

Respect for Governing Authorities Makes a Difference

Message 04 of the series "#For334"

I. Paul wanted Titus to make a difference by being a godly example in a sinful culture.

"This letter is from Paul, a slave of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ. I have been sent to proclaim faith to those God has chosen and to teach them to know the truth that shows them how to live godly lives... I am writing to Titus, my true son in the faith that we share. May God the Father and Christ Jesus our Savior give you grace and peace. I left you on the island of Crete so you could complete our work there... The people of Crete are all liars, cruel animals, and lazy gluttons." Titus 1:1,4-5,12 (NLT)

Life Application: Jesus wants us to make a difference by being godly examples in a sinful world.

"My Kingdom ...is not of this world." John 18:36 (NLT)

"They do not belong to this world any more than I do... Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world." John 17:16-18 (NLT)

"Dear friends, I warn you as 'temporary residents and foreigners' to keep away from worldly desires that wage war against your very souls. Be careful to live properly among your unbelieving neighbors. Then even if they accuse you of doing wrong, they will see your honorable behavior, and they will give honor to God when he judges the world." 1 Peter 2:11-12 (NLT)

II. Paul instructed Titus to remind believers that godly behavior toward government officials makes a big difference.

"Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good. They must not slander anyone and must avoid quarreling. Instead, they should be gentle and show true humility to everyone." Titus 3:1-2 (NLT)

a. God wants us to obey our governing authorities.

"Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished. For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience. Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do."

Romans 13:1-6 (NLT)

Note: The only reason we wouldn't obey governing authorities is if doing so means we would have to disobey God's Word.

"Then they called them in again and commanded them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John replied, 'Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God's sight to obey you rather than God. For we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.'" Acts 4:18-20 (NIV)

b. God wants us to respect our governing authorities.

"For the Lord's sake, respect all human authority—whether the king as head of state, or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right. It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you." 1 Peter 2:13-15 (NLT)

"Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority." Romans 13:7 (NLT)

Life Application: We must NOT slander governing authorities or anyone else.

"People can tame all kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, and fish, but no one can tame the tongue. It is restless and evil, full of deadly poison. Sometimes it praises our Lord and Father, and sometimes it

curses those who have been made in the image of God. And so blessing and cursing come pouring out of the same mouth. Surely, my brothers and sisters, this is not right!” James 3:7-10 (NLT)

“You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language.” Colossians 3:7-8 (NLT)

“Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ...”
Ephesians 4:15 (NLT)

“Don’t sin by letting anger control you.” Ephesians 4:26 (NLT)

Life Application: We must be careful who we listen to.

“Blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked or stand in the way of sinners or sit in the seat of mockers.” Psalm 1:1 (NIV)

c. God wants us to pray for our governing authorities.

“I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. This is good and pleases God our Savior, who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.” 1 Timothy 2:1-4 (NLT)

Life Application: We should especially pray for leaders we DIDN'T vote for.

“You have heard the law that says, ‘Love your neighbor’ and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? Even pagans do that. But you are to be perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.”

Matthew 5:43-48 (NLT)

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“Mockers can get a whole town agitated, but the wise will calm anger.”
Proverbs 29:8 (NLT)

“Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.”
Matthew 5:9 (NIV)

“If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
Romans 12:18 (NIV)

CONNECT GROUP QUESTIONS

1. Name a famous person in history who made an impact because they lived differently than the social norms. How were they a difference maker?
2. Read Titus 3:1-2. How would you help someone understand these verses?
3. Read Ephesians 4:15, 21-32. What are some ways Paul is instructing the church of Ephesus to grow and become more like Christ?
4. We all make choices in our attitudes toward governing authorities. We can choose obedience or disobedience, respect or disrespect. As followers of Christ, how can our ability to make a difference in the lives of others be effected by those choices?
5. Read Proverbs 15:1-2. In your opinion, why do we often struggle to control our emotions in a disagreement? What are some ways a person can respectfully disagree with someone?
6. Read Hebrews 11:1. What does our reaction to government, whether in elections or decision-making, say about our faith in God?
7. Spend some time as a group praying for governing authorities leading our nation, state, and communities. Use the prayer guide insert from this week's message, or download the prayer guide from centeringlives.com.

Governing Authorities

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