

John Owen: *“The vigor, and power, and comfort of our spiritual life depends on the mortification of the deeds of the flesh...
be killing sin or sin will be killing you.”*

- ~ Part 2: 2:13 - 5:14
- ~ Now: Being Beloved Warriors 2:13 – 2:21a

PREVIEW:

1. Christ’s Beloved Warriors **SUBMIT**
2. Christ’s Beloved Warriors **SERVE**
3. Christ’s Beloved Warriors **SUFFER**

BIG IDEA: Christians are called to
Submit, Serve, and Suffer...
like their loving and life-giving Savior.

- A. Some have never heard this...
- B. Some just do not believe this...
- C. Some think they can “balance” this...
- D. Some keep stumbling around this...
- E. Some are blessed by embracing this!

C. S. Lewis: "If you read history, you will find that the Christians who did the most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next... They all left their mark on earth, precisely because their minds were occupied with heaven. It is since Christians have largely ceased to think of the other world that they have become so ineffective..."

TEXT:

I. Beloved Warriors **SUBMIT** (vv.13-15)

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right/good.

¹⁵ For such is the will of God that by doing right/good you may silence the ignorance of foolish men.

A. **Submit** = a command to come under; by rank

John Piper: "Faith stands or falls on the truth that the future with God is more satisfying than the one promised by sin. Where this truth is embraced and God is cherished above all, the power of sin is broken. The power of sin is the power of deceit. Sin has power through promising a false future. In temptation sin comes to us and says: "The future with God on his narrow way is hard and unhappy, but the way I promise is pleasant and satisfying." The power of sin is in the power of this lie."

B. **Submit yourselves...**

a. Voluntarily

b. **Victoriously...** "you" are the beloved!

C. **Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake...**

- a. Motivation
- b. Methodology

***** KEY:** *Submit only to the degree that you remain faithfully obedient to the foundational and overarching Word, will, and ways of God!*

D. **Submit... to EVERY human institution...**

- a. **Whether to a king, as one in authority**
- b. **OR to governors**
 - i. **As sent by the king**
 - ii. **Sent... for the punishment of evildoers**
 - iii. **As sent... to praise those who do right.**

~ EVERY = EVERY! (*gov, work, Church, family...*)

~ See God's sovereignty and authority...

~ Now trust God's providence and power...

***** Illustration:** *we are to submit to earthly authorities in the same way that our children are to submit to school teachers and administrators... ONLY to the extent that they are not being asked or told to defy their God, their parents, or the laws of the land.*

We submit up to the edge of sin & no further!

- E. *Such submitting is the will of God*
a. *God's will is that you submit and do right*
b. *For your righteous witness can impact others*

Righteous witnesses
silence foolish ignorance!

Don't miss this before we move on...

It is God's missional WILL that His beloved warriors righteously SUBMIT to human authorities AND doing good works!
(cf. Matthew 5:16)

II. Beloved Warriors **SERVE** (vv.16-18)

¹⁶ *Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but use it as bondslaves of God.*

¹⁷ *Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.* ¹⁸ *Servants, be submissive/submit to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable.*

- A. Beloved Warriors are FREE! (John 8:32 & 36)
- B. Beloved Warriors serve with integrity & honor!
- C. Beloved Warriors do NOT cover up evil...
- D. Beloved Warriors use His freedom as His slaves
- E. Beloved Warriors serve God by, in part:
 - a. Honoring ALL people (rough & royalty)
 - b. Loving (truly loving) the brotherhood
 - c. Fearing God
 - d. See the inclusio SANDWICH here:
 - i. Outer: ***Honor all people***
 - ii. Middle: ***LOVE the brotherhood***
 - iii. Middle: ***FEAR Almighty God***
 - iv. Outer: ***Honor the king***
 - e. See the ***hierarchy of Passions & Positions!***

Bill Farley: "Those who understand the cross increasingly see their sin as God does, and therefore begin to *feel* about sin as does God. We begin to mourn for and hate it. In other words, at the cross God becomes larger and we become smaller. This separation is at the heart of the fear of God. This "fear" opens God's wisdom to us because only in light of God's immensity can we see the importance of living for the right end, his glory. And only in the light of our smallness can we feel overawed by the means he used to save us, his cross."

- f. BEing submissive to ALL those above you:
 - i. Be biblically submissive in ALL respects
 - ii. ***Submit to the good and gentle***
 - iii. ***BUT also submit to the unreasonable.***

Martin Luther: "A Christian man is the most free lord of all, and subject to none; a Christian man is the most dutiful servant of all, and subject to everyone."

T/S: If you don't serve, you won't suffer!

- JDP

Serving turns into suffering when it requires a sacrifice and painful price... Similarly, suffering becomes serving when a Christlike heart purposely pays that heightened price.

- JDP

Remember: [Luke 14:25-34](#)

Jesus warned want-to-be warriors to Count the cost!

JESUS on Suffering:

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------------------------|
| i. Matthew 5:11 | <i>"blessed persecuted!"</i> |
| ii. Matthew 10:22 | <i>"you'll be hated..."</i> |
| iii. Matthew 10:39 | <i>"lose your life... find it!"</i> |
| iv. Matthew 19:29 | <i>"100X ROI for sacrifice"</i> |
| v. Revelation 21:8 | <i>"no cowards in heaven"</i> |

III. Beloved Warriors **SUFFER** (vv.19-21a)

Suffer defined: *to feel, experience, and/or bear pain.*

¹⁹ For this finds favor/is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. ²⁰ 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.

D. A. Carson: "Some Christians want enough of Christ to be identified with him but not enough to be seriously inconvenienced (or SUFFER); they genuinely cling to basic Christian orthodoxy but do not want to engage in serious Bible study, (sacrifice, service, or suffering); they value moral probity (uprightness/integrity), especially of the public sort, but (they) do not engage in war against inner corruptions; they fret over the quality of the preacher's sermon but do not worry much over the quality of their own prayer life. Such Christians are content with mediocrity."

Suffering while being mindful of God maintains a righteous attitude, even when dealing with the wrong actions of others.

Suffering while being mindful of God includes **standing firm, bold, and courageous**, “no matter what!” – especially when suffering unjustly.

People are only willing to suffer when their commitment-to and passion-for the sacrificial serving of Christ and others outweighs their self-saturation and selfish-obsession with self-preservation and self-advancement.

- JDP

There is **no credit** given for enduring righteous discipline when it comes in response to one’s own **wrong and sinful behavior!**

Conversely, God’s gracious credit does come to those who endure and patiently persevere in Christ-likeness while suffering for righteousness’ sake.

1 Peter’s theme: see 3:14; 3:18; 4:16 & 5:10).

1 Peter 3:14

But even if you should suffer for righteousness’ sake, you will be blessed. Have no fear of them, nor be troubled,

1 Peter 3:18

For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that He might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh but made alive in the spirit,

1 Peter 4:16

Yet if anyone suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but let him glorify God in that name.

1 Peter 5:10

And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you.

Martyn Lloyd-Jones: "The One who has done the greatest thing of all for you, must be concerned about you in everything, and though the clouds are thick and you cannot see His face, you know He is there. 'Behind a frowning providence He hides a smiling face.' Now hold on to that. You say that you do not see His smile. I agree that these earth born clouds prevent my seeing Him, but He is there and He will never allow anything finally harmful to take place. Nothing can happen to you but what He allows, I do not care what it may be, some great disappointment, perhaps, or it may be an illness, it may be a tragedy of some sort, I do not know what it is, but you can be certain of this, that God permits that thing to happen to you because it is ultimately for your good. '*For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.*' (Hebrews 12:11)."

T/S: **How do you feel about truth in advertising?**
 How were you invited into Christianity?
 How biblically were you evangelized?

Sheep suffer in their war with wolves! – JDP

CLOSE:

²¹ For you have been called for this purpose

2 Timothy 1:8-14

⁸Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord or of me His prisoner, but **join with me in suffering for the gospel according to the power of God, ⁹who has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace which was granted us in Christ Jesus from all eternity, ¹⁰but now has been revealed by the appearing of our Savior Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel, ¹¹for which I was appointed a preacher and an apostle and a teacher. ¹²For this reason I also suffer these things, but I am not ashamed; for I know whom I have believed and I am convinced that He is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him until that day. ¹³Retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus. ¹⁴Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, **the treasure which has been entrusted to you.****

2 Timothy 3:12

Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted,

2 Corinthians 12:10

For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

REVIEW:

A. Beloved Warriors SUBMIT

- a. Humble
- b. Helpful
- c. Holy

B. Beloved Warriors SERVE

- a. Sacrifice
- b. Speak-up/out
- c. Stand firm!

