

Learning To Submit

1 Peter 2:13-3:12

MEMORY VERSE

1 PETER 2:13a

“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake....”

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

A set of checkers and a game board.

A scarf or masking tape for each pair of children.

Paper, pens, markers or crayons, envelopes, addresses of government leaders, police dept., fire department, etc., and postage stamps.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Silly Checkers

For this activity you will need a set of checkers and a board. Ask the children who likes to play checkers. Then ask who knows how to play checkers and knows the rules; ask for a show of hands. Choose one volunteer to come before the class and give a brief description of how to play checkers.

Next, invite up two more volunteers to actually play a game of checkers in front of the class. Once you have your two volunteers sitting down at a table with the board set out and the pieces ready to go explain that they are going to have a chance to play a nice game of checkers. The only difference is that instead of following the rules that were explained earlier, you decided that you do not like rules so you are going to throw out all of the rules. So ask your checker players to go ahead and play with absolutely no rules to see who wins. Give the children a few minutes to figure out what they will do. They will soon discover how necessary rules are. They might even freeze up and not know what to do at all. It will be fun to find out.

Go ahead and end the game and have the children sit down again. Ask the players what it was like to play checkers with no rules. Was it confusing? Did they have fun? In our lesson today we are going to learn that in life we have rules for doing things, or laws. And we have leaders who make up those laws. The Bible teaches us that we need to submit to rules and laws in order to be like Jesus. If everyone made up their own rules there would be a lot of confusion and problems. So God wants us to understand about authority, rules and laws. He will bless us when we obey and do what is right instead of doing whatever we feel like doing.

LESSON TIME!

In today's lesson we are going to look at a subject that has been overlooked in much of our world today; we are going to learn about submission. To submit to another means to surrender or yield oneself to the will or authority of another person. In life there are certain people who have authority; like our parents, schoolteachers, police officers and others. To submit means that I will listen to what they have to say and then do what they tell me to do.

The Bible has a lot to say about submitting to others. As Christians we are told that we are to submit to one another and to the authorities that God establishes in this world. But we are not just left with a command to submit, we are also given a great example of submission in Jesus Christ. We are going to see in our lesson today how He is the perfect example of submission that we are to follow.

First, let's explore some of the different types of people that we need to submit to in life in order to please the Lord. Then, let's look at our ultimate example, Jesus. And then also look at how we can have the power to submit through the strength that can only come from our relationship with Jesus. **God wants us to submit to others.**

1 PETER 2:13-17

Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme,

or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good.

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men—

as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God.

Honor all people. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

In these first verses, the Apostle Peter tells us that we need to submit ourselves to every ordinance of man. What is an ordinance? An ordinance is the same as a rule or a law. Maybe you have heard of a city ordinance before? For example there might be a "no parking" sign somewhere and at the bottom it might refer to the city ordinance for that

law and have a number. So what that means is that the city leaders made a rule at some time that there should not be any parking in that particular place.

So we are to submit ourselves, or yield to those ordinances. Really any law that our government has (except those that would keep us from worshiping Jesus) should be respected and obeyed. And we are told that we are to do it for the Lord's sake. So in order for us to honor and obey the Lord we need to honor and obey the rules that are in place.

We are also to submit to those who are the leaders in our country. In America we have a president, congressmen, senators, governors and others who pass laws and lead the people. We need to submit to them and the rules that they make to help people. Verse 14 talks about how that these leaders act to punish those who are evil and break laws and then praise those who do good.

In the same way, we should respect and honor police officers and others who enforce the law and help people. God places leaders in authority in nations so that those who practice lawlessness can be punished (see Romans 13). We should be thankful to those who work hard to enforce laws.

Also, when we obey laws and do what is right then we are being a witness of Jesus Christ to the world. Those who do not know Jesus may not care about obeying laws or submitting to authority. So when we gladly submit we can point others to Jesus. We are told that this is God's will so that people can look at our lives and be attracted to Jesus. If we obey and submit to the laws of the land then no one can point a finger at us and say that we are evil, but rather a servant of God, different from others who do not know Him. **God wants us to submit to others.**

Verse 17 gives us a great rule of thumb to live by. We need to honor all people. This is how we should treat people in the world. We should treat everyone with honor and respect. It does not mean that we agree with or participate in their sin, but we can certainly be nice to them and honor them. When we show love to those in the world then they will be drawn to Jesus.

Then we are told to love the brotherhood. These would be our brothers and sisters in Jesus, all of the other Christians. We need to treat others who are Christians with respect and as Christians we should submit to one another. We need to put others first along with their interests.

