

## ***Chewing on Gristle!***

Tough meat can be a bear to chew! (Excuse the pun!) But gristle is far worse! Don't you hate it when you're having a great steak and near the end you bite into a large, tough, nearly impossible piece of gristle!

Submission is like gristle to the brain! You're walking smoothly through life, enjoying a nice *mental* rib-eye steak when suddenly you come across some *mental* gristle - that part of life that bumps up against *submission!* Submission, proper, biblical submission, is so tough to chew that most people simply decide to pass it up, forget it or ignore it. That works, to a degree, at least in the short run. But sooner or later ignoring *proper, Godly* submission will turn out to be a nightmare.

Remember Judges 21:25, "**In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**" In other words, in the absence of a king, no one paid any attention to what was right in **God's eyes!** When people ignore proper, godly submission, you have the actual working outcome of anarchy. People ignore the law because no policeman is in view. People burn, loot and injure others simply because they have chosen to **ignore proper, godly submission.** I have never known anyone who wants to live in that world.

"But I wouldn't do anything like that," you say, and it may be true. Your upbringing may have taught you enough proper behavior that you easily choose to obey the law and treat others the way you want to be treated. But in reality, you are describing your choice to be in submission to the standards learned in your family of origin. Many people don't have that personal depth of child rearing that makes submission to good cultural norms easy.

God is very clear in many passages of scripture that **proper** submission to **proper** authority is not only a good idea but actually required.

I know, it's hard, it's uncomfortable and can even feel like enslavement! But **proper** submission to **proper** authority is actually the key to good and pleasant society in which to live.

God designed human government to punish the wicked and to reward the good. In Paul's letter to the church in Rome, we see these **gristle words** in chapter 13:3-5:

3 For rulers are not a cause of fear for good behavior, but for evil. Do you want to have no fear of authority? Do what is good and you will have praise from the same; 4 for it is a minister of God to you for good. But if you do what is evil, be afraid; for it does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. 5 Therefore it is necessary to be in subjection, not only because of wrath, but also for conscience' sake.

It is not a matter of personal preference, but God's mandate to His people concerning what it takes to secure a palatable society! The more we decide to chew on the gristle of **proper** submission to **proper** authority, the more we enjoy that palatable society in ways that reduce the **gristle** of every day life.

Submission often *feels* like diminished personal freedom or even slavery. But in reality, **proper** submission to **proper** authority is the path to personal peace, family harmony and social stability that cuts out most of the everyday gristle that ruins the freedom and joy of every day life. Keep on chewing the right stuff!

Ray Wallace

Further study: Luke 20:25; Titus 3:1; I Peter 2:13-17