

Living Honourably

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[0 : 00] Well, let's open up God's Word to 1 Peter, chapter 2. We'll start at verse 11 and we'll read through to chapter 3, verse 7. 1 Peter, chapter 2, picking up at verse 11.

Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honourable so that when they speak against you as evildoers they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution whether it be to the Emperor as supreme or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. For this is the will of God that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. Live as people who are free not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil but living as servants of God.

Honour everyone, love the brotherhood, fear God, honour the Emperor. Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust for this is a gracious thing when mindful of God one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly.

[1 : 30] For what credit is it if when you sin and are beaten for it you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure this is a gracious thing in the sight of God for to this you have been called because Christ also suffered for you leaving you an example so that you might follow in his steps.

He committed no sin neither was deceit found in his mouth. When he was reviled he did not revile in return. When he suffered he did not threaten but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness by his wounds you have been healed.

For you were straying like sheep but have now returned to the shepherd and oversee of your souls. Likewise wives be subject to your own husbands so that even if some do not obey the word they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Do not let your adorning be external the braiding of hair and the putting on of gold jewellery or the clothing you wear but let your adorning be the hidden person of the heart with the imperishable beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit which in God's sight is very precious.

[3 : 08] For this is how the holy women who hoped in God used to adorn themselves by submitting to their own husbands as Sarah obeyed Abraham calling him Lord and you are her children if you do good and do not fear anything that is frightening.

Likewise husbands live with your wives in an understanding way showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel since they are heirs with you of the grace of life so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Well let's pray as we come and understand God's words some more let's pray. Our Father in heaven thank you for giving us your life and giving and true and good word. Please give us ears to hear and hearts to obey for we ask it in Jesus name.

Amen. Well here at St. Lucia Bible Church we say that we love Jesus. Now if we love Jesus what will that look like? John chapter 14 verse 23 says this Jesus says if anyone loves me he will keep my word and my Father will love him and will come to him and make our home with him whoever does not love me does not keep my word.

So what we have here in the Bible is God's word and what we have in the Bible here is Jesus' word and because we love Jesus we'll certainly love his word and that means we will not reject it but we'll rejoice in every bit of it even the bits we don't particularly like.

[4 : 42] Actually these words that we don't particularly like are the words which we especially need to love like honouring those in authority and submitting to them.

Now when we read passages like this one in the Bible we're confronted by our own attitude towards the Scriptures. The question is how will I respond? And how did you feel when the word of God was read out to you just then?

Now here at St Lucia Bible Church we aim to have the Bible God's word as the final authority in all that we say and do and practice which in the end will always be controversial which will always be counter-cultural but for the believer it's good.

So we pick up the passage today in verse 11 and we're reminded of who we are and what we're to do and so we see that we are sojourners we're exiles that is we are refugees foreigners aliens we're not in our homeland those of us who have been called by God who have been born again into a living hope are not at home ultimately.

This world is not our home we actually don't belong here we're on a journey towards somewhere better heaven to the new heaven and the new earth and when we get home in glory with the Lord Jesus everything will be perfect everything will be right under his rule it'll be great.

[6 : 16] When we get home with the glory of the Lord Jesus we will receive the glorious inheritance we're waiting for and Peter's addressing believers who are experiencing all kinds of trials trials which God is using to refine their faith and so we use it to refine our faith as well God is making sure that we'll finish the journey he's guarding us so we'll make it in the end no matter what's going on in our lives the bottom line is this we are a royal priesthood a holy nation a people who belong to God to declare his excellencies is what we're to do then isn't it we are about proclaiming the excellencies of God chapter 2 verse 9 how we live will either help us do that or hinder us from doing that which is why we are then urged to abstain from the passions that wage war against the soul and as sojourners we will have an astounding attitude submitting to those in authority over us and this attitude will confound the world around about us or it should and this way of life is to be in lockstep with the gospel in this passage we're given three relationships all about authority and how to be lived out one in submission in society to those in authority over citizens to rulers the second is submission in service servants to masters and the third is submission in marriage wives to husbands relating rightly as husbands and wives and this is one of those passages in the bible that believing

Christians are set apart from the world by now since submission is such a key part of the passage we need to understand what submission is and what submission isn't so let's have a think about that for a minute or two what it is first of all submission recognises that there's someone in authority we all function in a world where there's authority no matter who you are there's someone in authority over you and there's probably someone or something that you're in authority over now to submit means to acknowledge that there's something to submit to no one likes to submit that's the bottom line isn't it that's our issue that's my issue no one likes to submit our natural instinct is to rebel the very nature of sin is rebellion against authority our natural instinct is to be rebellious and we resent the idea of submission but that's not going to work right we all want to be the sole authority in the world

