

**Sermon or Lesson: 1 Peter 2:13-15** (NIV based)  
[Lesson Questions included]

TITLE: Testifying To Non-Believers That Our Goodness Comes From God's Intrinsic Goodness

INTRODUCTION:

For those of us who have been a leader in a ministry, when you first started doing a ministry leadership role, did you experience the perception that people in your ministry group were intensely watching you with oversized magnifying glasses and binoculars? Shake your head up and down 'YES' if you have experienced this perception.

Well, for the rest of us true believers, God says the reality is that non-believers around us similarly notice, see, watch closely, draw conclusions, and talk about us, including even the goodness of our lives, the good deeds that we do, and the good submission to authority that we do. In this study now of the next verses in 1 Peter chapter 2, we are going to examine and analyze what God says about this topic.

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READ: 1 Peter 2:13-15, with vv.11-12 for context

BACKGROUND:

- - God has designed and intends that we true believers are to be living in holiness, possessing a deep sincere brotherly love for one another, spiritually maturing in the faith, and serving God effectively. (vv.1:15,22; 2:2,5)
  - - Even though we true believers are essentially foreigners to the non-believers around us, our living in comprehensive goodness and producing good deeds can have an attraction and substantial impact upon them becoming open to hearing about God. (vv.2:11,12)
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vv.13-14 - READ (cf. Romans 13:1-7)

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, distinguish, and formulate a fairly inclusive and thorough description of the 'submit to every authority' dynamic that is being stated in verses 13 and 14.]

SECTION POINT: We true believers are commanded by God to submit to every authority that we come under and submit to all aspects of those authorities.

- - As a continuation and application of the mandate in verse 12 to "live such good lives among the pagans", another mandate from God is given in verse 13 to "submit [ourselves]... to every authority instituted among men".
- - We true believers are commanded to "submit" to the authorities over us - to "subordinate; obey"; and "yield or surrender [ourselves] to their authority" and directives. (Strong's #5293 in v.13; AHD - "submit")
- - The extent or inclusiveness of which authorities to submit to is clearly state here - "every", meaning we are commanded to submit to every authority that is over us and every aspect of each of those authorities that is over us. (v.13)

- - The Greek word that translates as "authority" is a broad term that carries the sense of being "ordinance" that has been created, or formed, or founded, or "established, or set up, especially with provision for continuing existence". (Strong's #2937 in v.13; from Zodhiates p.897; *AHD* - 'found' (verb))

- - Thereby, this authority includes: the person in authority; the system that has been established and is used to form, implement, and enforce the various elements of that authority; and the various laws, regulations, rules, and etcetera that define, comprise, and establish the specifics of that authority. (from *AHD* 'ordinance')

-- Examples that are distinctly cited in verses 13 and 14 are:

- - - - "the king, as the supreme authority" and highest ranking governmental official on the national level;

- - - - and "governors", as the highest ranking governmental officials on the regional level, "who are sent by him [the king] to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right".

- - By implication from these cited examples and the definition of the Greek word, this authority that God wants us to submit to includes all of the governmental authority structures on the national level, and on the regional level, and on the local level.

- - And this authority that God wants us to submit to includes "every" kind of governmental entity, such as those that make the edicts or laws ("the king", for example), along with those that enforce the edicts or laws (the "governors", for example). (vv.13,14)

- - Even though only governmental authority is cited as examples here, certainly this mandate from God applies to "every" or "all" other "authorities that we come under, which would include church and denomination authority, educational institution authority, civic organization authority, employer authority, labor union authority, retail and service businesses authority, real estate landlord or community authority, hobby club authority, and etcetera. (Strong's #3956 in v.13)

-- This authority that God wants us to submit to furthermore includes "every" aspect of authority that emanates from the various authorities over us, as practical examples:

- - - - coming to a complete stop with our vehicle at 'STOP' signs;

- - - - not littering or polluting;

- - - - being honest and paying all taxes, fees, and dues that are imposed by and owed to the authority, without griping, grumbling, or complaining;

- - - - not fomenting or participating in dissension, division, or revolt against the authority;

- - - - following the processes designated by the authority to bring up grievances or claims, or to effect change;

- - - - not defrauding or stealing from the authority, such as time, money, or material objects.

- - From the contexts of verses 18 and 23, we true believers are to "submit ourselves to every authority" that we are under, even when that authority is being abusive, unfair, unjust, corrupt, oppressive, persecutive, or harmful to us.