C. Beloved Warriors SUFFER

- a. FOR Christ
- b. PER Christ
- c. LIKE Christ

Are you REALLY ready to sacrifice, submit, serve, and SUFFER... for, per, & like Christ?

VIDEO: *Hacksaw Ridge / Desmond Doss*

Did you hear...

1. "I have to enlist! I can't stay here while they all go out to fight for me."
2. "You're a conscientious objector who joined the army?"
3. "If Doss throws God at you... you throw hell right at him!"
4. "I want him/Doss GONE!"
5. "Why are you/Doss still here?"
6. "You/Doss could be sent to prison..."
7. "I'm/Doss being treated like a criminal..."
8. "Why don't you/Doss just meet them half way?"
9. "For God's sake Doss, just stop this nonsense and quit!"
10. "I don't know how I would live with myself if I don't stay true to what I believe."
11. "I fell in love with you/Doss BECAUSE you were not like anyone else... and you did not try to be like anyone else."
12. "Do not think for one moment (Doss) that you will disappoint me (for not compromising)."
13. "It is not right that other men should fight and die, while I would just be sitting there, safe at home – I NEED to SERVE!"
14. "I will love you... NO MATTER WHAT!"
15. "When everyone else is going to be taking life, I am going to be saving lives."
16. "(Doss) You are free to run into the hell-fire of battle without a single (worldly) weapon to protect you..."
17. "In peace sons bury their fathers... In war, fathers bury their sons."
18. "I'm scared. I'm scared!"
19. "Only 32 (less than 1/3) came down..."
20. "There's something you GOT TO SEE!"
21. "All I saw was a skinny kid. I didn't know who (Whose) you were."
22. "I hope one day you can forgive me."
23. "I believe SO MUCH in how much YOU believe."
24. "Please LORD, help me get one more!"
25. "Help me get one more." (3X)

To those who are categorically unwilling to sacrifice, submit, serve and suffer here... **you will not know** the celestial celebration of heaven.

Beloved warriors... always remember **Romans 8:28**

David Powlison: "We are meant to long supremely for the Lord himself, for the Giver, not his gifts. The absence of blessings - rejection, vanity, reviling, illness, poverty, (suffering) - often serve as the crucible in which we learn to love God for who he is. In our idolatry we make gifts out to be supreme goods, and make the Giver into the errand boy of our desires."

There is no greater test of one's love than their willingness to suffer for that love...

In other words, the height of one's love is defined and measured by the depths to which they are willing to go in suffering for their love.

Now... take another look at the cross of Christ!

- JDP

Count the cost!

- Jesus The Christ

Let's PRAY

WORSHIP: *No Turning Back! & Where Are The Christians?*

STUDY NOTES:

1 Peter 2:13-25 (NASB)

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, ¹⁴ or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. ¹⁵ For such is the will of God that by doing right you may silence the ignorance of foolish men. ¹⁶ Act as free men, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bondslaves of God. ¹⁷ Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

¹⁸ Servants, be submissive to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and gentle, but also to those who are unreasonable. ¹⁹ For this *finds* favor, if for the sake of conscience toward God a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. ²⁰ 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.

Christ Is Our Example

²¹ 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, ²² WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH; ²³ 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; ²⁴ and He Himself bore

our sins in His body on the ^bcross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.
25 For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls¹

◀ 5293. hupotassó ▶

Strong's Concordance

hupotassó: to place or rank under, to subject, mid. to obey

Original Word: ὑποτάσσω

Part of Speech: Verb

Transliteration: hupotassó

Phonetic Spelling: (hoop-ot-as'-so)

Definition: to place or rank under, to subject, mid. to obey

Usage: I place under, subject to; mid, pass: I submit, put myself into subjection.

HELPS Word-studies

5293 *hypotássō* (from [5259](#) /*hypó*, "under" and [5021](#) /*tássō*, "arrange") – properly, "under God's arrangement," i.e. *submitting to the Lord* (His plan).

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

from [hupo](#) and [tassó](#)

Definition

to place or rank under, to subject, mid. to obey

NASB Translation

put in subjection (5), subject (16), subjected (7), subjecting (1), subjection (4), submissive (3), submit (2).

Thayer's Greek Lexicon

STRONGS NT 5293: ὑποτάσσω

ὑποτάσσω: 1 aorist ὑπεταξα; passive, perfect ὑποτεταγμαι; 2 aorist ὑπεταγην; 2 future ὑποταγήσομαι; present middle ὑποτάσσομαι; **to arrange under, to subordinate;**

¹ [New American Standard Bible, 1995 Edition: Paragraph Version](#) (La Habra, CA: The Lockman Foundation, 1995), 1 Pe 2:13–25.

to subject, put in subjection: [τίνι τί](#) or [τινα](#), [1 Corinthians 15:27](#){c}; [Hebrews 2:5](#); [Philippians 3:21](#); passive, [Romans 8:20](#) (see [διά](#) B. II. 1 b.): [1 Corinthians 15:27](#){b} and following; [1 Peter 3:22](#); [τινα](#) or [τί ὑπό τούς πόδας τίνος](#), [1 Corinthians 15:27](#){a}; [Ephesians 1:22](#); [ὑποκάτω τῶν ποδῶν τίνος](#), [Hebrews 2:8](#); middle **to subject oneself, to obey**; to submit to one's control; to yield to one's admonition or advice: absolutely, [Romans 13:5](#); [1 Corinthians 14:34](#) (cf. Buttmann, § 151, 30); [τινα](#), [Luke 2:51](#); [Luke 10:17, 20](#); [Romans 8:7](#); [Romans 13:1](#); [1 Corinthians 14:32](#); [1 Corinthians 16:16](#); [Ephesians 5:21f](#) (but in [Ephesians 5:22](#), G T WH text omit; Tr marginal reading brackets [ὑποτάσσεσθε](#)); [Ephesians 5:24](#); [Colossians 3:18](#); [Titus 2:5, 9](#); [Titus 3:1](#); [1 Peter 2:18](#); [1 Peter 3:1, 5](#); [1 Peter 5:5](#); 2 aorist passive with a middle force, **to obey** (R. V. **subject oneself**, Buttmann, 52 (46)), [Romans 10:3](#); imperative **obey, be subject**: [James 4:7](#); [1 Peter 2:13](#); [1 Peter 5:5](#); 2 future passive [Hebrews 12:9](#). (The Sept.; (Aristotle), Polybius, Plutarch, Arrian, Herodian)

Strong's Exhaustive Concordance

to subject, put in subjection

From [hupo](#) and [tasso](#); to subordinate; reflexively, to obey -- be under obedience (obedient), put under, subdue unto, (be, make) subject (to, unto), be (put) in subjection (to, under), submit self unto.

see GREEK [hupo](#)

see GREEK [tasso](#)

◀ 3956. pas ▶

Strong's Concordance

pas: all, every

Original Word: [πᾶς](#), [πᾶσα](#), [πᾶν](#)

Part of Speech: Adjective

Transliteration: pas

Phonetic Spelling: (pas)

Definition: all, every

Usage: all, the whole, every kind of.

HELPS Word-studies

3956 *pás* – each, every; each "part(s) of a totality" (*L & N*, 1, 59.24).

[3956](#) /*pás* ("each, every") means "all" in the sense of "each (every) part that applies." The emphasis of the total picture then is on "one piece at a time." [365](#) (*ananeóō*) then focuses on the *part(s)* making up the whole – viewing the whole *in terms of the individual parts*.

[When [3956](#) (*pás*) modifies a word with the definite article it has "*extensive-intensive*" force – and is straightforward *intensive* when the Greek definite article is lacking.]

NAS Exhaustive Concordance

Word Origin

a prim. word

Definition

all, every

NASB Translation

all (731), all the things (7), all...things (1), all kinds (1), all men (14), all people (4), all respects (3), all things (126), all* (1), always* (3), any (16), any at all (1), anyone (3), anything (3), anything* (1), continually* (6), entire (4), every (128), every form (1), every kind (9), every respect (1), every way (2), everyone (71), everyone's (1), everyone* (1), everything (45), forever* (1), full (2), great (2), no* (15), none* (1), nothing (1), nothing* (1), one (4), perfectly (1), quite (1), whatever (3), whatever* (1), whoever (7), whole (18).