I know I do but ultimately all authority is established by God and derived from him God rules the universe according to his will and exercises his authority by his power to do his will Hebrews chapter 1 verses 1 to 3 speaks about that clearly secondly we become citizens of heaven by submitting to Jesus Lord so submission is something that God calls us to and is entirely appropriate because we have submitted to the one who is Lord of the universe that's the way into Christianity thirdly God is a God of order not chaos order requires structures of authority authority is exercised within various kinds of relationships and these relationships come with inherent hierarchy someone is the one who is in authority over somebody else now literally submission means placing oneself under that's what it means so fourthly submission is voluntarily placing yourself under the direct authority of another that's what submission is it's something that I do it's not something that someone else can make me do and so fifthly submission is what makes society work without it there'd be anarchy if we didn't submit to the red light right cars would be continually crashing into each other intersections and there'd be mayhem on the roads just to pick one example so let me tell you what submission isn't submission isn't compliance right if our submission is not done willingly it isn't truly submission it's compliance if your heart's not in it it's not submission secondly submission doesn't define me submission doesn't imply one person is more valuable than another submission

doesn't mean that someone is less intelligent or less significant men and women are both heirs of the kingdom of heaven we see in 1 Peter chapter 3 verse 7 men and women are both made in the image of God of Genesis chapter 2 and a person's value isn't determined by their position in society a person's value is that of being a human made in the image of God that's where our value comes from and submission doesn't mean that we condone sin right there are limits to submission and there's a place for resisting sinful use of authority submitting to a husband doesn't mean enduring domestic violence we can resist authority which is diametrically opposed to the very nature of Christ and his church at the same time those people who have authority have responsibility to exercise their authority appropriately so authority and responsibility go together let me elaborate a little bit further if someone goes to the doctor they put themselves under the doctor's direct authority or wisdom when the doctor says poke out your tongue you poke out your tongue right and then when the doctor prescribes pills to take I take the pills that submission to the doctor the doctor's responsible for making sure they prescribe the right pills remember but picture another situation if that very same doctor's driving down the road and sees their patient who is now the school crossing officer just down here at

St Lucia Centennial Street here Central Avenue and they have to stop saying stop right then the doctor puts themselves under the direct authority of the patient who is the school crossing officer the doctor could rebel and run over their patient but instead stops right so that the kids can cross the road safely that is submission to the stop go school crossing officer submission always works itself out in relationships which then brings us to this passage here before us submission of citizens to rulers verse 13 to 17 first we come across a very the way every one of us needs to conduct ourselves as citizens in society and that is submitting to the human institutions submitting as citizens to rulers now be that the emperor be that the governor be that the prime minister the policeman the principal of the school the tuck shop lady he says this because ultimately

[14:48] God is the one who establishes these human institutions Romans chapter 13 verse 1 let every person be subject to the governing authorities for there's no authority except from God and those that exist have been instituted by God God is the one who established the authority right and verse 2 of Romans chapter 13 therefore listen to this whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed and those who resist will incur judgment submission is the key way to being a good citizen and we submit for the Lord's sake if we rebel against the civil authorities we're actually rebelling against God that's who we're rebelling against and as we submit to the civil authorities we commend the gospel we commend the Lord Jesus we display the kingdom of God and the rule of God our submission to the civil authorities will ultimately put to silence the talk of ignorance and foolish people the way of revolution uprising and rebellion doesn't change society for the better the

French revolution brought about suspicion denouncement and death and the symbol of death the guillotine the people's revolution in China overturned oppression but when the oppressed came to power they themselves became the oppressors and blood continued to flow Christians are to be subject to every human institution would that be to the emperor or king and remember when Peter is writing the emperor at the time was not actually sympathetic towards Christians the emperor at the time was none other than Nero and he was not a Christian and he persecuted believers and it was the persecution that Nero instigated which led to

Peter's death Christians are to be subject to the one representing the king as well the governor and notice the purpose of governance that God establishes the responsibility the authorities have notice what it is to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good and governments that fail to do evil sorry to punish evil actually disobeying God's purposes for their establishment existence so we need to encourage and pray that our governments would do this there are a whole lot of things that people might want governments to do which is really not what God would have governments to do I'd encourage you to read a book called Subjects and Citizens it's out recently so to be clear submission to human institutions is to be the default position of Christians because we submit to Jesus Lord that's our default position we need to recognize we live free though we are told to live as people who are free we're not slaves to sin and death we're not slaves to human institutions we actually belong to the kingdom of God ultimately ultimately we are citizens of heaven we actually belong to the kingdom of God that's where we belong God has set us free from being owned by the institutions of the world ultimately we are free from the rule of the state we're not citizens of this world we've been born again to have a heavenly citizenship we're under the rule of King Jesus but notice we are literally there verse 16 we are literally slaves of God God owns us and he tells us to

submit to the authorities over us we're not free to sin and do evil that will not help us to proclaim the excellencies of our