- - Rightly however, we are to maintain personal integrity before God, while simultaneously submitting our-self to the authority, which in some situations requires that we conduct our-self in a manner that does not involve us personally committing sin but nevertheless is striving to be submissive to the authority.

- - For example, if a governmental authority over us were to impose a mandatory tax to specifically pay for providing abortions to its citizens, we true believers would have to

respectfully decline to pay this tax, be willing to suffer any penalties incurred, and perhaps instead try to politely negotiate to pay the equivalent amount to some other program of that governmental authority.

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## v.15 - READ

[Lesson Question: Discuss, analyze, distinguish, and formulate a fairly inclusive description and ramifications of how the "by doing good... silences..." dynamic in verse 15 develops and occurs.]

SECTION POINT: The 'doing of good deeds' by us true believers impacts non-believers and testifies to them that our goodness comes from God.

-- From verse 13, one reason we true believers are to have a position of submission, obedience, and compliance to each authority that we are under is because this behavior is "for the Lord's sake":

- - - - we do it for the Lord,

- - - - we do it "because" of the Lord, (Strong's #1223)

- - - - we do it because the Lord tells us to do it,

- - - - we do it because we obey the Lord,

- - - - we do it because the Lord has determined that it is the right thing to do.

-- We trust that the Lord has some good that He is working to accomplish even though we may not see or understand what good is being accomplished through our submission to every authority. This is one practical application of "walking" by faith. (2 Corinthians 5:7, Strong's #4043)

- - Another reason we true believers are to submit to each authority that we are under is because God uses our "doing good" to "silence the ignorant talk of foolish men".

- - Drawing conclusions about the motives that people have is prone to frequently be in error because it is essentially speculation that is usually based on scant evidence.

- - For "foolish men" or persons who draw these speculation conclusions, they also substantially rely on their experiences with other people, their observations of other people, their own inclinations, and their own behaviors from the past.

- - Their inclinations and immediate reactions to 'submitting to authorities' is to staunchly take the position of outright resentment, refusal, defiance, deflection, and subversion to every authority that is over them.

- - And of course, making negative speculation comments about other people gratifies a natural desire to tear down other people in an effort to make oneself look good and ingratiate oneself before one's cohort of listeners.

- - So, from a position of "ignorance", "foolish men" or persons "talk" and make these negative speculation comments about the motives of other people.

- - Perhaps many of these negative speculation comments eventually prove to be correct when they pertain to non-believers.

- - But for pertaining to true believers, these negative speculation comments should eventually prove to be incorrect - completely and utterly and blatantly false.

- - Therein, the good deeds and corresponding good motives from intrinsic goodness of the true believers eventually come to light - become known to other people.

- - As the truth and reality of this goodness of true believers gradually becomes more widely known, the negative speculation comments about their motives are essentially nullified, furthermore bringing and heaping discredit, shame, and "foolishness" on those "foolish men" or persons who made these false accusations and negative speculation comments about the motives of true believers who do good and agreeably submit to every authority over them.

- - An objective of God is to "silence the ignorant talk of foolish men" and bring reproach upon them by means of our "doing good".

- - Our duty as true believers, therefore, is to obey what the Lord directs us to do, patiently endure any consequent suffering that is unjustly inflicted on us, "entrust" our situation to God, and then leave to God any action or means by which He restores our well-being and good reputation or not restores them. (v.23)

- - "God's will" is for us true believers to suffer for doing good, doing right, appropriately; He wants that we experience and endure this suffering.

- - So we wait upon God to accomplish His "will", whether or not He ultimately "silences" their "talk" of negative speculation comments, exposes their "ignorance", and makes them obviously look "stupid" and "foolish". (v.15, Strong's #0878)

- - Nevertheless, though, we should expect that as we do good, we will encounter and endure unjust suffering and additional adverse consequences that are perpetrated by the worldly people around us.

- - But we should remember that morally blending in with society around us and failing to do good in order to avoid suffering and persecution are contrary to God's will for us. (vv.11,12)

- - Notice that in taking the position of submission to the authority over us in verse 13 and the "doing of good" in verse 15, we true believers will be cast in vivid and stark contrast to the "pagans" and non-believers around us.

- - In verse 14, a priority function of the "governor" authorities is "to punish those who do wrong" and to "praise" and "commend those who do right". (Strong's #1868)

- - Referring back to verse 12, these "governors" in verse 14 are highlighting, bringing to public attention, and in effect serving God's purpose of vindicating true believers who are living a life of goodness and good deeds.

