

Armed Forces, Politicians and Police

'Let every person be loyally subject to the governing civil authorities, for there is no authority except from God (by His permission and His sanction) and those that exist do so by God's appointment. Therefore, he who resists and sets himself up against the authorities resists what God has appointed and arranged in divine order; and those who resist will bring down judgement upon themselves, receiving the penalty due to them. For civil authorities are not a terror to people of good character and conduct, but to those of bad behaviour. Would you have no dread of him who is in authority? Then do what is right and you will receive his approval and commendation for he is God's servant for your good; but if you do wrong you should dread him and be afraid for he does not wear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant to execute His wrath, punishment and vengeance on the wrongdoer. Therefore one must be subject; not only to avoid God's wrath and escape punishment, but also as a matter of principle and for the sake of conscience. For this same reason you pay taxes; for the civil authorities are official servants under God, devoting themselves to attending to this very service. Render to all men their dues; pay taxes to whom taxes are due, revenue to whom revenue is due, respect to whom respect is due and honour to whom honour is due' (Romans 13:1 to 7).

'Remind people to be submissive to their magistrates and authorities, to be obedient; to be prepared and willing to do honourable work' (Titus 3:1).

'Obey your leaders and submit to them for they are keeping watch over your souls, as men who will have to render an account. Do this with gladness and not with sighing and groaning for that would not be profitable to you' (Hebrews 13:17).

We know the Bible is the inspired word of God and every scripture is God-breathed (2 Timothy 3:16). In the Bible, the Lord makes it very clear the civil authorities are put there by God for the good of the people, and we must always honour and obey them. We can see that the Lord takes responsibility of Government overall, which is on the Lord's shoulder (Isaiah 9:6). If we therefore complain about our government, we are actually questioning the Lord's choice of leadership for our nation, our area and our church. We must pray for those in leadership because the Lord has chosen our leaders right from the top; from the leaders in government, both federal and state; the leaders in our civic councils; the leaders in our church; to the head of the house (the husband) and they are all placed there by God for the good of the people, by divine order. As we read earlier, the leaders are God's servants for our good; and as God's servant, he is accountable to God (Hebrews 13:17). We are instructed to obey our leaders, but they too will have to give an account to the Lord for the way they have conducted themselves. Those who judge – magistrates for example – must be honest before the Lord. 'Be careful what you do, for you judge not for man but for the Lord and He is with you in the matter of judgement' (2 Chronicles 19:6).

Monarchy, rulers and judges are warned to do what is right. 'Now therefore, O you kings, act wisely. Be instructed and warned O you judges and rulers of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear; rejoice with trembling, lest you displease Him' (Psalm 2:10 & 11). 'Divinely directed decisions are on the lips of a king; his mouth should not transgress in judgement. It is an abomination to God for a king to commit wickedness, for a throne is established by righteousness' (Proverbs 16:10 & 12). We see here, the Lord establishes a monarchy or government in righteousness, and He becomes angry if a king or ruler abuses his position of authority and uses that authority for evil. We have seen in modern history how wicked kings and governments are overthrown by 'people power'. It is actually the Lord who 'de-thrones' them, and He uses the people to do it.

From these scriptures we can see that our armed forces, politicians and police force are there for us, appointed by God for our good, so we must be subject to them, obey them and pray for them. You may ask; "But what about corrupt or despotic officials? Did God put them in place?" Yes He did, and one day they too will have to give an account to God for their bad behaviour. God put them there to do what is right, even though they may choose to do what is wrong, which God says is an abomination (Proverbs 16:12).

If you are righteous, then you have the authority – in God – to pray for them and even ask the Lord to remove them from office – as long as you have a pure heart and pray with the correct attitude and without any rebellion against the God appointed authority. God will eventually remove a wicked ruler from his place of authority, and God Himself will deal with them fiercely. 'Let his days be few; and let another take his office. Let his children be fatherless and his wife a widow. Let the creditor seize all he has and let strangers plunder the fruits of his labour' (Psalm 109:8, 9 & 11; Acts 1:20).

Read from 1 Samuel 16:12 to 2 Samuel 4:12, about how King David dealt with the corrupt King Saul. Even though Saul tried to kill David and became an evil leader, David kept his attitude right and became angry with Saul's killer. 'David said to him, "Why were you not afraid to stretch forth your hand to destroy the Lord's anointed? Your blood be upon your own head; for you have testified against yourself saying, 'I have slain the Lord's anointed'" (2 Samuel 1:14 & 16).

To conduct a coup or to cause unrest is rebellion. To overthrow a leader brings judgement on ourselves, so we need to have the same attitude King David had and seek God, then we must let God deal with the wicked ruler in His own way, and in His own time. To oust a pastor is even more wicked. We need to pray for them and ask God's will regarding any difficult situation within a church. If someone dislikes a pastor, it is better for that person to leave the church than to undermine God's divine order by causing unrest. As Christians we need to forgive our leaders even if we disagree with them. The scripture says we are to love another, and to try to oust a church leader is not showing love or forgiveness. We are commanded to love one another; live in harmony and peace with one another, and never repay evil for evil but leave the way open for God to act (Romans 12:9 to 19).

Amen and God bless you.

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