Lord and God brothers we're in a far far better situation than Peter was in then and that many Christians in the world are in now so let me ask the question do we submit to the governing authorities the laws of the land the speeding rules on the road I know if my body wants to rebel against them the way we submit to the authorities over us will be a powerful witness to the world and a powerful witness to our families and I've got ten fingers pointed to myself here how can we call submission from our children if we can't submit to those in authority over us ourselves what kind of model will I be giving what kind of model have I given yes we're free but it's no excuse for evil it's no excuse to live in rebellion to the authorities that God has placed over us well there's the first one submission then to servants to masters next we come to the way servants are to conduct themselves the servant here is not the slave we might envisage we've seen from the movies on [20 : 24] TV right but rather a household slave that's the kind of person it is they are which is more like a person who works for a company right that is supplied with a house and a car and a health care plan and food that's the kind of idea here these servants could have been a teacher could have been a doctor could have been a lawyer and these people are servants who are very valuable members of a household they're not just people you can just sort of think really poorly of at all they're highly esteemed by the house so servants workers submit to your earthly masters your boss who is God has placed over you and notice we're to do it whether they're good or not there in verse 18 God is pleased when household servants endure through suffering unjustly unjust suffering is not a good thing right the endurance through the unjust suffering is it's a credit it's a good thing to endure because we are then becoming more and more like our saviour

Jesus who sets the example on how to suffer unjustly the example of trusting his father trusting God who will judge justly in the end and like us unlike us there was no sin in Jesus he didn't sin didn't lie no to sleep was found in his mouth he was reviled he suffered he didn't retaliate he could have called down legions of armies to actually obliterate everybody who opposed him but he didn't instead he left the ultimate judgment to God the father and in doing so brought salvation to the world by bearing our sins in his body that's what he did it's God who has the end goal of history in mind and is working even through the most wicked moment in history when the creator of the world is crucified this is one of our key memory verses to get a hold of it takes us to the heart of how we are saved he himself

Jesus right the spotless sinless perfect man bore our sins my sins in his body being hung on a tree a wood a cross a zulon strung out there and becomes a curse for us we're told in Galatians chapter 3 and Jeremiah chapter 21 takes the wrath of God for my sin that I deserve and you deserve and so brings about our salvation and so we are to die to sin no longer live for sin no longer live for ourselves our rebellious ways but for him who died for us we were wayward rebellious sheep but but now we've returned to the shepherd of our souls he's called us back to himself the risen reigning overseer shepherd of our souls now has called us back to himself and given

Jesus example then we come in submission as wives and husbands so let's plunge in take a deep breath and here we go wives to husbands chapters 3 1 to 7 likewise is important right likewise like servants to masters like citizens to rulers comes back to chapter 2 verse 11 so how does live honorably as sojourners of refugees in the world that's the likewise likewise wives as sojourners and exiles it seems that some of the wives had unbelieving husbands as is often the case then and so now and these husbands may not have been so nice to them some of them might have been but we're told here wives your conduct will speak volumes to your non believing husband if you have one and it may be it may just be that your unbelieving husband notices the change in life how you live it may make him curious to know why and they may be won over without a word that is without continual preaching continual nagging and no matter who your husband is your beauty is to be that which comes from within a beauty that comes from being submissive a gentle and quiet spirit and this is what we're teaching our daughters as well that is the very thing that should be the distinguished feature of our wives that is the thing which is really attractive about our wives not living in competition to rule over husbands not constantly complaining about them the natural inclination and outworking of sin is for a wife to rule the husband to lead the husband and the natural inclination of the husband you got it is the letter so this has been the problem since the beginning of time since the time when

Adam and Eve sinned in the garden and defied God's loving authority in the garden and Sarah submitted to Abraham and called him Lord leader master of the home so wives are children of Sarah those of the family of God are like Sarah having the same nature and character of righteous Sarah as they fight off the inclination to rule over husbands and instead submit to their loving leadership and notice clearly that women are to submit to their own husbands here right it's a family thing it's a household submission it's not a man can call every other woman to submit to him just because he's a man and they're a woman that's not how it works however there's one thing that must be said here again I've got to say it underline again for our world to hear loud and clearly as well submission to your husband does not mean enduring domestic violence the husband's authority is to reflect

