

Occasional Update #7

Saturday 1 October 2022

PRAYING FOR LEADERS

How should we pray for our leaders?

A number of relevant Scriptures are listed below, together with some other thoughts ...

- Respect them and their positions of authority.
- Obedience to those things that are right.
- Pray for them in the ways the Bible says, or illustrates.
- We don't need to tell God in detail what to do!
- We may hate what is done, but still intercede for leaders who are doing wrong.

Authority: Pharaohs, Kings, Caesars, Governors

The following verses say that we should pray for our leaders for ...

- An understanding mind to govern our people; able to discern between good and evil.
- Justice and righteousness. Wisdom, discretion, hate evil, humble, and govern rightly.
- Seeking quiet, peaceable living, which is godly and with dignity.

1 Kings 3:9. Job 34:17-19. Proverbs 8:12-16. 1 Timothy 2:1-3.

Romans 13:1-7 speaks of how **we**, as Christians, should live regarding those in authority:

Submission to the Authorities

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God.

Therefore whoever resists authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you wish to have no fear of the authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive its approval; for it is God's servant for your good. But if you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer.

Therefore one must be subject, not only because of wrath but also because of conscience.

For the same reason you also pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, busy with this very thing. Pay to all what is due them – taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due, honour to whom honour is due.

Matthew 22:21. Titus 3:1-2. 1 Peter 2:13-17. 2 Peter 2:10 (don't despise authority)

Examples of how God's people faced opposition from authorities, but God brought them through their situations:

Joseph & Potiphar. Moses & Pharaoh. Daniel and his friends & king Nebuchadnezzar and Darius.

Jesus & Caiaphas and Pilate. Peter and John & Temple leaders (Acts 4:1-21). Apostles & High Priest (Acts 5:18-25). Peter & King Herod (Acts 12:4-17). Paul and Silas & magistrates (Acts 16:23-40). Paul and Felix. John on island of Patmos (Revelation 1:9).

These examples demonstrate: Faith, patience, persistence, standing up for what is right, declaring the truth, and obeying God – even if that conflicts with the commands of human authorities – and a willingness to suffer for righteousness and truth, if necessary.

The Lord reigns over all !

However, our Lord God Almighty has supreme authority and power over all things. He, and He alone, is **“King of kings, and Lord of lords”** (1 Timothy 6:15b-16; Rev 17:14; 19:16)

Also see Psalm 146:10. Matthew 6:9-10. Acts 23:4-5. Ephesians 1:20-21. Colossians 2:9-10. 1 Timothy 1:17. Hebrews 13:17.

For a child has been born for us, a Son has been given to us. **Authority** [government] rests upon His shoulders; and He is named "Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

His **authority** shall grow continually, and there shall be endless **peace** for the throne of David and his kingdom. He will establish and uphold it with **justice** and with **righteousness** from this time onward and forevermore. (Isaiah 9:6-7)

Jesus came and said to His disciples, "All **authority** in *Heaven and on earth* has been given to Me" (Matthew 28:18)

Jesus is Lord! (Romans 10:9)

Jesus said to His disciples, "Pray then in this way: Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven." ... "For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen!" (Matthew 6:9-10 NRSV. v.13 KJV)

Jesus also prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not what I want but what You want." (Matthew 26:39)

FOR MEDITATION AND PRAYER

At times there can be real conflict between obeying human authorities, and doing what God says or is leading us to do. How can we resolve these issues?

Some issues may be:

Peer pressure to do what is wrong.

Employers telling us to do what we know is dishonest.

Compromise between what we know is right and what is "marginal" or "not too bad."

Our "borderline" desires.

Government's laws, both allowing what is wrong, or hindering or forbidding what is right.

When is it wrong (for example) for teens and young adults to disobey their parents, teachers, or church leaders because they believe that those 'authorities' are wrong?

How do we interpret what Peter and John said about obeying those in authority?

They said to the priests and captain of the Temple, who had called them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus, "*Whether it is right in God's sight to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge; for we cannot keep from speaking about what we have seen and heard.*" (Acts 4:18-20)

Or ...

When the captain and Temple police had brought the apostles out of prison, they had them stand before the council. The high priest questioned them, saying, "We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name, yet here you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and you are determined to bring this man's blood on us." But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than any human authority" (Acts 5:27-29)

How *should* authorities encourage people to live? 1 Timothy 2:1-2, etc.

What major things do we see in our society that are contrary to how we *should* be living?

What can we do about these things?

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