

A Practical Study of 1 PETER:

Practice for Suffering Saints

“How Suffering Fits in the Father’s Plan”

Key Verse: 1 Peter 5:10

“But the God of all Grace, who has called you to His eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, shall himself make you complete, shall establish you, shall make you strong, shall ground you as on a foundation.”

Pattern Number Four – Submit to Authority – 1 Peter 2:11-17

Key Verse 2:13

The first three patterns that we’ve seen in our previous sessions, we talked about not getting shook because God has control. And basically what we’ve been doing in these first three sessions is focusing on SALVATION.

Now we’re turning to our second big word. We’re going to talk about SUBMISSION.

It’s SALVATION, SUBMISSION, and SUFFERING is the sequence of the book of 1 Peter.

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When we talk about submission, immediately there is a red flag that goes up in every woman's heart.

I'll always remember one of my first Bible classes back in 1972. I was teaching 1 Peter. It was a large group of woman in Austin, Texas.

There were several ladies who had never had any exposure to the scripture. They were crammed into that room. And I got to chapter 3 and it says "wives be submissive to your own husband." And there was this gigantic sigh in the room. And a voice that actually came over my tape and it says "Oh God, there's got to be a better way."

The group that get tough and start growing, you're part of an establishment and now submitting to authority.

Someone has also wisely said: "Before you ever learn to submit to authority—I mean before you ever learn to exercise authority—you must learn to submit to it."

I think the reason we have so much tension in marriage along this line is we have an awful lot of proud fathers who have fought authority all their lives. So when it comes time to exercise it in the home, they really don't know how to handle it.

One of the greatest exercises of authority is the prerogative of being assertive. And that's what makes greatness.

There are no wives or any children that I know, who if their husbands in exercising their authority, made being a servant top priority would have any problems with authority in the home.

One of the reasons that I love camping so much is we not only have intense opportunities for evangelism, but we have great opportunities to teach these young people on our staff the one thing that we live and die by. And that is, if you're going to be great, you're going to learn to be a servant. To learn to do for others, and that's how you earn the right to lead.

So submission to authority is a problem for all of us. We're just going to focus on it when we get to chapter 3 in the husband and wife relationship.

But aren't you glad that we're studying the whole epistle so we get a couple of studies to prepare us for it and get to that point.

Ethel Barrett is probably a lady that I'll meet tomorrow at the book seller's convention. She was there last year. She's up in her 70's now. She's written many children's books. And her little book called *Will the Real Phony Stand Up* is a book on the epistle of James.

And she tells the story that helps us understand the problem of authority and I like to quote it.

There's a story of a bee who overheard a conversation while he was dallying on a window pane and he discovered to his dismay that he was a worker bee, born to be under authority all of his life and would never be anything else. He flew back to the hive mad as a hornet and he got his fellow bees to rebel and fly out for themselves and establish their own colony. Well they fell to quarreling over who would be the boss and got nowhere. In the thick of it our little bee left in disgust, ran into an older bee and decided to live with him. Who will be the boss? Asked the older bee. Why you're the wiser. And who will be the worker? Asked the older bee. Why me. I'm the stronger. And then he saw how things stood. He was right back where he started from so they both decided to go back to the hive and let the queen bee rule the roost, which is the way God had planned it in the first place.

That's an amazing thing isn't it? Have you been around long enough to watch people go through those kind of cycles? They never can learn to leave comfortably with authority over them so they go from church to church to church.

If you happen to have a few of them in your church like Diotrophes in 3 John 9 who always want to run everything, they run it for a while until everybody rebels and then they get mad and they take their toys and go somewhere else. And you just see the cycle. Are you like that? Are you kind of a suitcase Christian? You're around with a group of people for a while and then you can't get along with them because nobody appreciates the fact of your great leadership ability and so you go somewhere else and you kind of church-hop.

Or in college we used to call them “suitcase athletes.” They can’t get along with this coach so they take their bags and they go and play for this coach. And they can’t get along with him and they pack their bags and go play for this coach.

And that’s the way it is with a lot of people life isn’t it? Is that the way God intended it? You see, that’s not it.

In this particular pattern Peter is addressing a major issue. And the question I raise right now at the beginning of it, that I’m going to impress upon you at the end of it—in your life right now, as far as you know, are you living comfortably under divine authority? Because horizontal authority is only a manifestation of divine authority.

When you’ve got rumbling in the ranks you’ve got people out of fellowship with God. Somebody’s responsible for that. And that person is walking in the flesh instead of the Spirit and the conflict is between the flesh and the Spirit. That’s what’s causing it.

And if you’ve got that same problem in your family, if you’ve got somebody in your family walking in the flesh and somebody in the family walking in the Spirit. And that conflict is there simply because you’ve got a problem with authority.