New American Standard Commentary: (Schreiner)

2:13 The central theme of this section is found in the first word, "submit" (*hypotagēte*).

The idea that believers should be subject to governing authorities is a standard part of New Testament ethical exhortations (cf. [Rom 13:1, 5](#); [Titus 3:1](#)).

The parallels to Rom 13:1–7 have led some scholars to see literary dependence, but the differences are as great as the similarities. For instance, Peter did not explicitly say authorities are ordained by God, and nothing is said about paying taxes, both of which are prominent themes in Romans 13. The similarities probably are better explained in terms of common Christian tradition.

Some scholars define “submit” to refer to “deference” or “respect” rather than obedience.

It is lexically difficult, however, to wash the concept of obedience out of “submit.”³⁸

Indeed, **in 1 Pet 3:5–6 Peter glided from the verb “submit” in v. 5 to “obey” in v. 6 without any hint of discomfort.**

The idea of willing obedience (or failure to submit) is evident in a number of texts: Jesus’ submission to his parents ([Luke 2:51](#)), refusal to submit to God’s law ([Rom 8:7](#)), refusal to submit to God’s righteousness, the church’s submission to Christ ([Eph 5:24](#)), the need to be subject to God ([Jas 4:7](#)).

and the submission of younger ones to elders (1 Pet 5:5). Other examples could be adduced, but the main point is clear.

Michaels and Achtemeier criticize the translation “submit” by implying that it involves “total submission” and “unquestioning obedience to whatever anyone, including governing authorities, may command.”⁴⁰ Their interpretations confuse context with lexicography.

Whether or not submission involves “unquestioning obedience” cannot be determined by the term but by context. Translations like “defer” or “be considerate of” are simply too weak to convey the meaning of the word.

The injunction to submit does not rule out exceptions, for God is the ultimate authority.

They illegitimately use this point, however, to diminish the force of the command. **Peter gave a command that represents a general truth, that is, he specified what Christians should do in most situations when confronting governing authorities.**

Believers should be inclined to obey and submit to rulers. We will see, however, that the authority of rulers is not absolute. They do not infringe upon God's lordship, and hence they should be disobeyed if they command Christians to contravene God's will.

The injunction to submit is not to "every authority instituted among men" (NIV) or "every human institution" (RSV, NRSV, NASB) but "to every human creature" (*pasē anthrōpinē ktisei*). The word "creature" refers to human beings or creation (Mark 16:15; Rom 1:25; Col 1:23; cf. also *Jdt* 16:14; *Tob* 8:5, 15). No basis exists for defining it as "human institution." Some commentators therefore conclude that Peter exhorted believers to submit to every human being, using this argument as well to modify the meaning of the verb "submit."⁴³ The interpretation offered fails to account for the context in which the command is given.

Peter immediately defined "every authority" with the phrases "whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors" (vv. 13–14).

When Peter gave the exhortation, he reflected only upon governing authorities, not every single person. Yet we must also explain the reason why these authorities are called human creatures. The reason is not hard to seek. The emperor cult was popular in Asia Minor, and Christians doubtless felt social pressure to participate. Peter reminded his readers at the outset that rulers are merely creatures, created by God and existing under his lordship. A fine balance is maintained, however, in that believers still have a responsibility to submit to these authorities.

Their submission, however, is not obsequious or mindless. **Believers are to submit “for the Lord’s sake” (*dia ton kyrion*), which is likely a reference to Jesus Christ.**

They obey the injunctions of governing authorities ultimately because of their reverence for and submission to the Lord. We have an implication here that the ruling powers should be resisted if commands were issued that violated the Lord’s will.

It is impossible to imagine that one would obey commands that contravened God’s dictates *“for the Lord’s sake.”*

Seeing an allusion to the emperor cult is justified since the “king” (*basileus*) who has authority (*hyperechonti*) is almost surely a reference to the emperor (cf. John 19:15; Acts 17:7). This interpretation is reflected in the NRSV, “For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme.” If another king is intended, whether David, Herod, or someone else, they are typically named or context specifies that the king of the Jews or Messiah is in mind.

2:14 When Peter said “every authority” (v. 13), he meant both the emperor and governing authorities under the emperor. The word “governors” (*hēgomosin*) is not intended to be specific since it

can include procurators, proconsuls, and officials who collect revenues.

Believers should submit not only to the highest authority (the emperor) but to all those who are in authority.

When Peter spoke of governors as “sent by him,” it is tempting to read this in light of Rom 13:1–7, where it is clear that God ordains ruling authorities. Such an interpretation is unlikely here since the nearest and hence natural antecedent is the word “king,” representing the emperor.⁵⁰ **Governors, in other words, are commissioned by and under the authority of the emperor and are to be obeyed as his representatives.**

The purpose of ruling authorities is then explained: the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do what is right.

Doing right here means that Christians behave as good citizens, that they do what is honorable in the world’s eyes.⁵²

Peter hardly intended to say that rulers always fulfill such a purpose. He was quite aware from the Old Testament that rulers may resist God and his will (e.g., Pharaoh and Nebuchadnezzar). The persecution of believers indicates that rulers may be involved unjustly in oppressing believers (cf. 3:14, 16; 4:14, 16). Furthermore, Peter and early Christians could hardly forget that Christ was unjustly condemned under Pontius Pilate or that James was put to death by Herod Agrippa (Acts 12:2).

Even the most oppressive governments, however, hold evil in check to some extent, preventing society from collapsing into complete anarchy. The ideas here are quite similar to Rom 13:3–4, though Peter did not identify the ruling authority as “God’s servant.”

Modern people are not familiar with governments praising those who do what is right. The Romans, however, would erect statues, grant privileges, or commend in other ways those who helped the community. Still, evidence is lacking that Peter encouraged wealthy readers to engage in public benefaction. He addressed all believers and did not particularly focus on the well-to-do.⁵⁴

All believers should do what is right and strengthen the social fabric.

Rulers help maintain order in society by commending good citizens.

2:15 Peter now explains why believers should submit, arguing that they should do so ***“because it is God’s will.”***

The word “thus” (*houtōs*) is omitted by the NIV, but it is crucial for unpacking the meaning of the verse. Literally the Greek reads, ***“Thus is the will of God.”***

The question that must be answered is whether “thus” is retrospective or prospective. Most English versions take it as prospective, and in this case we could translate the verse, “Because the will of God is that you should silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.” If “thus” is retrospective, the verse should be translated, including the main verb of v. 13, “Submit because thus [the command to submit] is the will of God, with the result that you will silence the ignorance of foolish people by doing good.” Achtemeier rightly argues that the latter option is correct. It fits with the word *hoti*, meaning “because.” The word “thus” (*houtōs*) is typically retrospective (cf. 1 Pet 3:5).

By submitting to government, Christians demonstrate that they are good citizens, not anarchists. Hence, they extinguish the criticisms of those who are ignorant and revile them.

Such ignorance is not innocent but culpable,
rooted in the foolishness of unbelievers.

To refer to unbelievers as foolish is no denigration of their intellectual capacities. Peter hearkened back to Proverbs, where the foolish are morally debased. They are foolish because they do not fear the Lord and walk in his ways (Prov 1:7), and hence their ignorance is culpable. Such people will be silenced by the good deeds of Christians.

The participle “*doing good*”
(*agathopoiontes*) is instrumental,
emphasizing how unbelievers are silenced.

We should note again that there is no conception of believers doing whatever a government enjoins. Indeed, Peter used the same verb (*agathopoieō*) in acknowledging that believers may suffer while practicing what is right (1 Pet 3:17). He did not envision society and governmental structures as always siding with believers or inevitably commending them for their good behavior. His point was that the good behavior of

Christians will minimize slanderous attacks on

believers, revealing that charges of moral debilitation have no basis.

Opponents will be discovered to be animated by hatred, lacking any objective ground for their criticism of believers.

Perhaps there is also the hint here that some would see the good conduct of believers and glorify God by believing in the gospel (cf. 1 Pet 2:12), though this point is not made explicitly here.

2:16 Peter was not merely concerned about the outward actions of believers but also the motivations that inform their submission.