We also need to fear God, or respect Him. And definitely we need to submit to Him and His authority in our lives. Whatever He tells us to do we need to do it. Then finally we need to honor the king. That would be the same as saying the leaders in our country. Sometimes we find people saying mean things about our leaders. We need to be careful about what we say because it might sound dishonoring. Even if we disagree with a person we still need to respect their place and position of authority. **God wants us to submit to others.**

1 PETER 2:18-20

Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.

For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully.

For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.

Next Peter talks about the relationship between servants and masters. Back in the days when Peter wrote this people had servants and slaves. Peter, through the Holy Spirit, is telling the servants that they need to be submissive to their masters. What if a master made a request to a servant and they said back to him, "Well, let me think about that and I'll get back to you." No, they were to be obeyed immediately.

During this time people sometimes owed others money and so they would become a servant in order to pay off the debt. They would voluntarily serve a master in order to help themselves and their family financially. When a Christian servant is being submissive and doing a good job then glory is being brought to Christ.

This relationship between servant and master is similar to having a job today. We have employers (masters) and employees (servants). An employee needs to do a good job and submit to what the employer wants him or her to do. What would happen if all the employees in the world one day just said, "I do not feel like doing what my boss says anymore, I am going to do whatever I want to do"? That would be quite a mess.

In fact a lot of people do not like to submit to authority today and it is getting harder and harder for bosses to find good employees. But as Christians we need to be different from the world. We need to do whatever our boss tells us to do, as long as it does not go against God's Word. When we do that, just like submitting to the laws of

the land and our government leaders, we will be showing Jesus to others. As children, it is important to remember these things for when God blesses you with a job. **God wants us to submit to others.**

But what if we have a mean boss? What if we have a boss that is not very understanding or maybe is not fair to us? Well, certainly in that situation we should not have to submit. Actually the Bible says we still do need to submit. In fact, the Bible tells us that it is commendable (or a really good thing) for us to still submit even after being treated wrongly. What a hard thing to do, but certainly we could do it through Jesus and His strength.

If we are treated wrongfully and still obey our boss then we will look even more like Jesus. Do you remember how Jesus was treated very wrongfully by many people? Yet He still loved them and submitted to the will of His Father. He still went to the cross and died for our sins. We are going to look a little closer at that in the next few verses. **God wants us to submit to others.**

1 PETER 2:21-25

For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps:

“Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”;

who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed.

For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

So Jesus is our perfect example. Sometimes in life we can be treated in a wrong way. It does not mean that God wants us to stay in a place of danger or where we can be hurt, but maybe someone just does not treat us fairly. Should we get angry and try to get back at them? If a boss does not keep a promise to us do we refuse to work hard anymore? No way, because that is not like Jesus' example.

We need to follow Jesus' example and follow in His steps. He did not commit any sin. That means that He never did anything wrong as long as He lived. He never told a lie or deceived anyone ever. But He was still reviled by man. He was mistreated and suffered. When He was beaten and suffered he never did the same thing in return to those who beat Him and caused Him to suffer. Jesus once talked to His disciples about loving our enemies and blessing those who are mean to us. This was His example to us.

So we read in these verses that not only did Jesus not threaten back or be mean back to those who were mean to Him, what He did do was simply commit Himself to God. He trusted God that He would be the one to make things right. God is the perfect judge and every person will one day have to stand before Him. So we can trust God that He will make things right if we are being treated wrongly.

Jesus went on to bear all of our sins on the cross so that we might receive eternal life and have a relationship with God. What if Jesus had said one day, "I am through with this and I am tired of being treated badly by people. I do not feel like doing this anymore for a bunch of people who are ungrateful and are being mean to me. I quit!" Wow! If that had happened we would not be able to have our sins forgiven. But Jesus submitted anyway to God's will and plan for His life. He did what God wanted Him to do. And He was blessed and He blessed the world because of it. **God wants us to submit to others.** And we need to do it because it looks like Jesus.

The "We Need Each Other" Races

This game is simply based on a "three-legged race." You will need a scarf or masking tape for each pair of children. Have the children choose a partner. Have them stand next to each other and tie their ankles together. You will need to have an open area for the children to race. If space is limited just have a couple of teams race at a time instead of the entire class.

Have the children line up and say, "go." Let the children race and declare a winner.

When the race is over have the children sit down again. Ask the children to describe ways that they needed to submit to one another in order for this race to work. What if one partner demanded to do it their way? Could the team have worked? How important was it for the teams to work together? In order for us to do things in life do we need the help of others? How important is it for us to submit to one another (see Ephesians 5:21)?

1 PETER 3:1-6

Wives, likewise, be submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives,

when they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear.

Do not let your adornment be merely outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on fine apparel—

rather let it be the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God.

For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands,

as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

Next, Peter looks at family relationships. He talks about how wives are to submit to their husbands. God has an authority structure in the home so that the home can be orderly. Husbands are to submit to Christ, wives are to submit to the husband and children are to submit to their parents. Husbands are commanded to love their wives as Jesus loves the church (Ephesians 5) which when that happens it makes it easy for wives to submit.

