

The Christian and Civil Government

I. Introduction

- A. God is the original source of all authority. **John 19:11**
- B. As the inherent source of authority, He has the right to *delegate* authority as He deems appropriate. One area in which He has done this is in the realm of civil authority.

II. The Need for Submission

- A. Because God has delegated civil authority to governing bodies, it is fitting for Christians to *submit* to the governing civil authorities. **Romans 13:1, 6-7**

III. “For the Lord’s Sake”

- A. Since this is God’s desire, when one rebels against civil government, he or she is rebelling against *God*. **Romans 13:2**
- B. Though we may disagree with decisions of our civil rulers, we should still submit to them “for the Lord’s sake.” **1 Peter 2:13**
- C. Doing so can be a positive influence on those of the world. It is a fitting response to the ultimate freedom God allows us to have in Him. **1 Peter 2:14-16**

IV. The Exception

- A. The exception Scripture gives to any submission to a fallible person or group is that we must obey God rather than man when asked to do something that conflicts with God’s will. **Acts 5:29**
- B. This does not mean that we are only to submit to governing officials who are Christians (cf. **1 Pet. 3:1**). **1 Peter 2:17**
- C. It also doesn’t mean that we should only submit to laws we agree with. Rather, the key is whether we have the ability to submit to a given law without violating the Law of Christ.

V. The Need for Meekness

- A. Submissiveness toward anyone requires humility and *meekness*. It requires letting go of self-assertiveness and insistence that things always be done according to one’s own preference. Submission to civil government well exemplifies the principle that we must *steadfastly* hold to the truth, yet be *willing to yield* when it is appropriate. **Titus 3:1-2**

VI. The Need for Prayer

- A. Scripture also teaches the need to *pray* for civil authorities. Even if we disagree with many of their stances, we should still seek to help them in this way. **1 Timothy 2:1-2**

VII. “Fear Not”

- A. While it is good to pray that people be able to live righteous lives without facing government persecution, Scripture shows that civil authorities in some cases still choose to persecute the righteous. When Christians in the first century faced such persecution, they were not promised immediate removal of persecution, but they *were* told not to fear as long as they were right with God. **Revelation 2:10**
- B. Life on earth is never going to be a “utopia.” Yet, each of us can choose to do what is right. The one who makes this choice has cause for joy, peace, and contentment, regardless of temporal circumstances like the political climate one lives in. **Philippians 4:11-12** (cf. **1:12-14**)

VIII. Conclusion

- A. May we fulfill our responsibilities toward civil government, and trust God regardless of what civil authorities do or don’t do, remembering that *God’s* kingdom will stand forever.