Three phrases explain the standpoint from which Christians should operate in subordinating themselves to governing authorities. In each case the implied verb is “submit” from v. 13 rather than “live” as the NIV renders it.⁵⁸ The Greek text lacks a verb, and hence as interpreters it must be supplied.

A. First, they are to submit “as free people” (NRSV, *eleutheroi*). Believers have been ransomed by

Christ's blood (1:18–19) and are no longer subject to the futile lifestyle characteristic of this world. Hence, the submission of believers is never servile or rendered out of weakness.

B. Second, as free people they are not to use their freedom as an excuse to indulge in evil. Genuine freedom liberates believers to do what is good. Those who use freedom as license for evil reveal that they are not truly free since a life of wickedness is the very definition of slavery. Christians should never respond to the dictates of government slavishly, but they should obey out of strength and because of their freedom (cf. Matt 17:24–27).

C. Third, believers should submit “as servants [doulou] of God.” The word “servants” also could be rendered “slaves.” **Believers do not enjoy unrestricted freedom.** Their freedom is exercised under God's authority. In fact,

*Genuine freedom is
experienced only by those
who are God's slaves.*

One is either a slave of
sin or a slave of God

(cf. Rom 6:15–23).

True liberty, according to the New Testament, means that there is freedom to do what is right.

Hence, **only those who are slaves of God are genuinely free.**

Believers are called upon to live under God's lordship, obeying the government as God's servants.

When we consider the freedom of believers and their subservience, ultimately, to God alone, it is evident that the government does not enjoy carte-blanche authority. Peter did not envision Christians submitting to government regardless of the circumstances, even if ruling authorities prescribe what is evil. The ultimate loyalty of Christians is to God, not Caesar. They are liberated from fearing Caesar, and hence they do not feel compelled to do whatever he says. Believers are God's servants first, and thereby they have a criterion by which to assess the dictates of government. Ordinarily believers will submit to the commands of ruling authorities, for in the normal course of life governments punish evil behavior and reward good conduct. The inclination and instinct of believers, then, will be submission to government. Peter wanted to avoid anarchy and a kind of enthusiasm that rejects any human structures. Nevertheless, if governments prescribe what is evil or demand that believers refuse to worship God, then believers as slaves of God must refuse to obey.

2:17 The section concludes with four commands.

Two of the commands remind us of Prov 24:21, "Fear the Lord and the king," though Peter reserved fear for God alone.

The command to "**honor**" (*timaō*) begins and concludes the list, but this is obscured by the NIV since in the first instance they translate the verb "show proper respect" and in the last case "honor." The NRSV

more closely reflects the Greek here, **“Honor everyone.... Honor the emperor.”**

Interestingly, the first imperative is in the aorist tense, and the remaining three are all present tense imperatives. Some have tried to explain this by seeing the first command as summarizing the remaining three, but it is unsatisfying to say that the command to fear God fits under the “all” (*pantas*) of “honor everyone” (NRSV).⁶⁴ Peter did not place God on the same plane as the others mentioned in this verse, for fearing God is fundamental and primary and hence cannot be

equated with the honor due to all. **Peter specifically distinguished one’s attitude toward God (“fear”) from one’s attitude toward the emperor (“honor”).**

The verbs “honor,” “fear,” and “love” simply do not mean the same thing.

It is preferable, then, to **take each command separately**, so that we have four distinct injunctions in the verse.

What is the significance of the first command being in the aorist tense (*timēsate*) rather than the present tense?

At first glance it is tempting to conclude that the following verbs “love” (*agapate*) and “fear” (*phobeisthe*) may have different tenses because of the nature of the verbs. That is, “love” and “fear” are in the nature of the case ongoing attitudes. One could respond, of course, that the same is true of “honor.” Most important, though, the verse concludes with the imperative “honor” (*timate*) in the present tense. Hence, **any attempt to explain the**

variations in the tense by the meaning of the verbs fails since Peter used the same verb twice. Indeed, it is difficult to come up with any satisfying explanation for the variation, for it is not evident why Peter would emphasize that the emperor should be honored in an ongoing way in contrast to all people. I conclude, therefore, that the difference in tense is not interpretively significant and that all four imperatives are generalizations that apply to one's entire life.⁶⁸

The first imperative is the call to “honor everyone” (NRSV). **Believers are to treat every person with dignity and respect since all human beings are created in God's image (Gen 1:26–27).** Even sinners are to be accorded respect and honor as human beings.

Interestingly, the same respect and honor that should be given to the emperor should be given to all human beings.

Those with more power and dignity are not exalted over “ordinary” human beings. Michaels wrongly equates the verb “honor” with “submit,” but the meanings of the verbs are quite different. One should honor all people, but nowhere is it clearly taught that we should submit to all people. The word “submit” is used of hierarchical relationships. All human beings should be respected, but there is a special bond between fellow believers. Indeed, **the union between fellow Christians is such that it is best described in terms of family, and hence we have the command to “love the brotherhood of believers” (*agapate adelphotēta*).**

The word “brotherhood” is only found in Peter in the New Testament, both here and in 1 Pet 5:9. It appears nowhere in the Greek Old Testament, though it is used seven times in the

Maccabean writings (1 Mac 12:10, 17; 4 Mac 9:23; 10:3, 15; 13:19, 27). In the stresses and difficulties of life and the battle against fleshly desires (1 Pet 2:12), believers need to be reminded of the priority of love, of the need to love fellow members of the family.

The injunction to **“fear God”** is placed in contrast to **honoring the king** (“emperor,” NRSV).

Believers are to honor the king and show him respect because of his office, but they are not to fear him.

Only God is to be feared *(cf. 1:17).*

Peter may have been taking a swipe at the emperor cult here. Indeed, Peter was quite clear that his readers were not to fear other human beings (1 Pet 3:6, 14) and that only God should be feared as the sovereign Lord. Goppelt notes that fear belongs only to God “because God alone determines existence and non-existence.” We are reminded again that ultimate loyalty belongs to God, not to the emperor, nor to husbands (1 Pet 3:6). The imperatives conclude with a call to honor the emperor. The literal word here is “king” (*basilea*) instead of “emperor” (NRSV). But as we noted in 2:13, the word “king” would certainly bring to mind the emperor to Peter’s readers. Believers should continue to respect and honor the emperor, even though they are free citizens of God. Their freedom should not become a pretext for sin, as if they were free from giving the emperor the respect the office deserved.

(2) Slaves, Submit to Masters (2:18–25)

18 Slaves, submit yourselves to your masters with all respect, not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh. ¹⁹ For it is commendable if a man bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because he is conscious of God. ²⁰ But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it? But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God. ²¹ To this you were called...

Peter continued the household code by enjoining slaves to submit to their masters, even if the masters are wicked people.

The exhortation is addressed to slaves, but slaves function as examples for all Petrine Christians, and so the principle enunciated applies to all believers.

The motivation for the exhortation is given in v. 19. Those who endure suffering from masters while doing what is good will be rewarded by God.

Given the emphasis on the eschatological reward in 1 Peter, the reward in view here is probably the end-time gift of salvation. **Verse 20 explains v. 19 in more detail.**

Those slaves who endure punishment because they have sinned will not receive any approval from God. Only those who do what is good and experience suffering will be rewarded by God.

Peter began v. 21 by reminding believers that they have been called to suffer, and he immediately turned to Christ as an example to be imitated.

Therefore, the suffering of believers may be like Christ's in that it will lead some unbelievers to repentance and conversion.

The subsequent verses are richly informed by the Servant Song of Isaiah 53.

TO RECEIVE A REWARD (2:18–20)

2:18

Peter began by exhorting believers to submit to the government (2:13–17). Now he turns to the responsibility of slaves. People became slaves by being captured in wars, kidnapped, or born into a slave household. Those facing economic hardships might choose to sell themselves into slavery in order to survive. Many slaves lived miserably, particularly those who served in the mines. Other slaves,

however, served as doctors, teachers, managers, musicians, artisans, and could even own other slaves. It would not be unusual for a slave to be better educated than the master. Those who are familiar with slavery from the history of the United States must beware of imposing our historical experience on New Testament times since slavery in the Greco-Roman world was not based on race and American slave owners discouraged education of slaves. Still, slaves in the Greco-Roman world were under the control of their masters, and hence they had no independent existence. They could suffer brutal mistreatment at the hands of their owners, and children born in slavery belonged to masters rather than the parents who gave them birth. Slaves had no legal rights, and masters could beat them, brand them, and abuse them physically and sexually. J. A. Harrill remarks: “Despite claims of some NT scholars, ancient slavery was not more humane than modern slavery.”⁷⁴ Slaves could purchase their freedom in the Greco-Roman world with the help of their masters, a procedure called manumission. Manumission, however, was available mainly for urban slaves, and most slaves had no hope of being manumitted.

