

“Submission in the Workplace”

1 Peter 2:18-25

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I. Introduction

* “I have written briefly, exhorting and testifying that this the true grace of God in which you stand” (1 Peter 5:12).

A. 1 Peter is a call to “stand” in God’s true grace.

1. Salvation (1 Peter 1:2-10)
2. Peter knew that there was a danger in this newfound freedom through salvation in Christ.
3. Peter moved secondly to exhort them to live exemplary lives before the unbelieving world (1 Peter 2:12).
4. This meant lives lived in submission
 - a) Submission to governmental authorities (1 Peter 2:13)
 - b) Submission in the workplace (1 Peter 2:18)
 - c) Submission in the home (1 Peter 3:1-7)
 - d) Submission in the church (1 Peter 3:8)

B. The text today is a call to “submissive obedience in the workplace

1. Even if we are being treated unfairly or harshly, we are to submit obediently and humbly
 - a) It is the best way to win the lost
 - b) Being a good witness is more important than getting your rights
 - c) It’s not about you; it is all about Jesus

II. The Mandate to Submit (1 Peter 2:18)

* “Servants be subject to your masters” (1 Peter 2:18)

A. “Servants”

1. In Greek, it’s the word used for household servants or slaves.
2. Two questions are often asked when you come to a passage on slaves
 - a) Why doesn’t the Bible condemn slavery?
 - 1) Though the Bible does not, in so many words, condemn slavery, neither does it commend it. In Bible days, it was simply a fact of life.

- 2) The Bible did seek to regulate it and modify it so as to eventually destroy it through the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- b) Isn't a passage like this irrelevant to us today?
 - 1) No. If slaves were to submit to their masters, even harsh masters, how much more shall we submit today in the workplace?
- B. "Be subject" (v. 18)
 - 1. Literally "submit yourselves"
 - 2. It's a voluntary submission
- C. "With all fear" (v. 18)
 - 1. It is a fear of God
 - 2. Out of respect for God
 - 3. Being conscious of God
- D. There are two kinds of masters (v. 18)
 - 1. "Good and considerate"
 - a) KJV- "gentle"
 - 2. "Harsh"
 - a) Literally- "bent" or "crooked"
 - b) Awkward to deal with
 - 3. "Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eye service, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with goodwill doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, knowing that whatever good anyone does, he will receive the same from the Lord, whether he is a slave or free. And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him" (Ephesians 6:5-9).

III. The Motive for Submission (1 Peter 2:19-21)

* Peter's focus is not on submission to the kind and gentle masters but on the harsh and hard masters. Under a harsh master, the slaves (or employees) would be tempted to rebel. He gives us three motives for submission.

- A. It is pleasing to God (1 Peter 2:19-20)
 - 1. "For this is thankworthy" (v. 19)
 - a) Greek- *charis*
 - b) It's a quality of grace
 - 2. "For conscience toward God" (v. 19)
 - a) NIV- "conscious of God"
 - b) It's living a life for God

3. “Endure grief, suffering wrongfully” (v. 19)
4. It’s a rhetorical question (v. 20)
5. If you do right and suffer patiently, that is acceptable to God (v. 20)
 - a) It’s pleasing to God
- B. It’s your calling from God (1 Peter 2:21)
 1. “For even to this you were called.” (v. 21)
 - a) God calls us to salvation (1 Peter 2:21)
 - b) God calls us out of darkness unto the light (1 Peter 2:9)
 - c) God calls us to inherit a blessing (1 Peter 3:9)
 - d) God calls us to eternal glory (1 Peter 5:10)
 2. We are called to a patient endurance of undeserved suffering
- C. It’s following Christ’s example (1 Peter 2:21)
 1. “Because Christ suffered for us, leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps.” (v. 21)
 - a) It serves a double function
 - b) Christ is our motive and also our model

IV. The Model of Submission (1 Peter 2:22-25)

* How did Jesus suffer?

- A. He suffered blamelessly (1 Peter 2:22)
 1. Old Testament- “And they made His grave with the wicked—but with the rich at His death, because He had done no violence, nor was any deceit in His mouth (Isaiah 53:9).
 2. Jesus did not sin
- B. He suffered graciously (1 Peter 2:23a)
- C. He suffered trustfully (1 Peter 2:23b)
 1. “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit.”
 2. Commit your ways unto the Lord.
 - a) Matthew 5
 3. Peter knew that Christ’s example could not save us.
 - a) Sinners need a savior.
 - b) Peter reminds us that Christ’s suffering on the cross was redemptive. Jesus was not only a model but also a savior.
- D. He suffered vicariously (1 Peter 2:24-25)

1. Jesus took our sins (v. 24a)
 - a) N.T. Wright's New Perspective on Paul
2. Jesus died to set us free (v. 24b)
 - a) "Dead to sin"
 - i. Its penalty
 - b) Live unto righteousness
 - i. Its power
 - c) "By whose stripes you were healed."
 - i. Not physical healing
3. Jesus died to bring us to Himself, our Shepherd and Bishop (1 Peter 2:25)
 - a) "All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6).
 - b) "The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1).
 - i. I have everything I need
 - ii. In the house of the Lord forever

V. Conclusion

A. Have you come to Jesus, the Savior and Shepherd of your soul?

1. He took your sin
2. He set you free
3. You must come to Him and put your faith in Him
4. "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9).