

*CALLED
TO*

ACT

FOLLOWING JESUS IN TODAY'S CULTURE

*CULTURE FOLLOWING
JESUS IN
TODAY'S*

As followers of Jesus in today's culture, we
assume we have the options to:

- Pretend
- Ignore
- Hope

Instead, the Savior Called us to ACT

Followers of Jesus are Called to ACT as...

- Subjects of the King (Leviticus 19)
- Fishers of Men (Matthew 4)
- Makers of Disciples (Matthew 28)
- Citizens of Heaven (Philippians 3)

Last week...

Ambassadors for Christ

2 Corinthians 5

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new [καίνος *kainos*] creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who **reconciled** us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of **reconciliation**, namely, that God was in Christ **reconciling** the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of **reconciliation**.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be **reconciled** to God. He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. 2 Corinthians 5:18-21

The Assignment of Ambassadors for Christ

- Receive the gift of salvation by faith
- Go public with your spiritual story
- Speak as if Jesus is speaking
- Explain to others how they may receive the gift of reconciliation with God

Are you ready for the mission?

This week...

Persons Under Authority

Who is the ultimate Authority?

For the kingdom is the Lord's and He rules over the nations.

Psalm 22:28

It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men and knowledge to men of understanding.

Daniel 2:21

“By me kings reign, and rulers decree justice.”

Proverbs 8:15

Romans 13

Every person is to be in subjection to the governing authorities [ἐξουσία *exousia*]. For there is no authority [ἐξουσία *exousia*] except from God, and those which exist are established by God.

Therefore whoever resists authority [ἐξουσία *exousia*] has opposed the ordinance of God; and they who have opposed will receive condemnation upon themselves. Romans 13:1-2

Established... τάσσω [*tasso*] Greek verb meaning “to station, to place in a certain order, to arrange, to assign a place, to appoint”

“Authority” in this teaching series

And Jesus [the man who was dead and is now alive] came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth.”

Matthew 28:18

authority = Greek noun **ἐξουσία** *exousia* means
“official right or power, jurisdiction, influence”

For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority [ἐξουσία *exousia*]? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; 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. Romans 13:3-4

Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for rulers are servants of God, devoting themselves to this very thing. 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. Romans 13:5-7

ὑποτάσσω *hypotasso* Greek verb “put under, be subject unto, submit (one’s) self unto”

Did You Know That Jesus Paid Taxes?

When they came to Capernaum, those who collected the two-drachma tax came to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not pay the two-drachma tax?” He said, “Yes.” And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth collect customs or poll-tax, from their sons or from strangers?” When Peter said, “From strangers,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are exempt. However, so that we do not offend them, go to the sea and throw in a hook, and take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for you and Me.” Matthew 17:24-27

*According to custom every Jew 20 years old and above was required to pay a temple tax of half a shekel or two drachmas each year to help support the Temple (Exodus 30:13–15; Nehemiah 10:32).

Tyrian Shekel

125 BC - 66 AD



Temple Tax

Exodus 30:13



Money changers

John 2:15; Matthew 21:12



Peter's Fish

Matthew 17:27



Judas' 30 coins

Matthew 26:15



www.bible.ca/coins

Owe nothing to anyone except to love [ἀγάπη *agape*] one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, “You shall not commit adultery [7th Commandment], you shall not murder [6th Commandment], you shall not steal [8th Commandment], you shall not covet [10th Commandment],” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself [quoting Leviticus 19:18].” Love [ἀγάπη *agape*] does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love [ἀγάπη *agape*] is the fulfillment of the law. Romans 13:8-10

Apostle Paul reinforced the teaching of Jesus

One of them, a lawyer, asked Him [Jesus] a question, testing Him, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He said to him, ““You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind [quoting Deuteronomy 6:5].’ This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself [quoting Leviticus 19:18].’ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:35-40

“love your neighbor as yourself”

- Imagine how drastically American culture would change if the people of our nation began to implement this spiritual principle
- Imagine how life would be different in this country if governmental leaders and average citizens would love God first and then love each other as a result
- Imagine the impact on our society if Americans would understand how God’s love can transform and heal and save, as compared to the cheap, self-serving and manipulative types of “love” expressed by our culture

1 Peter 2

Submit [ὑποτάσσω *hypotasso*] yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority [ὑπερέχω *hyperecho*... to be above, be superior in rank], or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. 1 Peter 2:13-15

Submit ὑποτάσσω *hypotasso*

- Is self-directed
- Begins with humble and willing submission to God
- Then includes submission to human authorities

and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Ephesians 5:21

Act as free men, and do not use your freedom
as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves
[δοῦλος *doulos*] of God. Honor all people, love the
brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

1 Peter 2:16-17

Free... ἐλεύθερος *eleutheros* free, at liberty, one who is
not a slave

Servants, be submissive [ὑποτάσσω *hypotasso*] to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. For this finds favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. 1 Peter 2:18-20

For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, who committed no sin, nor was any deceit found in His mouth; and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously; and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. 1 Peter 2:21-25

**When is it right for a follower
of Jesus to disobey human
government?**

While the Roman rule of the 1st century is different than our democratic governance, we must affirm that elected officials have delegated authority that should be respected. Under God's good providence, by way of each citizen's vote, American governing leaders are put in place and given authority.