Just as citizens are to submit to the government, so slaves are commanded to submit to their masters.

A word should be said here about the common New Testament admonitions that slaves should submit to masters (cf. Eph 6:5–9; Col 3:22–25; 1 Tim 6:1–2; Titus 2:9–10; Philemon). Modern people often ask why New Testament writers did not criticize the institution of slavery or advocate its overthrow. The latter was completely unrealistic for the fledgling New Testament church in the Roman Empire. The young churches would be fighting the consensus of the Greco-Roman world, and hence any such attempt would be doomed to futility. Why was there not criticism of the practice? Again we must remember that New Testament documents address readers in the situation in which they live.

Railing against slavery would not be of any help to ordinary Christians, for, as noted, the dissolution of slavery was out of the question. Furthermore, New Testament writers were not social revolutionaries (cf. 1 Cor 7:17–24). They did not believe that overhauling social structures would transform culture. Their concern was the relationship of individuals to God, and they focused on the sin and rebellion of individuals against their Creator. New Testament writers therefore concentrated instead on the godly response of believers to mistreatment. Peter fits this paradigm nicely, for he admonished his readers to respond in a godly way to persecution and oppression.

If enough individuals are transformed, of course, society as a whole benefits and the Christian faith begins to function as a leavening influence. We are keenly aware from history that Christians have too often failed to live righteously, and yet we may fail to see that the Christian faith also has been a force for good in Western civilization. History demonstrates the impact of Christian faith on social structures. One of the consequences, under Christian influence, was the eradication of slavery. Christians, of course, have inflicted evil on others throughout the centuries as well. As sinners we have left a legacy that is disappointing. A realistic appraisal of history, however, includes both the evil and the good that Christians have accomplished.

It is crucial to note that the New Testament nowhere commends slavery as a social structure. It nowhere roots it in the created order, as if slavery is an institution ordained by God. The contrast with marriage is remarkable at this very point. God ordained the institution of marriage, but slavery was invented by human beings. The New Testament regulates the institution of slavery as it exists in society, but it does not commend it *per se*. Hence, Peter's words on slavery should not be interpreted as an endorsement for the system, even if he does not denounce the institution.

Most scholars think the participle "submitting" (*hypotassomenoi*) is imperatival here. Others suggest that the participle depends on the imperatives in v. 17 and should be construed as instrumental. The problem with this latter view, however, is that it is difficult to see *how* the participle could relate to all four imperatives in v. 17. It hardly makes sense to say, "Love the brotherhood by submitting to pagan masters." In this case, therefore, we should simply construe the participle as an independent imperative, in which slaves are enjoined to submit themselves to their masters. The submission is to be carried out "with all respect." The Greek literally says "with all fear" (*en panti phobō*). The NIV's "with all respect" and the NRSV's "with all deference" suggest that a proper attitude toward the master is in view. But this interpretation is unlikely, and the NIV should have retained the meaning of fear. In every instance in 1 Peter fear is directed toward God, not human beings (1 Pet 1:17; 3:2, 6, 14, 16). In fact, Peter spoke against fearing human beings in 3:6 and 3:14. The phrase "conscious of God" in 2:19 also constitutes evidence for this view. **The reason slaves are to submit to masters is**

because of their relationship with God. Hence, we have evidence that masters are not to wield absolute authority over slaves. If they commanded slaves to violate God's will, then slaves are obligated to disobey, even if they suffer because of their disobedience.

Ordinarily, however, believing slaves will do what their masters dictate. Peter applied the injunction to submit to both good and kind masters and masters who are "harsh" (*skoliois*). The word "harsh" is not the best translation, for the emphasis is on the moral bankruptcy of some masters (cf. Acts 2:40; Phil 2:15). The evil of slavery is reflected in Seneca's criticism of harsh masters: "You may take (a slave) in chains and at your pleasure expose him to every test of endurance; but too great violence in the striker has often dislocated a joint, or left a sinew fastened in the very teeth it has broken. Anger has left many a man crippled, many disabled, even when it found its victim submissive" (*Ira* 3.27.3). Harrill argues, however, that "such calls to kindness toward slaves were not criticisms of the institution but of its abuse by arrogant masters not abiding by Stoic ideals. These statements calling for humane treatment of slaves analogous to modern calls against cruelty toward animals were articulated to strengthen the institution, not abolish it."⁸⁴ **Believers cannot opt out of obeying masters who are wicked and disreputable. Peter was scarcely saying that Christian slaves should participate in evil or follow a corrupt master in an evil course of action.**

His point was that slaves cannot exempt themselves from doing what a master says, even if the master is wicked.

[A word about how this would relate today will illustrate Peter's meaning. A secretary cannot refuse to type a letter for a manager simply because the manager is an evil person. Refusal to type the letter would be defensible only if the contents of the letter are evil.](#)

2:19 In v. 18 slaves are called on to submit, and now Peter explains why ("for," *gar*) such submission should be practiced. **The reason believers should submit is**

that such obedience is “commendable.” What did Peter mean when he said it is “commendable”?

We should note that the literal Greek word used is “grace” (*charis*). Before answering the question on the meaning of the term “commendable” (*charis*), we need to examine the meaning of the verse in context. It seems that **v. 19 states the general principle, and v. 20 explains or unpacks the principle in more detail.**

The principle articulated in v. 19 is that those who suffer unjustly are rewarded by God.

In v. 20 Peter explained more fully what he meant. He remarked that those who are punished while doing wrong have no reason to congratulate themselves since they are simply receiving what they deserve. On the other hand, those who suffer while doing good and who endure such mistreatment will receive a reward from God.

Verses 19–20 are marked by an inclusio,

v. 19 begins with the statement “this is grace” (literal translation), and v. 20 concludes with “this is grace in God’s sight” (literal translation).

We are instructed by the inclusio to interpret
the two verses together.

It should also be noted that the injunction given to slaves becomes a model by which believers should respond to injustice, and hence what is said here is not applicable only to slaves. The use of the word “one” (RSV, *tis*) also indicates that the instructions relate to believers in their various situations.

Now we return to the question posed above.

**What is commendable
in the lives of believers?**

It is “grace” (*charis*) if they endure pain while suffering unfairly.

That such suffering comes because of their Christian faith is clear from the phrase “conscious of God.”

The word for “conscious” (syneidēsis) usually refers to the “conscience” in the New Testament (e.g., Acts 23:1; 24:6; Rom 13:5; 1 Cor 8:7, 10, 12; 10:25, 27–29; 1 Tim 1:5, 19; 3:9), and it even has this meaning in 1 Pet 3:16, 21.

In these latter two instances the adjective “good” is used to show that the conscience is in view. But in the verse we are examining the word “God” (*theou*) as an objective genitive, signifying a different contextual meaning that is suitably rendered “consciousness of God.” Slaves are commended, then, if they suffer pain because of their relationship with God, a relationship that causes them occasionally to deviate from what masters desire.⁹⁰

So what is the main point Peter was trying to communicate?

He was saying that slaves who endure unjust suffering because of their relationship with God will be rewarded by God. What reward did he have in mind? He probably was speaking of the reception

of *the future inheritance described in such detail in 1:3–5*.

Some might think Peter simply said that such suffering is “evidence of God’s grace” in one’s life. Two pieces of evidence, however, indicate that Peter thought of rewards rather than evidence of grace.

First, the word “credit” (*kleos*) is parallel to the word “grace” (*charis*), and it can be defined as “credit,” “fame,” or “glory” (cf. Josephus, *Ant.* 4.105, 115; 19.223; *1 Clem.* 5:6; 54:3). It refers to

the reward believers will inherit (cf. *1 Clem.* 5:6), demonstrating that “grace”

here is not “evidence of grace” but the divine favor, blessing, and reward given to believers on the last day.

Second, the argument in v. 19 is quite similar to Luke 6:32–35, and Peter adapted that tradition here. Jesus in Luke argued that if people bestow love only on their friends, they are no different from unbelievers. What distinguishes believers from others is their love for enemies and sinners.