- - And then in verse 15, "the ignorant talk of foolish men" is being distinctly "silenced", while simultaneously the "doing good" by the "you" true believers is being made more widely known and highlighted in our respective community.

- - Even though the mandates in verses 12 and 13 along with verse 11 may seem arbitrary, God has a purpose in having His "chosen people" "live such good lives", do "good deeds", and "submit [ourselves]... to every authority instituted among men". (v.9)

- - His purpose is that our 'good lives', 'doing of good deeds', and 'good submission to every authority' testify to the "pagans" and non-believers of the goodness that God is building in the lives of His true believers, which furthermore testifies to His own intrinsic goodness.

- - "In this way", "pagans" and non-believers "see" unusual goodness, they become informed about what religious type of persons this unusual goodness is coming from, they gain comprehension of the Deity who empowers this unusual goodness, and consequently they respond to their gained understanding by ceasing their

corresponding ignorant, stupid, and foolish accusative talk. (Strong's #3779 in v.15, omitted in NIV; v.12)

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BIG IDEA: God uses our good 'submitting to authorities' and our 'doing good' as means to testify to non-believers that our goodness comes from His intrinsic goodness.

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#### APPLICATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS:

- - For those of you who are true believers, are you in compliance to this mandate from God to "submit yourself... to every authority" that you are under? Are you in full compliance to this mandate? Or instead, are you in selective compliance to this mandate?
- - Are you amicable to the various kinds of rules and mandates that authorities issue? For example, are you amicable to vaccine and mask mandates issued by an authority because of the Covid-19 pandemic? Or do you react with outrage, hostility, verbal assault, and defiance?
- - Do you appropriately accept a directive from an authority when given a directive that you do not like, or that unwarrantedly costs you extra money, extra time, extra effort, or extra inconvenience?
- - Are you amicable to all of the kinds of authority that are over you? Even governmental authority? Or is your heart hostile, rebellious, contemptuous, or subversive to governmental authority and perhaps other kinds of authority?
- - The reason of submitting to authority "for the Lord's sake" - do you find that reason compelling and sufficiently motivating for you to be consistently compliant to all rules and mandates given to you by an authority that is over you?
- - Do you trust that the Lord has some good that He is working to accomplish even though you may not see or understand what good is being accomplished through your submission to every authority?
- - Do you live in genuine goodness and submission to authority that vividly and starkly differentiates and contrasts you from the way pagans and non-believers live?
  
- - Do you engage in ignorant, speculative, and accusative talk about the motives of other true believers when they do good deeds or use their spiritual gifts?
- - Do you patiently endure erroneous, speculative, and accusative comments made about you? Even when the comments come from other fellow believers?
- - Do you react with joy and thankfulness when other people are acknowledged for their good deeds or the effectiveness of their use of their spiritual gifts? Or instead, do you react with jealousy, insecurity, skepticism, criticalness, and false accusations?
  
- - For those of you who are not true believers, do you fit into God's description in verses 15 and 13 of engaging in "ignorant talk" by means of your "foolish" thinking, in which you "accuse" and disparage true believers for "doing good" and "submitting to the authorities" that are over them?
- - If so, perhaps you should consider and weigh what you gain by engaging in this "ignorant talk"?

- - God says that you gain displaying yourself in "ignorant talk" and in being a "foolish [person]", and later in being "silenced" presumably in shame because the assertions in your "ignorant talk" were subsequently proven to be completely in error and false.
  - - Do you now realize that the 'good lives', the 'doing of good deeds', and the 'good submission to every authority' of true believers are designed by God to testify to you and other non-believers of the goodness that God is building in the lives of His true believers?
  - - By God's design and orchestration, in this way, you and other non-believers are to "see" the unusual goodness of true believers, become informed about what religious type of persons this unusual goodness is coming from, gain comprehension of the Deity who empowers this unusual goodness, and consequently soften your heart towards being attracted to this Deity.
  - - Are you willing to adopt this 'silent watchful non-critical openness' approach to the goodness of true believers, rather than the 'ignorant talk from foolish thinking' approach?
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File name: 1Peter2\_13-15-SermonOrLesson.\_\_\_\_ (.htm, .rtf, .doc, .pdf)

Translation used: NIV, quoted or referred to in various places within this document

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