[27 : 45] Christ's sacrificial love and so serve not abuse and by failing in this area he's failing as a husband and forfeiting any authority he might otherwise have had but in the very next sentence we read likewise husbands I want to major on this now husbands see here look at it with me I want you to work with me closely on this one likewise husbands so in view that you're a sojourner a refugee an exile in the world the bottom line is husbands you are not we are not to abuse our positions of authority in marriage for we read verse seven live with your wives in an understanding way showing honour to the woman as the weaker vessel since they are heirs with you of the grace of life so that your prayers may not be hindered so our job right our job is to live with your wives in an understanding way literally according to knowledge now what would this knowledge be let me just give you a few ideas of what this knowledge would be firstly knowledge of what marriage is right husbands firstly know what marriage is it's a one flesh relationship where a husband is faithful to his wife and loves her as

Christ loves the church as Christ loved you to the point of dying for you secondly knowing what marriage is for it's for companionship it's for bringing into the world of godly offspring it's a sermon illustration of the gospel it's not for domineering overpowering self serving enslaving of women thirdly husbands we need to know our wives know their strengths their weaknesses their fears their likes their dislikes their foibles be understanding of them recognise that there are all kinds of things going on for them that are unique for our wives we need to know what makes them tick what concerns for children and friends they have their vulnerabilities their frustrations their fears their need for tenderness and compassion it's a lifelong study and as we live in an understanding way of our wife husbands are to honour their women the feminine one the fairer one recognise their worth their value their contribution their long suffering at least their long suffering with me we are to see them as precious and valuable honouring means that we will speak well of them in public and in private

God has entrusted your wife to you to love and cherish and to present holy and spotless to Christ on the last day and we see that women are the weaker vessel on average and generally men have stronger muscles and women have sharper tongues and that's why we have men and women's events in sport don't we it's absurd to think that men and women are equal in every way they just aren't we are different and the difference is something we enjoy to celebrate and not despise husbands we are to try and make life easy for our wives being willing to go the extra mile to make life more bearable bear the load be prepared to help around the house when you come home the things we are fundamentally equal though in is salvation we are to honour our wives why because they are heirs with us do you see that in verse 7 honour the women as we can since they are heirs with you co-heirs of the grace of life we are both looking forward to the glory and receiving inheritance kept in heaven for us we will inherit eternal life together we are equally loved by God precious in his eyes we are equally forgiven sinners by faith in the precious blood of Jesus shed for us one thing that christians christianity has done let me tell you has elevated the positions of women in society christians recognise that christian men and women are equal in status with God men and women are heirs of the grace of life yet with different roles and responsibilities within the framework of this relationship that God has established there's a bloke named Tom Holland you may have read about he's not a christian he tells us in his book dominion that christianity was the best thing that ever happened to women and so wives in the first century you can read his argument it's compelling when christianity came to india it liberated women from the horrendous hindu practice of sati where the wives are encouraged to be burned alive on the funeral pyre of their husbands and now even though it's officially illegal it's still practiced in some places encouraged as the ultimate form of womanly devotion and sacrifice a christian husband would never ever

encourage this from his wife christian husbands recognize the status of women and would never demean wives in any way and now we have the reason why we're to honor our women and the reason we're to live with them according to knowledge is so that what would you write next so that you can have a happy life so that she will worship you so that you can play golf on Sunday afternoon with your friends so that you can go fishing with your mates so that you can play computer games all night no what does it say chapter 3 verse 7 husbands why are we to honor our wives live with them in an understanding way so that you can pray so that you can pray so that your prayers may not be hindered or kind of literally your prayers may not be cut off so that God will actually listen to you that's the idea here it's hard enough already for husbands to be prayer for and if we're not living with our wives according to knowledge if we're not honoring our wives then prayer is going to go it just will so while we live as aliens and exiles in this world [35 : 45] God's chosen and precious children waiting for our salvation to be revealed we're to live honorably we'll submit to human institutions for the Lord's sake knowing that he established them we'll submit to those who are authority over us even if we have to endure unjust suffering just as the Lord Jesus did and we'll submit appropriately in marriage with husbands who will live in an understanding way of their wives ultimately so that God might be glorified on the day when he comes let's pray now Father we thank you for giving us your life giving word a word which enables society to function and Father help us to live honorably in this society and that the way that we live and the words that we say might have integrity we pray in Jesus name Amen