Similarly, Peter insisted that suffering for doing wrong deserves no credit, but if one suffers for doing what is right, a reward is fitting.

Interestingly, three times in Luke the reward believers would receive for showing love is

conveyed through the word “grace” (*charis*), translated “credit” by the NIV (Luke 6:32–34). We see from this that the word “grace” can be a synonym for the word “reward.” Indeed, in the conclusion of the paragraph (Luke 6:35) Luke shifted from “grace” to “reward” (*misthos*), showing that the two terms are roughly synonymous here.

Indeed, in the Matthean parallel (Matt 5:46) to Luke 6:32 the word “reward” (*misthos*) is used instead of “grace” (*charis*), constituting another piece of evidence that “grace” means reward in Luke 6:32.

To sum up...

when Peter said it is “grace” for someone to endure suffering because of their relationship with God, his point was that those who suffer in such a way will receive a reward from God and that the reward in context is their eschatological inheritance—future salvation.

2:20 Verse 20 elaborates on v. 19, explaining (“for,” *gar*) in what circumstances believers will be rewarded and in which circumstances they will not.

Peter began with the instance in which believers endure pain, but they do so because they have “done wrong” (*amartanontes*) and as a consequence received beatings. In such cases they will receive no reward from God since they are simply receiving what they deserve. On the other hand, if they endure suffering as a consequence of **“doing good”** (*agathopoiontes*) — a favorite word of 1 Peter (2:15; 3:6, 17; cf. 2:14; 3:11, 16; 4:19) and translated “do right” by the NIV here— then one will receive a reward (“grace,” *charis*) from God.

TO IMITATE CHRIST (2:21–25)

2:21 What is the logical relationship between vv. 18–20 and v. 21, which begins with the words **“for to this you have been called”** (NRSV; the NIV omits the “for,” *gar*)?

The words “to this” (eis touto) point back to the believers’ experience of suffering, even though they do what is right.

The word **“called” (eklēthēte)**, as we have seen elsewhere (see commentary

on 1:15; 2:9), refers to God's effectual call that results in the faith of believers.

*So what Peter said here was that believers were called to experience their final reward (vv. 19–20) through enduring suffering. Suffering, in other words, is not a detour by which believers receive the inheritance to which they were called. It is God's appointed means for receiving the inheritance.*⁹⁸

Why are believers called to suffer in order to receive their final reward?

The answer given is that...

this was also the way appointed for
Jesus, the Messiah
("because Christ also suffered for you").

It is likely that the phrase Christ "suffered for you" (*epathen hyper hymōn*) refers to the vicarious sacrifice of Christ, especially since such an idea is explicitly taught in v. 24 and is clearly taught in 3:18. By implication Peter may have been suggesting the unique benefits of Christ's death. Achtemeier, however, doubts that this idea is intended, for the word "also" (*kai*), wrongly omitted by the NIV, demonstrates that...

the logic of the verse is as follows:

*Christ also suffered for you,
as you now suffer for Him.*

Supporting this interpretation are the words immediately following. Christ's suffering functions as an example to believers. They are to follow his pattern and endure suffering in this present age.

The word "example" (*hypogrammon*) is used of children who trace over the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to write the letters correctly. Christ's suffering functions as an example for this purpose (*hina*), so that believers would "follow in his steps." **As Christ's disciples, believers are to suffer as he did,**

enduring every pain and insult received because of their allegiance to the Master.

Achtemeier rightly detects the emphasis on following Christ in his suffering, which is emphasized particularly in vv. 22–23. Still, the significance of the “also” is preserved without

embracing his interpretation. We saw in **1 Pet 2:12** that the good conduct of believers while being reviled is intended to lead others to salvation. It is likely that such a theme is suggested here as well.

Just as Christ’s suffering led to the salvation of others, so too the unjust suffering of believers will draw some to faith in Christ.

Believers are to suffer just as Christ also suffered,

But...

Peter recognized and specifically taught that the suffering of Christ and believers is not comparable in every respect, in that Christ's substitutionary death is the sole basis of the relationship of believers with God ([1:18–19](#); 2:24; 3:18).

Further, he emphasized that Christ was sinless (1:20; 2:22–23), something that is not matched by any believer.

Indeed, Christ's sinlessness is the basis upon which his death can function as a vicarious sacrifice for believers.

The godly life of believers may win unbelievers to the faith, but Jesus' suffering and death are unique since he alone through his death atones for sin.²

[The New Bible Commentary](#) (D.A. Carson)

2:13–17 Attitudes to state authorities. Good conduct is to be expressed in a submissive acceptance of the demands of *every authority instituted among men*.

² Thomas R. Schreiner, *1, 2 Peter, Jude*, vol. 37, The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2003), 126–142.

It is striking that Peter, probably writing in the age of Nero, still sees the state as appointed by God for the maintenance of moral values (see [Rom. 13:1–7](#); [1 Tim. 2:1–2](#)).

The Christian's upright behaviour should raise him or her above the slanders or suspicions of the ignorant (15).

Christians must give Caesar what is his due ([Mt. 22:21](#)) and Peter does not hint at any exceptions here, even though he knew how to refuse the authorities when they claimed for themselves what was God's ([Acts 4:19–20](#); [5:29](#)).

Surprisingly, Christian freedom is the liberty to live as the *servants of God*, fulfilling his will (16). It is not, therefore, the licence to please oneself, under the pretext of 'permissiveness'.

Four brief commands sum up these practical requirements: *everyone* is to be shown respect, as those for whom Christ died and in whom the divine likeness can be restored; *the brotherhood of believers* is to be loved; *God* is to be approached with worship (*i.e.* reverent fear; see [Heb. 12:28–29](#)); and *the king* is to be treated with respect.

Notes. 13 *For the Lord's sake* reminds us of both the example and the teaching of Jesus. *Supreme authority i.e.* over human institutions. **17** Peter quotes [Pr. 24:21](#), where

the writer uses the same word to describe attitudes to God as well as the king. Peter does not do this.

2:18–25 Attitudes to employers. ...The lot of *slaves* would not be too bad under a good master, but they were often treated unjustly. While Peter addresses himself to their situation as employees, Paul shows that employers must also show respect and consideration for those who work for them (Eph. 6:5–9; Col. 3:22–4:1).

Patience while suffering a deserved punishment is no virtue, but the Christian is called to accept even the harsh treatment of an unkind master. This wins God's commendation. To persevere in doing good, and be patient under suffering, could even be said to be the Christian's calling, as it was part of Christ's sufferings (*cf.* Phil. 3:10).

It is also the example left by Jesus.

Peter recalls vividly how he behaved during his sufferings. He then reminds his readers of the benefits we enjoy as a result of that suffering.

Notes. 21 **Example** is used only here in the NT

and describes an outline drawing or copy-book letters to be followed by a pupil.

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A Biblical Argument for Self-Defense

August 27, 2018 by: [Wayne Grudem](#)

A Nuanced Difference

I think Christians often wonder what it means to turn the other cheek. Jesus taught in [Matthew 5](#), “You have heard that it was said ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth’, but I say to you, ‘Do not resist the one who is evil, but if anyone slaps on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.’”

If we pay careful attention to the wording of that verse, Jesus is teaching about turning the other cheek has a specific meaning. If I’m facing someone and I slap that person on the right cheek, it would require me to slap the person with the back of my hand to make contact with the person’s right cheek.

So, I think what it means is that Jesus is telling us not to hit back when someone slaps us an insult. I don’t think it is really talking about escaping or defending ourselves against a violent attack that would do us bodily harm or even kill us.

Christians shouldn't retaliate when persecuted specifically for their Christian faith but should take that as part of what God calls them to do to suffer for the sake of the testimony of the gospel.

Self-Defense

There are a number of other passages of Scripture that encourage escaping from danger or even using force in self-defense, if necessary, and encourage us to defend other people against wrongful attacks.

Jesus's disciples carried swords, even after three years of traveling with Jesus.

In the garden of Gethsemane, they had swords. **Swords in the first century were used for self-defense.** So, I think there are times in which self-defense to prevent us from suffering significant bodily harm is justified.

However...

