**Submit Yourselves…**

I'll be honest, I don't like "submit yourselves" in my emotional makeup. I like to be independent. I'm an individualist. I'll take care of myself, thank you (well, until I'm too old). But God, Himself says, "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right." (1 Peter 2:13, 14).

We have an election coming up and we must realize two important realities. First is that "We the People" are the final authority in the United States. We can even change the Constitution. But as such, God holds us accountable for how we use that authority. Second, what laws are made by the official elected by the majority, God also holds us accountable for our submission to those laws (so long as those laws do not attempt to force us into ungodliness). With that in mind, consider the following.

"But I'm an American and we don't lick anybody's boots!" my heart shouts. "You're a Christian and you are called submit," Jesus answers. "But we don't have a king!" I say. "But you do have human institutions, "He answers. "I have my rights!" I assert. "So long as they don't demand that you break My laws, you must submit to human institutions," He reminds me. "But I live in America!", I insist. "And I had to submit to the Emperor of Rome and his evil dominions," Jesus gently reminds me.

OK, Jesus does not talk to me personally, but this supposed conversation has scriptural authority in every answer. Sadly, in the minds of many Christians, politics and government reign over their commitment to Jesus and His word. When that happens, many other priorities become blurred and confused. When *that* happens, we lose our focus on the cross and when *that happens, we* become a pawn of Satan, even as we claim to be Christians.

Is there ever a time to fight? Yes, but that is not in the purview of this article. Do we have rights some other nations don't have? Yes - "We the People" are sovereign, not any elected or appointed official. (And "We the People" live under a constitution that "We the People" can change and have numerous times. But it is still the law of the land. Yes, resisting lawbreakers who ignore the law of the land is almost always an option. Should we ever march or protest or resist? Certainly, and I've done that on a number of occasions, but always peaceably, and with Christian attitude and under God's laws.

When Peter was commanded, by people in authority, to cease teaching about Jesus, he responded, "We must obey God rather than men," Acts 5:29. We should do likewise. But we must remember and seek the proper balance between Acts 5:29 and 1 Peter 2:13-17. (Even if our masters are crooked - read verse 18 - the Greek word there is *skolios, English "crooked"*.)

> Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority, or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right. For such is the will of God, that by doing right you silence the ignorance of foolish people. *Act* as free people, and do not use your freedom as a covering for evil, but *use it* as bond-servants of God. Honor all people, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king. (1 Peter 2:13-17, NASB)

To emphasize this reality, verses 19 and 20 teaches us that we find favor with God if we endure when we are suffering harsh treatment *un*justly. *Then…* the real kicker slaps me in the logic in verses 21 - 25: we are called for this purpose and are more like Jesus when we follow "in His steps" (v. 21) when suffering unjustly. ***Hang in there - it might get even rougher!***

Ray Wallace

Further study: Read 1 Peter 4:12-19