- Further, the 1st century Roman rule was anything but consistent in governance. In a dictatorial reign, with one man as emperor, the potential for corruption, inconsistency, and abuse was even greater than what we have in America today. Consider Nero's rule, which was likely the backdrop to Paul and Peter's teachings. Suffice it to say, it wasn't pretty. And yet both Paul and Peter's instruction about submitting to governing authorities isn't limited to "only when they are consistent."
- If we are waiting on consistency of rule before we will obey Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2, then we will have to wait for King Jesus to establish His Kingdom. Are we saying that the church should submit to the authorities in every situation? No. We are saying that, as long as the church's primary functions of gathering, preaching etc. aren't hindered, we should be very cautious to jump to civil disobedience. <https://www.faithchurch.net/blog/when-should-the-church-disobey-civil-authorities/>

Notice a few things about Romans 13:1-5...

- Christians are commanded to be subject to the government.
- The reason the Apostle Paul gives for the command is that God is the one ultimately responsible for establishing governments.
- Christians should obey the government, not simply because they are afraid of consequences, but for the sake of conscience.

Are there exceptions? You should disobey a governmental directive:

- If your government instructs you to kill someone (Exodus 1:15-21).
- If your government instructs you to engage in false worship (Daniel 3).
- If your government instructs you not to pray (Daniel 6).
- If your government instructs you to stop sharing the gospel (Acts 4:17-20; 5:27-29; 5:40-42).
- If a governmental leader instructs you to do something contrary to what God has already instructed in His Word, you not only have permission, but you have an obligation to disobey.
- Unless we have biblically-derived reasons for doing something contrary to what the government has ordered, we should seek to faithfully carry out whatever has been directed, even when doing so makes us uncomfortable or appears unreasonable.

What is happening in America today?

Religious Persecution

or

Bad Policies

What is happening in America today?

Bad policies enacted by incompetent leaders

How should followers of Jesus react?

- Say: “That is a foolish plan”
- Say: “That won’t work”
- Say: “That has never worked”

How should followers of Jesus NOT react?

- By incorrectly claiming biblical permission to disobey
- By arrogantly and selfishly choosing to disobey
- By motivating others to disobey

What should followers of Jesus do if politicians are making bad decisions and enacting foolish policies?

**What are the roles
of a citizen?**

- Pray
- Protect
- Serve
- Pay taxes
- Run for office
- Speak up
- Vote

Can Christians Participate in Civil Disobedience?

by Pastor John MacArthur

- We believe the Scripture teaches that we are to submit to government even if that government does not function entirely (or even primarily) by biblical principles (Romans 13:1-7). That principle is explicit in Peter's message to servants (1 Peter 2:18-19), which directly follows his more general comments regarding government (1 Peter 2:13-17). And that epistle teaches the same thing over and over again in varied ways: Submit even if you suffer, because in doing so you identify with Christ and are blessed (cf. 1 Peter 2:21-24; 3:1-2; 4:12-14; 5:9-10). There are times when we must obey God rather than men, but we believe that we should disobey the authorities only if they command us to do something directly against God's law (e.g. Acts 5:29).
- That is a fine distinction, but it is precisely where the issue lies. If we say that Christians are only required to obey their government when it is functioning by scriptural principles, we then nullify the teaching of Romans 13:1-7 and 1 Peter 2:13-17 in just about any age of history-especially the time during which those passages were written! The Roman government was as corrupt and godless as any in history, and yet Paul and Peter told Christians to "live in subjection," "submit to every ordinance," and "honor the king."
- So we believe that civil disobedience is justified only when government compels us to sin, or when there is no legal recourse for fighting injustice. The reason we draw the line there is simply because all the scriptural examples of civil disobedience fall squarely into those two situations. Any other kind of activism has no precedent in the Word of God and violates the spirit of Romans 13 and 1 Peter 2.

3 Facts We Learn About Government from Reading the Bible

by Heidi Charalambous

1. God establishes all authority in our lives, including our government.

- God's people have found themselves under the authority of God-fearing kings and idol-worshipping kings. They have been captured, enslaved, and exiled by conquering nations. Even in Jesus' day, believers worried their faith could be considered treason. And God was not surprised by any of it.
- Every leader of every nation all over the world is only in charge because God allows it to be so. Through every election and every regime change, God is still sovereign — literally, The King over all kings — and still at work. Even if we don't like the outcome of an election, we take comfort in knowing God can work through anyone, in any place and time, to bring change to the world (Psalm 46:10).

3 Facts We Learn About Government from Reading the Bible

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2. God calls us to obey the rules and regulations in the countries where we live.

Why does obeying the government matter so much to God? Because the best way to demonstrate our trust in God is to continue to obey the law, pay taxes, and do whatever we can to live at peace with other people (Romans 13:2-7). No matter who wins the election, our actions reflect whether we truly believe that person was established by the Lord and is carrying out His, sometimes mysterious, purposes. When we're responsible as citizens, we show ourselves as responsible before God.

3 Facts We Learn About Government from Reading the Bible

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3. God wants us to pray for those in authority over us.

Submitting to our governing authorities doesn't mean we have to agree with them. 1 Timothy 2:1-4 specifically calls us to pray for "all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness." Our leaders' decisions can affect our families, our churches, our workplaces, our cities, and our countries. So if we're worried about our leader's moral compass or new laws that would challenge our faith, the best thing we can do is pray and work lawfully within our democratic system to create change. We can pray for our leaders' salvation, for them to have wisdom, and be surrounded by good counsel. We can pray for peace and for justice in our communities and help accomplish it.

If you fear that the American Church will be weaker in the future than in the past...

And He (the Lord) has said to me (Apostle Paul), "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I am well content with weaknesses, with insults, with distresses, with persecutions, with difficulties, for Christ's sake; for when I am weak, then I am strong."

2 Corinthians 12:9-10

The greatest spiritual problem in America today is NOT government mandate but apathetic followers of Jesus

Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near. Hebrews 10:23-25

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