I need to specify also that **Christians shouldn't retaliate when persecuted specifically for their Christian faith, but should take that as part of what God calls them to do to suffer for the sake of the testimony of the gospel.**

The Playground Dilemma

Another question comes up with regard to self-defense, and that is, what should children do when attacked by a bully on a playground? Children should be taught to be peacemakers, of course (Mat. 5:9), but if a bully continues to escalate his or her attacks, and if no parent or teacher will intervene—which sadly happens—then I think children should be taught to fight back and defend themselves with courage and determination, as well as to pray for and forgive those who attack them.

Otherwise, they could continue to suffer physical harm and internalize a deep sense of injustice and bewilderment at why no parent, teacher, or other authority is protecting them. I think that can be very harmful.

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Christianity.com

What Does the Bible Say about Self-Defense?

The Bible does support self-defense. While Christ does denounce retaliation and revenge, He does not prohibit acting in self-defense. Therefore, believers are not sinning when they defend themselves or others from harm and suffering.

[SOPHIA BRICKER](#)

CONTRIBUTING WRITER

NOV 11, 2021

Security is important in the modern world. Cybersecurity, advanced technological home safety systems, and knowledge of self-defense tactics are abounding in society. Christians also seek

security in their churches and home, with self-defense classes sometimes offered by churches.

Although it can be easy to make assumptions about safety, the first concern for the follower of Christ should be what the Lord says about any subject, including personal safety and defense.

Relevant passages about self-defense can be found in Scripture, which includes specific statements and examples of faithful followers of God engaging in the protection of themselves and others.

What Does Turn the Other Cheek Mean?

One of the main verses involved in the discussion of self-defense includes [Matthew 5:39](#) when Jesus talks about turning the other cheek.

The Lord stated, “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also” ([Matthew 5:38-39](#), NIV).

Many Christians read this verse and wonder if Jesus means that they should allow themselves to be harmed and not defend themselves.

When examining this verse, it is important to understand that Jesus is directly referring to Old Testament passages that deal with the law of retaliation ([Exodus 21:24](#); [Leviticus 24:20](#)).

Based on these verses, God intended to limit the retaliation involved with wrong acts. Christ affirms this but focuses on people willing to give up their rights and endure slights against themselves.

Many commentators emphasize that the slap on the face could be referring to an insult, but even a slap on the face is not life-

threatening. Instead of responding in retaliation, Christ urges a selfless attitude by turning the other cheek and going the extra mile ([Matthew 5:39-41](#)).

This teaching of non-retaliation is reflected in the writings of the [apostles](#) as well. Believers are reminded, “Do not repay anyone evil for evil” ([Romans 12:17](#), NIV) and “do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult” ([1 Peter 3:9](#), NIV).

These verses are not about self-defense, but rather about retaliation.

As Jesus taught, Christians are not to offensively retaliate against someone for being wronged.

Scriptural Examples of Self-Defense

The Bible speaks against vengeful retaliation but does not forbid self-defense. There are many examples of people who defended themselves against attack.

For instance, Esther requested that the Jews be able to defend themselves against the murderous attack by the Persians, which was planned by the villain, Haman ([Esther 8:3-6](#)).

The Jews were allowed to fight against their attackers and successfully defended themselves from the intended annihilation, showing God's work in the events to protect and preserve His chosen people ([Esther 8:11](#); 9:1-2). Jewish people continue to observe a holiday, called Purim, to remember the events recorded in the Book of Esther ([Esther 9:18-32](#)).

In a similar fashion, the Israelites armed themselves for protection when they rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem under the guidance of Nehemiah ([Nehemiah 4:11-18](#)). In fact, Scripture records that *the Israelites “did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other”* ([Nehemiah 4:17](#), NIV).

The builders of the wall even wore their swords as they worked ([Nehemiah 4:18](#)). **While the Israelites were ready to defend themselves if their enemies tried to attack them to stop them from rebuilding the wall, they did not actively war against their enemies.**

Thus, Scripture does include examples of people acting in self-defense. Believers today can and should seek to protect themselves and others from harm. The Bible even includes an example of a man protecting himself and his family from a thief in the night ([Exodus 22:2-3](#)).

Acting in defense of oneself or others includes standing up for those who are defenseless as well as defending oneself against physical, mental, spiritual, and sexual harm.

For instance, if a man or woman is being physically attacked or sexually assaulted, these individuals should try to fight back against their attacker.

They are not sinning for trying to protect themselves. Christians are not supposed to allow themselves to be “doormats,” who allow anyone to do as they please with them. Instead, they can defend themselves and seek the well-being of the weak and helpless (**Psalm 82:3**).

Regarding the spiritual realm, which is discussed numerous times in God’s Word, believers are also encouraged to defend themselves “against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms” (Ephesians 6:12, NIV).

Satan is described as a roaring lion seeking to devour believers (1 Peter 5:8), which is why Christians should be aware of the devil’s schemes (2 Corinthians 2:11).

In the epistle to the Ephesians, Paul uses the imagery of the armor and weapons of the Roman soldiers to describe the different aspects of a Christian's armor to protect themselves against Satan's attacks ([Ephesians 6:10-20](#)).

Consequently, protecting oneself and others is not limited to the physical realm, but includes the spiritual realm as well.

Persecution and Self-Defense

While self-defense is needed in many circumstances, persecution for the cause of Christ is dealt with differently in Scripture.

Throughout the New Testament, persecution for faith in Jesus is seen as a privilege for believers to endure.

Jesus said, "Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil

against you because of me. Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you” ([Matthew 5:10-12](#), NIV).

Enduring suffering because of one’s faith in Jesus will bring about heavenly rewards. The disciples recognized this truth after they were flogged for preaching the Name of Jesus ([Acts 5:40-41](#)).

Generally, most followers of Christ described in the Bible willingly endured suffering because of their trust in Jesus. There are times when people fled from persecution, but even this was used by God to spread the gospel ([Acts 8:1](#), 4).

At other times, persecution was avoided because of its hindrance to the message of Jesus’ death and [resurrection](#). For instance, Paul deliberately defended himself against being whipped by claiming the rights of a Roman citizen to avoid unnecessary delay ([Acts 22:24-25](#)).

Thus, at certain times seeking defense against persecution is advisable and needed. However, most instances of persecution involve a deliberate decision to faithfully follow Christ and give up personal rights.

Love for Jesus and the passionate need to spread His message to the world is so

important that His followers should be willing to lay down their lives

([John 15:13](#); [1 John 3:16](#)).

Suffering persecution for the cause of Christ is a privilege

since Jesus suffered and laid down His life to free the world from slavery to sin and death ([John 10:18](#); [Romans 8:2](#)).

Protecting Oneself and Others

The Bible does support self-defense. Many examples are given in Scripture of followers of God seeking to protect themselves and others from harm.

While Christ does denounce retaliation and revenge, He does not prohibit acting in self-defense.

Therefore, believers are not sinning when they defend themselves or others from harm and suffering.

What does it mean to “count the cost” (Luke 14:28)?

In [Luke 14](#), Jesus lays out the terms of discipleship. There were great crowds following Him. Everyone loved the miracles, healing, and free food. Jesus was cool, the talk of the town, and the latest fad. But He knew their hearts. He knew they desired the benefits of what He *did* rather than an understanding of who He *was*. They loved His gifts, not the life He was calling them to. So He explained what it takes to be one of His followers:

“If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it? Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple” ([Luke 14:26-33](#)).

Jesus said a lot in those simple illustrations. He quickly put an end to the idea that He offered some kind of welfare program. Although the gift of eternal life is free to anyone who asks ([John 3:16](#)), the asking requires a transfer of ownership ([Luke 9:23](#); [Galatians 5:24](#)). “Counting the cost” means recognizing and agreeing to some terms first. In following Christ, we cannot simply follow our own inclinations. We cannot follow Him and the world’s way at the same time ([Matthew 7:13-14](#)). Following Him may mean we lose relationships, dreams, material things, or even our lives.

Those who are following Jesus simply for what they can get won’t stick around when the going gets tough. When God’s way conflicts with our way, we will feel betrayed by the shallow, me-first faith we have bought into. If we have not counted the cost of being His child, we will turn away at the threat of sacrifice and find something else to gratify our selfish desires (cf. [Mark 4:5, 16-17](#)). In Jesus’ earthly ministry, there came a time when the free food stopped and public opinion turned ugly. The cheering crowds became jeering crowds. And Jesus knew ahead of time that would happen.

