Daily Devotion #215

**Submission is a Mark of Godliness**

*1 Peter 2:13-14 (NASB)* *“Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether to a king as the one in authority,**or to governors as sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and the praise of those who do right.”*

Submitting to anyone can be very challenging. Growing up in the country, my mom and dad always had a wood stove for heat. It was supplemental, but it was still a huge source of heat for us in the winter and on chilly late fall and early spring days. Many times I can remember my mom standing in front of that stove warming herself and heating her cup of coffee. She would often set it on the top of the stove as she was working around the house.

What I also remember about that wood stove is how it always needed to be fed. Day after day, my dad would tell me to get wood from the shed and fill the wood box. I never minded the warmth of the heat from the stove, but I hated being told to get wood. I’m not sure why except that my sinful nature didn’t what to be told what to do. There were a few times I took the initiative and got wood in and even took time to split it without being told. I didn’t mind that at all. It was just being told to do so that got under my skin.

One of the many problems with our sinful humanity is that it doesn’t like, and neither does it want, anyone to be in charge over it. It loves to be the decision maker and the leader. It is that part of us that wants to be our own god and tell others what to do. So when we are told to do something we don’t want to do, we resist and often rebel against that directive.

It was no different for the people of the church in Rome and the surrounding regions in Peter’s day. Nero was the brutal tyrant who dictated the moves of all of his subjects. He was ruthless in his dictatorial leadership and cared very little for anyone other than himself. He certainly had no tolerance for anyone who even appeared to be a threat to his rule.

So when Peter says to the church, by the direction of the Holy Spirit, to submit to every human institution, you can imagine how that must have grated against their souls. Many of these people had lost their livlihoods and even been robbed of family members’ lives to Nero’s circus games. Games where innocent people were slaughtered for sport. But none-the-less, the instruction from the Lord was, and is, to submit.

Our submission is not just because they are in power over us, but because God is the ultimate power of all authority. So our submission is ultimately to God. The Apostle Paul said that all authority is given by God. (Romans 13) Not that all government is good, but all government is under the authority of God. Meaning God will always have the final say, no matter what type of government exists. So, God’s people are to understand that no matter what government they live under physically, they are ultimately living under God’s authority. Our God is a gracious and kind God who loves us. He has plans to bless us and never harm us. So, then, some may ask how God can be good and love us if He allows people to be treated the way Nero treated them? We must remember that God’s blessings are not necessarily blessings in this life. God is the god of eternity. And all who belong to Him will one day be with Him, never to feel the pains of this life again. So even if we struggle in this life, even in violent ways, our souls are safe with Him. He has ultimately saved us from pain in the next life - eternal life.

So God says to keep our eyes focused on serving earthly leaders because, in reality, we are really serving Him - the One who will bring you to be with Him forever, even if earthly authorities do us harm. So, be a good citizen of God’s Kingdom, and submit to those in authority over you remembering that God is the One who you really serve.