

## Good Citizens for God's Mission

How should we as believers think about government? How should we speak about our local, state and national leaders? How should we engage our civic responsibility as followers of Jesus Christ? We are living at time when we could use God's perspective on these sorts of questions. Thankfully, today's passage offers such perspective. This passage gives us insight into how our faith and civic responsibility relate and how we can live as good citizens for God's mission.

**Opening Question:** Have you ever held, or thought about running for, some kind of governing office? If so, what?

### Read 1 Peter 2:13-17

1. How is this passage related to the principles articulated in 2:12?
2. Peter knew that human institutions suffer from sin, corruption, and evil agendas, yet he still counseled Christians, "Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution." Why? What reasons does the rest of the passage give?
3. Why is the phrase, "for the Lord's sake," critical to our understanding of what Peter commands (v. 13)?
4. How is submitting to governing authorities part of God's plan of redemption? What effect can we as citizens of heaven have on people through our obedience to government?

5. When it comes to submitting to governing authority, is there a limit? Where do we draw the line? Think Scripturally about this. What other passages speak to this issue?
  
6. Peter states that the God-given purpose of government is to punish evil and to uphold what is good (v. 14). What are ways that we can help our governing authorities pursue this role?
  
7. What are some practical ways that the command to honor everyone and to honor the emperor (i.e. our rulers) should be lived out in today's political climate (v. 17)?

Sam said:

So as followers of Christ let's excel at doing good:

- Let's be charitable in our understanding of one another.
- Let's be loving and gracious in all our political discussions.
- Let's be resolute about what we believe is right, but never vicious, cruel, or insulting when we think someone else is wrong.
- Let's do things like advocate for the rights of the oppressed, lead our culture in overcoming racism, and serve people who are struggling and lost.
- Let's make part of our Christian reputation be that we are safe to come and talk to about what is moral, what is good, and might need to change in our society.

8. How would you personally evaluate yourself doing good in these things that Sam suggests? Where is there a need for growth?
  
9. What do you sense is the main thing that God is saying to you through this passage?