Peter addresses how that in some families only the wife may believe in Jesus. He talks about how that if a wife will honor and respect her husband, even if he is not a believer, he can be won over to Christ because he can observe Jesus in his wife. So what a wife does can have a big effect on her husband in leading him to Jesus (if he is not a believer).

Then we are told that wives should be much more concerned about what is taking place in their hearts than how they look on the outside. In our world today there is so much emphasis on how we look and what we are wearing. Those things are not very important in God's sight. What is precious in His sight is a heart that is right with Him, a gentle and quiet spirit. The most important thing for young ladies to realize is that their relationship with God and what is in their heart is the most important thing in life. **God wants us to submit to others.**

1 PETER 3:7

Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

Next, the apostle Peter addresses husbands. He tells them that they need to be sensitive to their wives' need. They need to understand them and give them honor. Husbands need to take care of their wives. So when God gives the command for wives to submit to their husbands, He is also telling the husbands that they have a responsibility to love and care for their wives.

Husbands and wives need to understand that they are both heirs together of salvation. God's Word is clear that men and woman are the same and on equal footing as it relates to salvation. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that men are better than women or smarter than women or anything like that. Rather both men and women are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, both the same. But God did define order in the home so that there would not be confusion.

Both husbands and wives have a great responsibility to submit to Jesus and do what He wants in order to have a blessed marriage. And it is so important to the Lord that He tells husbands that if things are not right in this area that it could hinder their prayers. So it is pretty important that husbands are treating their wives in the right way. **God wants us to submit to others.**

Another great place to read about this is in Ephesians chapter 5. This is also so important because the relationship between a husband and a wife is a picture to the world of Jesus and His bride, the church. Husbands and wives have a great opportunity to show others the wonderful relationship between Jesus and Christians when they are living out their lives in obedience to Him.

1 PETER 3:8-12

Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous;

not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing.

For "He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit.

Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it.

For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and His ears are open to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against those who do evil.”

As we conclude our lesson today let's look at some final things that the Lord wants to share with us. As we learn about submitting to one another these things are good things for us to remember.

First, we need to be of one mind. As believers in Jesus we should be unified with one purpose in mind and that is to obey Jesus and share with others about Him. If we are upset and fighting against one another, as believers in Jesus how will the world ever find out that we have something wonderful and different to offer them? If we are to reach the world, then we need to live our lives different from the world.

Next, we are told that we need to have compassion for one another. We need to help others who are in need. Compassion means to place ourselves in the shoes of someone else who is hurting and to “suffer with” them. So if we see someone hurting we need to see how we can lighten their burden by suffering with them. We also need to be tenderhearted and courteous. We just need to be nice to other people. We live in such a mean world, where it is even considered cool to be rude and mean. For us to live like Jesus is to live a very different way.

Next, we should not return evil for evil. If my little brother bops me in the shoulder I should not bop him back on the shoulder. There is a better way for us to handle that. The Bible tells us that we should rather bless them and do good to them. Read verses 10-12 as a class and talk about how this needs to describe our lives.

In almost every area of our lives we need to learn how to submit. If we learn to submit to our teachers, to the laws, to our parents, etc. then it will be easy for us to submit to Jesus. But how do we do this? Maybe some of us have a difficult time submitting. We can do this through the power of the Holy Spirit. As we are filled with the Holy Spirit and desire to follow Jesus then He will give us the power to do what is right. Let's remember to always submit to one another. **God wants us to submit to others.**

Writing a Letter to Our Leaders

For this activity you will need paper, pens, markers or crayons, envelopes, addresses of government leaders, police dept., fire department, etc., and postage stamps. Share with the children that we have learned today how important it is to submit ourselves to authorities. That would include government leaders as well as those whose job it is to help us; like police officers or firemen. But not only should we submit to our leaders, we should also pray for them and even write them to encourage them (you can also review Romans 13).

Explain to the children that they need to choose a government leader, official or other person whose job it is to help them and write them a letter (for example: the president, a congressman, the mayor, a police officer, fireman, etc.). It can be someone they know or someone they do not know. Give each child a piece of paper, a pen and an envelope. Ask them to write a letter to the person they have chosen. They can share things like, "I am praying for you." Or "Thank you for serving us." Or "God bless you as you serve us." They children can write whatever they would like to.

Next have the children decorate the letter if time permits. Fold the letter and place in the envelope. Help the children with addresses to put on the letter and give them stamps. NOTE: Younger children may not be able to write their own letter. Perhaps you can write one letter as a class and have all the children sign it and decorate it, then mail it. Once you have collected the letters take them home and mail them out. This will no doubt be an encouragement to our leaders.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to submit to those who are in authority. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.