

# 1 Peter

## Week 4: Faithful Witness in a Hostile World

### Scripture

1 Peter 2:13-25

### Review

#### *Identity Peter Gave to His Readers in the Middle of Suffering...*

**1 Peter 1:1 (NLT)** This letter is from Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ. I am writing to God's chosen people who are living as foreigners in the provinces of Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

- They were *chosen exiles* — *saved by grace, secure in hope of an eternal inheritance*, and *refined through suffering* (1:1–12)
- They were *called to be holy* - to fear God above man, and to love and grow through His Word (1:13–2:3)
- They had been *made living stones, built on Christ the cornerstone* - a holy people who live honorably and proclaim God's goodness in a broken world (2:4–12)

Now Peter will show how this identity takes shape in daily life — *submitting to authority with humility and honor, following the example of Christ, our suffering servant.*

Let's see how Peter calls us to reflect Christ in the way we live under authority and respond to unjust suffering.

### Motivation

Peter will lay out specific places we are to live out the example of Christ by *submissive obedience* to authority - *citizens* (2:13-17), *employees* (2:18-20), and the *marital relationship* (3:1-7) — *we'll cover that last one next week.*

Let's be honest...we don't like being placed under the authority of others. We want to do *what* we want to do, *how* we want to do it, and *when/if* we want to do it.

Our human nature is rooted in rebellion.

The very first humans proved that *a perfect place* won't protect us from rebelling.

## Information

### ***Peter called His Readers to Submit to Authority...***

#### ▪ **Submission to Government Authority**

##### ✓ What government authorities?

**1 Peter 2:13 (ESV)** Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, **14** or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.

- National Government (emperor)
- State Government (governors)
- Police and judges (those who keep order)

##### ✓ What kind of government authorities were Peter's readers living under?

*Peter's audience lived under the rule of Nero, where the government was corrupt, pagan, and often cruel. Christians were a misunderstood minority, accused of being troublemakers or disloyal citizens. Submission to authority was not easy—it required faith, courage, and trust in God's sovereignty.*

##### ✓ What did Peter want his readers to do?

**1 Peter 2:15 (ESV)** For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. **16** Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. **17** Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

- Peter writes not to endorse corrupt power, but to remind believers that their conduct under authority was a witness to the gospel.
- Submission didn't mean agreement with evil—it meant honoring God by living honorably before others.
- Their respectful obedience to governing authorities would silence false accusations and show that their freedom in Christ leads to service, not rebellion.

##### ✓ What does this mean for us NOW?

*We may not face Nero's empire, but we still live in a world skeptical of biblical conviction and skeptical of truth. Authority is often abused, mistrusted, or mocked. Yet Peter's call remains the same - honor those in authority, **not because they deserve it, but because God placed them there.** Our response to leadership, even flawed leadership, is meant to point people to Christ and prove the gospel's power to transform hearts, not overthrow systems.*

**“Only when the government tries to force a Christian to do what is against the law of God explicitly stated in Scripture, should he refuse to submit.” – John MacArthur**

## ■ Submission to Employer

**1 Peter 2:18 (ESV)** Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. **19** For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. **20** For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.

- ✓ Employees are called to be submissive to both good and bad “bosses”
- ✓ Peter says it “mindful of God” when an employee maintains Christian witness
- ✓ Peter contrasts discipline for wrongdoing vs. discipline for doing good
- ✓ However, Peter says that endurance is key when being mistreated for doing good, and God looks graciously on patient endurance during suffering

## Application

I believe our tendency is to fight back (against government or employers) when we’ve been mistreated or feel not heard. Peter gives a “hot take” on fighting back...

### ■ Christ is the only example we follow (He suffered; so will we)

**1 Peter 2:21 (ESV)** For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps.

### ■ Christ did not fight against the system (political or workplace)

**1 Peter 2:22 (ESV)** He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. **23** When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten

The word “revile” means bitter or spiteful speech intended to harm or humiliate. Jesus transformed the world not by conquering Rome, but by conquering sin. The church’s greatest influence has always come from humble, holy lives, not political dominance.

### ■ Christ trusted that God would sort things out

**1 Peter 2:23 (ESV)** ...but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

### ■ Christ is not only our example in suffering, but our Savior/Shepherd in suffering

**1 Peter 2:24 (ESV)** He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. **25** For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

- ✓ Jesus carried our sins to the cross as a sacrifice taking the curse we deserved
- ✓ His death frees us from sin’s control so we can live new, obedient lives
- ✓ His suffering brings spiritual healing and reconciliation with God
- ✓ We were lost, but Jesus brought us back to God as our Shepherd and Overseer, who now cares for and guards our souls