Jesus ended His description of the cost of discipleship with a breathtaking statement: "Any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple" ([Luke 14:33](#)). "Renouncing" may mean we give up something physically, but more often it means we let go emotionally so that what we possess no longer possesses us. When we become one of His, we cannot continue to belong to this world ([1 John 2:15-17](#)). We must make a choice, for we cannot serve both God and Mammon ([Matthew 6:24](#)). The rich young ruler, when confronted with that choice, turned his back on Jesus ([Luke 18:18-25](#)).

Suppose you learned that you had been given an all-expense-paid condo on a beach in Tahiti, complete with airfare, a car, food, and a maid. You could brag about your new lifestyle, plan for it, and dream about it. But until you pack up and leave your current home, the new life is never really yours. You cannot live in Tahiti and your current hometown at the same time. Many people approach Christianity the same way. They love the idea of eternal life, escaping hell, and having Jesus at their beck and call. But they are not willing to leave the life they now live. Their desires, lifestyle, and sinful habits are too precious to them. Their lives may exhibit a token change—starting to attend church or giving up a major sin—but they want to retain ownership of everything else. Jesus is speaking in [Luke 14](#) to those with that mindset.

We cannot earn salvation by lifestyle change or any other good deed ([Ephesians 2:8-9](#)). But when we choose to follow Christ, we are releasing control of our lives. When Jesus is in control, pure living results ([1 John 3:4-10](#); [2 Corinthians 5:17](#)). In Jesus' [parable of the sower](#), it was only the soil that allowed the seed to put down roots and bear fruit that was called "good." If we are going to be disciples of Christ, we must first count the cost of following Him.

DesmondDoss.com

Desmond Doss: The Real Story

On April 1, 1942, Desmond Doss joined the United States Army. Little did he realize that three and a half years later, he would be standing on the White House lawn, receiving the nation's highest award for his bravery and courage under fire. Of the 16 million men in uniform during World War II, only 431 received the Congressional Medal of Honor. One of these was placed around the neck of a young Seventh-day Adventist, who during combat had not killed a single enemy soldier. In fact, he refused to carry a gun. His only weapons were his Bible and his faith in God. President Harry S. Truman warmly shook the hand of Corporal Desmond Thomas Doss, and then held it the entire time his citation was read aloud to those gathered outside the White House on October 12, 1945. "I'm proud of you," Truman said. "You really deserve this. I consider this a greater honor than being president." The journey that had brought young Desmond to this day had been a challenging one.

When Pearl Harbor was attacked, he was working at the Newport News Naval shipyard and could have requested a deferment—but he wanted to do more for his country. He was willing to risk his life on the front lines in order to preserve freedom.

When he joined the Army, Desmond assumed that his classification as a conscientious objector would not require him to carry a weapon. He wanted to be an Army combat medic. As luck would have it, he was assigned to an infantry rifle company. His refusal to carry a gun caused a lot of trouble among his fellow soldiers. They viewed him with disdain and called him a misfit. One man in the barracks warned him, "Doss, as soon as we get into combat, I'll make sure you won't come back alive."

His commanding officers also wanted to get rid of the skinny Virginian who spoke with a gentle southern drawl. They saw him as a liability. Nobody believed a soldier without a weapon was worthwhile. They tried to intimidate him, scold him, assign him extra tough duties, and declared him mentally unfit for the Army.

Then they attempted to court martial him for refusing a direct order—to carry a gun. But they failed to find a way to toss him out, and he refused to leave. **He believed his duty was to obey God and serve** his country. But **it had**

to be in that order. His unwavering convictions were most important.

Desmond had been raised with a fervent belief in the Bible. When it came to the Ten Commandments, he applied them personally. During childhood his father had purchased a large framed picture at an auction. It portrayed the Ten Commandments with colorful illustrations. Next to the words, "Thou shalt not kill" was a drawing of Cain holding a club and standing over the body of his dead brother Abel. Little Desmond would look at that picture and ask, "Why did Cain kill Abel? How in the world could a brother do such a thing?" In Desmond's mind, God said, "If you love me, you won't kill." With that picture firmly embedded in his mind, he determined that he would never take life.

However, there was another commandment that Desmond took just as seriously as the sixth. It was the fourth commandment. His religious upbringing included weekly church attendance, on the seventh day. The Army was exasperated to discover that he had yet another personal requirement. He asked for a weekly pass so he could attend church every Saturday. This meant two strikes against him. His fellow soldiers saw this Bible reading puritan, as being totally out of sync with the rest of the Army. So they ostracized him, bullied him, called him awful names, and cursed at him. His commanding officers also made his life difficult.

Things began turning around when the men discovered that this quiet unassuming medic had a way to heal the blisters on their march-weary feet. And if someone fainted from heat stroke, this medic was at his side, offering his own canteen. Desmond never held a grudge. With kindness and gentle courtesy, he treated those who had mistreated him. He lived the golden rule, "...do to others what you would have them do to you..." (Matthew 7:12 NIV).

Desmond served in combat on the islands of Guam, Leyte, and Okinawa. In each military operation he exhibited extraordinary dedication to his fellow men. While others were taking life, he was busy saving life. When the cry, "medic" rang out on the battlefield, he never considered his own safety. He repeatedly ran into the heat of battle to treat a fallen comrade and carry him back to safety. All this, while enemy bullets whizzed past and mortar shells exploded around him. Several times, while treating a wounded soldier, Desmond was so close to enemy lines, he could hear the whispering of Japanese voices.

In May, 1945, as German troops were surrendering on the other side of the world, Japanese troops were fiercely defending, to their last man, the only remaining

barrier (Okinawa and the Maeda Escarpment) to an allied invasion of their homeland. The men in Desmond's division were repeatedly trying to capture the Maeda Escarpment, an imposing rock face the soldiers called Hacksaw Ridge. After the company had secured the top of the cliff, the Americans were stunned when suddenly enemy forces rushed them in a vicious counterattack. Officers ordered an immediate retreat. Soldiers rushed to climb back down the steep cliff. All the soldiers except one.

Less than one third of the men made it back down. The rest lay wounded, scattered across enemy soil—abandoned and left for dead, if they weren't already. One lone soldier disobeyed orders and charged back into the firefight to rescue as many of his men as he could, before he either collapsed or died trying. His iron determination and unflinching courage resulted in at least 75 lives saved that day, May 5, 1945, his Sabbath.

Eventually, the Americans took Hacksaw Ridge. Okinawa was captured inch by bloody inch. Several days later, during an unsuccessful night raid, Desmond was severely wounded. Hiding in a shell hole with two riflemen, a Japanese grenade landed at his feet. The explosion sent him flying. The shrapnel tore into his leg and up to his hip. He treated his own wounds as best he could. While attempting to reach safety, he was hit by a sniper's bullet that shattered his arm. His brave actions as a combat medic were done. But not before insisting that his litter-bearers take another man first before rescuing him. Wounded, in pain, and losing blood, he still put others ahead of his own safety. He would choose to die so another could live. After all, that's what he read in his Bible. Such was the character demonstrated by Jesus Christ.



In addition to his Medal of Honor, Desmond Doss received a Bronze Star for valor with one Oak Leaf cluster (signifying he received 2 Bronze Stars); a Purple Heart with two Oak Leaf clusters (signifying he received 3 Purple Hearts); the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign Medal with three Bronze Stars, and

beachhead arrowhead (signifying he served in 4 combat campaigns including an amphibious landing under combat conditions); the Good Conduct Medal; the American Defense Campaign; and the not so common, Presidential Unit Citation given to the 1st Battalion, 307Inf, 77th Infantry Division for securing the Maeda Escarpment.

The Medal of Honor was established during the Civil War under President Abraham Lincoln in 1862. At the one hundredth anniversary in 1962, the other recipients of that award selected Desmond Doss to represent them at a White House ceremony. He had a pleasant chat with President John F. Kennedy.

Before being discharged from the Army in 1946, Desmond developed tuberculosis. He would spend most of the next six years in hospitals. Cold, wet, sleepless nights, shivering in a muddy foxhole on the islands of the Pacific, had taken their toll. As the illness progressed his left lung had to be surgically removed along with five ribs. For the rest of his life, he survived on a single lung, until it too failed. At the age of 87, Corporal Desmond Thomas Doss died on March 23, 2006, after being hospitalized with difficulty breathing. He is buried in the National Cemetery, Chattanooga, Tennessee.



<https://desmondoss.com/bio/bio-real.php>