Now Peter saw some of those problems. And so he’s writing from the crucible of personal experience. That’s what makes this letter just jump off of the page when you read it.

Verse 11, chapter 2.

v. 11 Beloved, I am begging you as aliens and exiles to keep away from the desires of the flesh, which are waging war against your soul.

You know what the desires of the flesh are? That's the old nature within you. That's the desire to be independent. That's the desire to break the mold. That's the desire to get out of the circle and go and do what I want to do.

We had the funniest experience. We got to the airport to come up here last Friday, this lady—she's white-headed—was the driver of the bus at the west side remote park. I live at DFW. I fly the Advantage plan and Pearl and I go to Hawaii every November free. So I was using the Lord's money wisely.

We've had some real thoughts, in fact our first experience on Maui a couple of years ago was to establish Maui ministries. We were convinced that we saw a vision. The first sunset did it.

Well this is our third year back so I know all these bus drivers at remote parking. And I said "Lady, I remember you so clearly because you were having a headache over driving this crazy route every hour on the hour, taking these people around. And remember I had some Bufferin." And she giggled and she said "O, that wasn't me! That was my daughter! She's married!" And I said "I thought she was you." She said "Oh no,

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we look just alike!”

And she got into the biggest conversation with us all the way to the terminal about the fact that she wasn't given to headaches. And then finally, it was so funny we got to talking about it. “Do you ever get bored driving this big circle, going round and round from the terminal, back out to the deal and around there?” She says “Yes! I got to admit. There've been times that I'd like to do something about it.”

So we landed up here in Denver and we got on the bus and this lady that was driving the bus to take us over to the Alamo rental car place says “You know what, I would just like to get off this bus, just go somewhere different for a change!”

So I told her the story of the New York bus driver that did that. Did you read that in the paper? He was so tired of driving his route, he wanted to break out of his mold and he came to one of his stops, let all of his passengers off, and took off for Florida. When they found him in Florida they took away his job and his bus. And there was such a rebellion back in New York that the company had to rehire him.

We all have those times don't we? We would like to just break out of it and go and rebel against the authority.

Now what is that? That is the old nature within me! That is not a signal from the Spirit of God. It is the nature which is within me as “I want to call my own shots and I want to do my own thing and I want to go here and I want to do this and I

want to do that!”

Peter, as he begins to address authority, he says “Look! We’re all human! We’re all like David. I want to go to someplace where you aren’t! I want to live beyond authority.”

I believe that Ecclesiastes chapter 3 has never really been fully understood until you read it in the context of the mid-life crisis.

Why is Solomon saying “There’s a time to be born and a time to die—a time to plant, a time to root up and a time for this and a time for that”? It’s because he’s fed up with parameters of authority! He wants something different in his life. He’s bumping against that authority.

And we all have those times when we’re really honest. Is what I’m doing worth it? Is it productive and fruitful? Those feelings are the stirrings of the old nature within us. And the evil one delights to destroy us by responding to those yearnings.

“Beloved, I am begging you as aliens and exiles”—don’t you love those words?—“to keep away from the desires of the flesh which are waging war against your soul.”

What do you see there that’s really neat? When a person is begging somebody to do something, you know that he’s been hurt by it.

You know, he could have used his authority. Here is Peter, one

of the twelve. He could say “Now men, I’m an apostle! And there’s one thing I want you to do. Stop living in the flesh and start living in the Spirit.” But he’s a man that uses preciousness. Here’s a man that begs them.

You see, I can’t come to you this morning and tell you “Look, shape up and start living under authority.” You don’t do that. I can come and I can beg. I can come and appeal because I know personally what’s involved when you break out of the parameters of authority and I can see you’re going this way I beg of you, please.

Or I can do that with my children. I can see them making mistakes and I can say “Kids, look, please life is slipping away from you!” And I can beg them. You don’t.

They resist and they go on. And so Peter begs.

“I am begging you as aliens and exiles to keep away from the desires of the flesh, which are waging war against your soul.”

Lenski put it this way—the Lutheran commentator:

These exhortations deal with our relationships and thus naturally flow from those that emanate from our relationship to God.

(source unknown)

You see, SALVATION has to do with relationship with God. SUBMISSION has to do with the relationship with each other.

Once the authority is established and the chain of command is right in the doctrine of salvation, then we've got to deal with it down here in our relationships with each other.

Now he calls them “aliens and exiles” and he loves that. And his please is that they would “keep away from the desires of the flesh, which are waging war against your soul.”

You understand that? I maybe need to throw a few more passages in here so you understand the difference.

When you became a Christian, you were given a new divine nature. This new nature, when you're in fellowship with God, is operating and it produces always the same kind of things. We'll see that in just a minute. But, the old nature's still there. And at any moment in your life you are capable of allowing that old nature to operate.

