority. Romans 13:1, 1 Peter 2:13-14

Submit to spiritual leaders. Hebrews 13:17

Submit to parents. Ephesians 6:1

Submit to the elderly. 1 Peter 5:5

Submit to spouse. Ephesians 5:22

Submit to one another. Ephesians 5:21

Submit to God. Hebrews 5:9, James 4:7

Commentary

Submit. 1 Peter 2:13

ὑποτάσσω [Strong's 5293]. A verb occurring 38 times in the New Testament, including 6 times in 1 Peter. It is a composite word, combining ὑπό [Strong's 5259] meaning 'under', plus τάσσω [Strong's 5021] meaning 'arrange in order'. Therefore, ὑποτάσσω means 'to place under, to rank below, to arrange beneath, set in appropriate order'.

This word is not related to διάκονος [Strong's 1249] servant; or δοῦλος [Strong's 1401] slave; or λειτουργός [Strong's 3011] public servant; or οἰκέτης [Strong's 3610] domestic servant.

The occurrences in this letter are: 1 Peter 2:13, 2:18, 3:1, 3:5, 3:22, 5:5.

Good. 1 Peter 2:14, 15

A word with 13 occurrences (including cognates) in 1 Peter, but not in 2 Peter

1 Peter 2:14, 2:15, 2:18, 2:20, 3:6, 3:10, 3:11, 3:13, 3:16, 3:16, 3:17, 3:21, 4:19

ἀγαθός [Strong's 18] 'good, intrinsically good, admirable, beautiful'; equivalent to 'fertile soil,' 'a fruitful tree'; "the widest and most colourless of all words with this meaning". An adjective occurring 101 times in the New Testament, including 7 times in 1 Peter. Those occurrences are, 1 Peter 2:18, 3:10, 3:11, 3:13, 3:16, and 3:21.

ἀγαθοποιέω [Strong's 15] a verb occurring 10 times in the New Testament, including 4 times (40% of all occurrences) in 1 Peter. A composite word from ἀγαθός [Strong's 18] 'good' plus ποιέω [Strong's 4160] 'make, do'. Hence 'do that which is good'. 1 Peter 2:15, 2:20, 3:17.

ἀγαθοποιΐα [Strong's 16] a noun occurring only once in the New Testament. From the verb, ἀγαθοποιέω [Strong's 15]. That one occurrence is, 1 Peter 4:19.

ἀγαθοποιός [Strong's 17] an adjective occurring only once in the New Testament. From the verb, ἀγαθοποιέω [Strong's 15]. That single occurrence is, 1 Peter 2:14.

Other possible titles

Religion and politics do mix!

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Vote with your values

Citizen's arrest

Take a stand by bending your knee

Politicians need prayer

The toughest task

Quotes and illustrations

To try to improve society is not worldliness, but love. To wash your hands of society is not love but worldliness. Sir Frederick Catherwood

It is a paradox of the Christian life that the more profoundly one is concerned about heaven, the more deeply one cares about God's will being done on Earth. J I Packer

God has spoken to man, and the Bible is his Word, given to us to make us wise unto salvation... Godliness means responding to God's revelation in trust and obedience, faith and worship, prayer and praise, submission and service. Life must be seen and lived in the light of God's Word. This, and nothing else, is true religion. J I Packer

True strength lies in submission which permits one to dedicate his life, through devotion, to something beyond himself. Henry Miller

Submission is not about authority and it is not obedience; it is all about relationships of love and respect. William Young

The essence of sin is arrogance; the essence of salvation is submission. Alan Redpath

Submission is the willingness to give up our right to ourselves, to freely surrender our insistence on having our own way all the time. Myles Munroe

We are all servants. The only question is whom we will serve. R C Sproul

God cannot be understood by logical reasoning but only by submission. Leo Tolstoy

Our submission defines our authority. Bradley Cooper

Some people may complicate it for you, but the formula is simple: Love God more than anything else. More than your ego. More than your money. More than your desires...More than your sleep at dawn. Love God more than anything else, and submission comes natural. Love God more than anything else, and all goodness will follow. Yasmin Mogahed

Obedience, submission, discipline, courage--these are among the characteristics which make a man. Samuel Smiles

Head knowledge is worthless, unless accompanied by submission of the will and right action. Bishop Fulton Sheen

The spirit of submission is choosing His way over ours, for His sake. K P Yohannan

Carry the cross patiently, and with perfect submission; and in the end it shall carry you. Thomas à Kempis

Submission to duty and God gives the highest energy. He, who has done the greatest work on earth, said that He came down from heaven, not to do His own will, but the will of Him who sent Him. Whoever allies himself with God is armed with all the forces of the invisible world. James Freeman Clarke

Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His Beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose - and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for that self-centeredness which is our original sin and the source of all actual sin. William Temple

From obedience and submission comes all our virtues, and all that sin is comes from self-opinion. Michel de Montaigne

God has great plans for you today... creative and unexpected means by which He will make you a saint. He needs only your joyful submission to His plan. Mark Hart

Anything less than abject submission has to have some attack in it. Frank Herbert

Take advice, but not orders. Only give yourself orders. Abraham Lincoln once said, 'Since I will be no one's slave, I will be no one's master.' Jim Rohn

One should, as a rule, respect public opinion only in so far as is necessary to avoid starvation and to keep out of prison, but anything that goes beyond this is voluntary submission to an unnecessary tyranny. Bertrand Russell

One thing that has helped me personally in the past was to stop interfering with the people around me and getting frustrated when I couldn't change them. Instead of intrusion and passivity, may I suggest submission? Some people make the mistake of confusing "submission" with "weakness", whereas it is anything but. Submission is a form of peaceful acceptance of the terms of the universe, including the things we are currently unable to change or comprehend. Elif Safak

Music and songs

As for me and my house
Give thanks to the Lord... Forever
Great South Land
He has shown all of you what is good
Highest place
Workers prayer
Your glorious cause... Let Your Kingdom come

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. When you were at school, were you one of the smart kids?
2. Is it ever possible to "silence the ignorance of foolish people" (v15)?
3. How do you decide to whom you should submit?
4. What is authority? Who has it? Should I ever reject authority? How does Acts 5:29, 40-42 help?
5. How do you measure freedom? How do you enjoy freedom?
6. Is it possible in the real world to "honour everyone" (v17)?
7. What is good about putting Psalm 92:1-2 into practice?