

Christian Citizens

1 Peter 2:13-17
David Feddes



Living under the system

- Political system (2:13-17)
- Work system (2:18-25)
- Family system (3:1-7)

¹³ Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, ¹⁴ or to governors, who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

¹⁵ For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men. ¹⁶ Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil; live as servants of God. ¹⁷ Show proper respect to everyone: Love the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Live under rulers

- Honor God's image and rule in human creatures who govern.
- Disprove ignorant accusations that Christians are ruinous rebels.
- Live freely to serve God, not evil.
- Honor all, love brotherhood, fear God, honor ruler.

Caesar and God

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human creature: whether to the king, as the supreme authority, or to governors sent by him (2:13-14)

Give to Caesar what is Caesar's, and to God what is God's. (Matthew 22:21)

Tax exempt—but pay

“The sons are exempt,” Jesus said to Peter. “But so that we may not offend them, go to the lake and throw out your line. Take the first fish you catch; open its mouth and you will find a four-drachma coin. Take it and give it to them for my tax and yours.” (Matthew 17:27)

Living under rulers

Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. (Romans 13:1)

Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good. (Titus 3:1)

What's right with the government?

- It is put there by God as his servant to punish evil and promote good.
- It maintains order and stability.
- It prevents hell on earth (though it can't produce heaven on earth).

Room for gospel living

Pray for all people, for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all men to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. (1 Timothy 2:2-4)

Biblical impact

- Government under God
- Rule of law
- Separation of powers
- Value of each person
- Authority to serve
- Vision: free to flourish

Wiseest, best system

Representative democracy as we know it is not the only form of government under which Christian citizens have lived and served God. However, there is no doubt that from a Christian standpoint, it is a fitter and wiser form than any other. (J. I. Packer)

Punish bad, praise good

... to punish those who do wrong and
to commend those who do right. (2:14)

Do what is right and he will commend
you... But if you do wrong, be afraid,
for he does not bear the sword for
nothing. (Romans 13:3-4)

Three options in governing

1. Prohibit
2. Permit
3. Promote

Missteps to avoid

1. Redefine gospel as social justice and shalom in this present world.
2. Avoid sociopolitical activity; stick to personal piety and evangelism.
3. Wield political power to make non-believers behave like Christians.

Systemic realism

- System is human, not divine.
- System is needed and helpful.
- System is worldly and wicked.
- System is fragile and fleeting.
- System can't save souls, purify people, or produce paradise.

Compromise

Compromise in politics means realistic readiness to settle for what one thinks to be less than ideal when it is all that one can get at the moment. (Packer)

Political compromise is NOT moral or doctrinal compromise.

Christian citizens

- Obey good laws; resist evil orders.
- Use your voice and your vote to protect life and liberty under law.
- Pursue public service if called.
- Pray for officials, police, military.
- Put heavenly citizenship first.