

## Armed Forces, Politicians and Police

'Let every person be subject to the governing authorities for there is no authority except from God and those that exist do so by God's appointment. Therefore, they who resist the authorities resist the ordinance of God and those who resist will bring down judgement on themselves. Civil authorities are not a terror to people of good character, but to those who do evil. Do you desire to have no dread of those in authority? Then do what is right and you will receive his approval, for he is a servant of God to you for good. If you do evil you should be afraid for he does not wear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant to execute His wrath on the evildoer. Therefore one must be subject, not only to avoid God's wrath but also as a matter of principle and conscience. For this same reason you pay taxes. The authorities are official servants under God, devoting themselves to attending to this very service. Give to the authorities what you owe. Pay taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due and honour to whom honour is due' (Romans 13:1 to 7).

'Remind people to be submissive to their magistrates and authorities, to be obedient, to be prepared and willing to do honourable work' (Titus 3:1).

'Obey your leaders and submit to them for they are keeping watch over your souls as men who will have to give an account to God. Do this with joy and not with groaning for that would not be profitable to you' (Hebrews 13:17).

We know the Bible is the inspired word of God and every scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). In the Bible, the Lord makes it very clear the civil authorities are put there by God for the good of the people and we must always honour and obey them. The Lord takes responsibility of Government overall, which is on His shoulder (Isaiah 9:6). If we therefore complain about our governments at any level, we are actually questioning the Lord's choice of leadership for our nation, our area and our church. We must pray for those in leadership because the Lord has chosen our leaders right from the top; from the leaders in government, both federal and state; the leaders in our civic councils; the leaders in our church; to the head of the house (the husband) and they are all placed there by God for the good of the people, by divine order. As we read earlier, the leaders are God's servants for our good, and as God's servant, they are accountable to God. We are instructed to obey our leaders, but they too will have to give an account to the Lord for the way they have conducted themselves. Those who judge – magistrates for example – must be honest before the Lord. 'Be careful what you do, for you judge not for man but for the Lord and He is with you in the matter of judgement' (2 Chronicles 19:6).

Monarchs, rulers and judges are warned to do what is right. 'Now therefore you kings, act wisely. Be instructed and warned you judges and rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, rejoice with trembling lest you displease Him' (Psalm 2:10 & 11). 'Divinely inspired decisions are on the lips of a king. He will not betray his mouth ... It is an abomination to God for a king to commit wickedness, for a throne is established by righteousness' (Proverbs 16:10 & 12). The Lord establishes a monarchy or government in righteousness, and He becomes angry if a king or ruler abuses his position of authority and uses that authority for evil. We have seen many wicked kings and governments overthrown. It is actually the Lord who 'de-thrones' them.

Our armed forces, politicians and police force are there for us, appointed by God for our good, so we must be subject to them, obey them and pray for them. You may ask, "But what about corrupt or despotic officials? Did God put them in place?" Yes He did, and one day they too will have to give an account to God for their actions. God put them there to do what is right, even though they may choose to do what is wrong, which God says is an abomination. If you are righteous, then you have the authority – in God – to pray for them and even ask the Lord to remove them from office – as long as you have a pure heart and pray with the correct attitude and without any rebellion against the God appointed authority. God will eventually remove a wicked ruler from his place of authority, and God Himself will deal with them fiercely. 'Let his days be few and let another take his office ... Let the creditor seize all he has and let strangers plunder the fruits of his labour' (Psalm 109:8 & 11).

For several years King David was forced to deal with the corrupt King Saul (1 Samuel 16:12 to 2 Samuel 4:10). Even though Saul tried to kill David and became an evil leader, David kept his attitude right and became angry with Saul's killer. 'David said to him, "Why were you not afraid to stretch forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed? Your blood be on your own head for you have testified against yourself saying, 'I have slain the Lord's anointed'" (2 Samuel 1:14 & 16).

To conduct a coup or to cause unrest is rebellion. To overthrow a leader brings judgement on ourselves so we need to have the same attitude King David had and seek God, then we must let God deal with the wicked ruler in His own way, and in His own time. To oust a pastor is even more wicked. We need to pray for them

and ask God's will regarding any difficult situation within a church. If someone dislikes a pastor, it is better for that person to leave the church than to undermine God's divine order by causing unrest. As Christians we need to forgive our leaders even if we disagree with them. The scripture says we are to love another, and to try to oust a church leader is not showing love or forgiveness. We are commanded to love one another, to live in harmony and peace with one another, and never repay evil for evil but leave the way open for God to act. 'Do not be wise in your own conceits. Repay no one evil for evil. Respect what is honourable in the sight of all people. If it is possible, as much as it is up to you, be at peace with everyone. Do not seek revenge yourselves Beloved, but give place to God's wrath, for it is written, "Vengeance belongs to Me. I will repay," says the Lord' (Romans 12:16 to 19).

Amen and God bless you.

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