

civil governments because God gave them their authority. In 1 Peter 2:13, Peter says that we need to obey the government for “**the Lord’s sake.**” One of the reasons we are to obey the civil government is because they were established by God. Another reason is mentioned in 1 Peter 2:15, that we need to obey those who rule over us to “**silence the ignorance of foolish men.**” Later, in vs. 20, Peter reasons it out for us: “**For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.**” One of the reasons we are to obey the government is to bring others to Christ. There is something about watching a righteous person suffer that inspires others to righteousness (Romans 5:6-8; 1 Peter 2:21-25). And, if nothing else, the third reason is because it makes God happy (1 Peter 2:20).

In conclusion, we have seen that it is the Christian’s responsibility to obey the civil government despite our feelings towards it and those in charge. We need to obey the civil government because it has been established by God and obeying it is the same as obeying God. The only time it is not acceptable to obey the civil government is when it would require us to violate God’s Laws and even then, it is only acceptable to disobey that civil law. The reasons we are to obey the civil government is because 1) it is from God, 2) it might bring some lost soul to God, and 3) it makes God happy. Therefore, we need to obey our civil government regardless of who is in the White House or Congress, but, ultimately, we need to obey God. Let us do our best to obey and serve Him all of our lives.

By Curtis Carwile

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# Faithful Sayings

## Olsen Park Church of Christ

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### Services

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.  
10:20 a.m.  
6:00 p.m.  
Wednesday: 7:00 p.m.

#### Elders:

Ken Ford  
Charles Kelley  
Pat Ledbetter

#### Deacons:

Dean Bowers  
Eddie Cook  
Bill Davis  
Pat Goguen  
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## A Christian's Responsibility to the Civil Government

Finally, the elections are over and we have a new President-elect. Whether you voted for Senator Obama or Senator McCain, the question arises: “What is a Christian’s responsibility towards his or her civil government?”

In Titus 3:1, Paul tells the young preacher in Crete, Titus, to “**Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey, to be ready for every good work.**” We are to be subject to and to obey the rulers and the authorities wherever we are. Paul repeats that

idea in Romans 13:1a and goes into further explanation in vss. 1b-7. Paul explains that any and all authority that man possesses comes from God. Jesus also makes that point to Pilate (John 19:11). Paul explains that it is the Christians responsibility to obey the civil government because it draws its authority from God and obeying the civil government is the same as obeying God. This obedience to the civil government permeates all aspects of a Christian’s life. Paul, in vss. 6-7, says to pay your taxes (cf. Matthew 22:21), pay

the customs, respect those who deserve respect (whether by their own merits or by the position of their office), and honor those who deserve honor. In 1 Peter 2:13-17, Peter makes much the same points. He says to “**submit to every ordinance of man**” and tells us to do that to the king all the way down to governors. God makes it very clear that He commands us

to obey our civil government.

In the passages we just looked at (Titus 3:1; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-17), the Biblical writers show us the responsibilities the government holds, as well. First and foremost, the responsibility of any civil government is to uphold the statutes of God. Those in positions of authority have been given that power and authority by God and therefore are stewards of that gift. It is their responsibility to use that gift in a way that glorifies God. The authority any government uses should be used to protect and encourage serving God. In Romans 13:3, Paul tells us that the role of government is to be a terror to evil works, not good works. In 2 Peter 2:14, Peter tells us that the role of government is to punish evil-doers and praise or reward those who do good deeds. Eventually, those in positions of author-

ity will have to answer for how they used that authority on the Judgment Day. However, regardless of how the government uses its God-given authority, it is still the Christian’s responsibility to obey the government because that is one of the things they will be judged for on the Judgment Day.

Does this mean we have to agree with our civil government on all accounts and blindly follow them? Of course not! In the Old Testament, the prophets God would send to Judah and Israel would always recognize the political power of the kings despite their disobedience to God (e.g. Elijah and Ahab). In the New Testament, Jesus said, “**Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s**” (Matthew 22:21). This is at a time when emperor-worship was sponsored by the govern-

ment, people were put to death in the Colosseum and Circuses for entertainment, and prostitution was sanctioned by the government. I am sure that Jesus disagreed with Caesar in the way he ran his empire and disagreed with Herod and Pilate in the ways they ran their administrations. Yet, Jesus told them to obey those governments. He tells us to obey our government despite all the evils it promotes and allows.

With all of this said, there are times when disobeying the government is required. In Acts 5, Peter and the other apostles were arrested for teaching Jesus to the people. In vs. 28, the rulers asked them, “**Did we not strictly command you not to teach in the name of Jesus?**” In vs. 29, Peter responds, “**We ought to obey God rather than men.**” Our example was set that obedience to

the government is commanded only as far as the commandments of God. That does not mean we can disobey government because it does things that are contrary to God’s law. Rather, we must obey God in all things, even if civil government commands us to do otherwise. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-Nego in Daniel 3 made the same stand against the idol worship established by Nebuchadnezzar. In Daniel 6, Daniel faced the same dilemma when forced to disobey King Darius of Persia when Darius decreed that no one could pray to anyone else other than him for 30 days, but he still obeyed God and prayed to Him. The point is that there are times and situations in which it is a Christian’s responsibility to DIS-obey the civil government. Christians in oppressive countries like China, Cuba and Venezuela all have to disobey the civil governments

under which they live in order to obey God. There may come a day when those of us in the United States will have to disobey the civil government here in order to obey God. That may not be that far away. Even now calling something a sin can be regarded as “hate-speech.” How long will it be before that is prosecutable?

There are several reasons why we are to obey the civil government. One is explained in Romans 13:1-7. Paul explains that we are to obey the