

I Peter 2:17b
March 19, 2017

Open with Prayer

HOOK:

If you have been with us the last couple of weeks, you know that we have identified people groups here and abroad who feel targeted by a government authority or law enforcement agencies. Groups who came to mind were: Black Lives Matter, illegal immigrants, Organizations providing Sanctuaries for Refugees, Muslims in America, Coptic Christians in Egypt under severe persecution, Christians in Sudan, etc. We agreed that it is quite difficult to imagine what it would be like to live in a country where authorities are targeting us and appear “out to get us.”

Transition: Peter acknowledges how these scattered Christians feel. But if we had to describe how he is leading them in this letter, it can be summarized with Michelle Obama’s mantra from her DNC speech: “When they go low, we go HIGH.” All of us CAN go “high” when enduring persecutions by those in authority “for the Lord’s sake” BY heeding the ADMONITIONS that Peter offers in his letter. We will pick up where we left off, which means we will re-visit verse 17. Let’s read it and begin.

BOOK (NIV 1984):

V.17:

- Show proper respect to everyone: Love (agapaō) the brotherhood of believers, fear God, honor the king.

Process Questions:

Q V.17b: What is the third admonition we should heed as citizens? [fear God; The verb “fear” (*phobeisthe*) here does not mean to be in terror, but awe and reverence that leads to obedience (cf. *phobō* in 1 Peter 1:17, *phobou* in 3:16, and *phobon* in 2 Cor. 7:11).

True or False: One will never truly respect people until he reverences God. [Let people engage]

Q: What is the fourth admonition we should heed as citizens? [Honor the king; The respect or “honor” due to all is especially to be given to those God has placed in authority.]

Q: Can you “honor the King” and be critical of him at the same time?

Q: If you have concerns regarding how the King is leading the people, how do you continue to honor him/her? [Let people engage]

Q: Let me check in with you. If you were part of a people group experiencing injustices, being thrown in jail because of false accusations, or feeling oppressed by their governing authority, how is Peter’s message going over at this moment? Are you inspired? Astounded by what you’re reading? [Let people share how they are processing Peter’s admonitions.]

Q: How do we ensure that we conduct ourselves by word and deed “for the Lord’s sake?” If we are really “advertising God’s virtues,” then we have to have the mindset all day long that when others persecute us, we go “high.” How do we make sure our mindset is right?

LOOK:

Here, then, is the wonderful truth Peter wanted to share: as we live godly lives and submit in times of suffering, we are following Christ’s example *and becoming more like Him*. We submit and obey, not only for the sake of lost souls and for the Lord’s sake, but also for our own sake, that we might grow spiritually and become more like Christ.

Close in Prayer

Commentaries for Today’s Lesson:

Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible Exposition Commentary* (Vol. 2, pp. 405). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

“Fear God” and “honor the king” go together, since “the powers that be are ordained of God” (Rom. 13:1). Solomon had the same counsel: “My son, fear thou the Lord and the king” (Prov. 24:21). We honor the king because we do fear the Lord. It is worth noting that the tenses of these verbs indicate that we should *constantly* maintain these attitudes. “Keep loving the brotherhood! Keep fearing God! Keep honoring the king!”

As Christians, we must exercise discernment in our relationship to human government. There are times when the right thing is to set aside our own privileges, and there are other times when *using* our citizenship is the right thing. Paul was willing to suffer personally in Philippi (Acts 16:16–24), but he was unwilling to “sneak out of town” like a criminal (Acts 16:35–40). When he was arrested on false charges, Paul used his citizenship to protect himself (Acts 22:22–29) and to insist on a fair trial before Caesar (Acts 25:1–12).

Raymer, R. M. (1985). *1 Peter*. In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, pp. 844). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2:17. This section concludes with a four-point summary of Christian citizenship. First, Christians are to **respect** (*timēsate*, “honor, value, esteem”; cf. *timēn*, “respect, honor,” in 3:7) ... **everyone** (cf. Rom. 12:10; 13:7). Believers should be conscious of the fact that each human has been uniquely created in God’s image. Second, Christians are to **love the brotherhood of believers**, their brothers and sisters in Christ. God’s family members should love each other. Third, Christians are to **fear God**. The verb “fear” (*phobeisthe*) here does not mean to be in terror, but awe and reverence that leads to obedience (cf. *phobō* in 1 Peter 1:17, *phobou* in 3:16, and *phobon* in 2 Cor. 7:11). One will never truly respect people until he reverences God. Fourth, believers are to **honor the king**. “Honor” is from *timaō*, the verb used at the beginning of this verse. The respect or “honor” due to all is especially to be given to those God has placed in authority (cf. “the king” in 1 Peter 2:13 and “governors” in v. 14; cf. Rom. 13:1).