And it can come just like that! It can come on the freeway when somebody cuts in front of you. You can be driving down the freeway singing “Let's just praise the Lord!” and somebody cuts in front of you and it's amazing what happens! You have stepped from the old nature to the new nature.

And the longer you're a Christian, the more you weather and you've got to deal with that and be victorious.

Now let me give you some verses—Galatians 5:16 and 17. Oh, by the way, if this is not a problem to you you've got a

problem. And it's one of two things. Either you're not a Christian or number 2, you've lived so long by the old nature, you don't know what it is to live by the new one. And either one of them are going to put egg on your face.

Every believer has got this problem. You are I fight the flesh with the walking in the Spirit. And it's going to be a war all the way to the house. That's never going to stop.

Galatians 5:16, 17

I advise you to obey only the Holy Spirit's instructions. He will tell you where to go and what to do and then you won't always be doing the wrong things your evil nature wants you to. For we naturally love to do evil things that are just the opposite from the things the Holy Spirit tells us to do and the good things we want to do when the Spirit has its way with us are just the opposite of our natural desires. These two forces within us are constantly fighting each other to win control over us and our wishes are never free from their punctures.

Now here's Romans 7.

Romans 7:15-25

I don't understand myself at all [Paul says] for I really want to do what is right but I can't. I do what I don't want to, what I hate. I know perfectly well what I am doing is wrong. The laws I am breaking are good ones, but I can't

help myself because I'm not doing it. It is sin inside me, that old nature, that is stronger than I am and that makes me do these evil things. I know I am rotten through and through so far as my old sinful nature is concerned. No matter which way I turn I can't make myself do right. I want to but I can't. When I want to do good I don't and when I try not to do wrong I do it anyway. Now if I am doing what I don't want to it is plain where the trouble is. Sin still has me in its evil grasp. It seems to be a fact of life that when I want to do what is right I inevitably do what is wrong. I love to do God's will so far as my new nature is concerned, but there is something else deep within me in my lower nature that is at war with my mind and wins the fight and makes me a slave to sin and death that are still within me. In my mind I want to be God's willing servant, but instead I find myself still enslaved to sin. So you see how it is, my new life tells me to do what's right, but the old nature that's still inside me loves to sin. What a terrible thing this is. Who will free me from my slavery to this deadly lower nature. [Then he says] Thank God it has been done through Jesus Christ our Lord. He has set me free.

But I can still choose to live under it. And live out of fellowship with God.

Now, you know this is such an important problem that James addresses it too.

You've heard from Peter and you've heard from Paul. Now let's get James in here.

James 4:1-2

What is causing the quarrels and the fights among you. Isn't it because there is a whole army of evil desires within you. You want what you don't have so you kill to get it. You long for what others have and can't afford it so you start to fight and take it away from them and yet the reason you don't have what you want is because you don't ask God for it.

And actually we must identify what the flesh looks like. And it's given in full color in Galatians 5:19-21. There are 15 characteristics of the flesh when a person falls out of fellowship with God and he starts walking in the flesh. Eight of these have to do with interpersonal relationships, by the way. The first three have to do with moral matters. That's the big issue, isn't it? And here we go.

Galatians 5:19-21

But when you follow your wrong inclinations your lives will produce these evil results: impure thoughts, eagerness for lustful pleasure, idolatry, Spiritism, hatred and fighting, jealousy, anger, constant effort to get the best for yourself, complaints, criticisms, the feeling that everyone else is wrong except those in your own little group, and there will be wrong doctrine, envy, murder,

drunkenness, wild parties, and all that sort of thing. Let me tell you again as I have before that anyone living this sort of a life will not inherit the kingdom of God.

And for a believer we're not beyond that. Every one of those nasty things can jump out in a minute when the flesh is in control instead of the Spirit. And you need to be aware of that. We don't preach a lot of this. But this is where the rubber meets the road. This is real life.

And so Peter starts out, he's saying "Now I know you want to break out of the mold. I know you want to live by your own authority. But I'm telling you please, I'm begging you, don't! Because this is what results when the old nature is at work. And I want to avoid a lot of personal problems for you."

Verse 12—Oh, isn't this a great verse?

v. 12 Having your manner of life among the Gentiles beautiful in its goodness, in order that in case they are speaking against you as those who are doing evil, as a result of your good deeds, which they are watching, they may glorify God on the day of visitation.

"Having your manner of life among the Gentiles beautiful in its goodness,"

I just marveled at that phrase last night. Coming from a crusty old fisherman. Precious. Now it's beautiful in its

goodness. Oh boy!

“in order that in case they are speaking against you as those who are doing evil, as a result of your good deeds, which they are watching, they may glorify God on the day of visitation.”

You’ve got a **NEGATIVE COMMAND** in verse 11. Now here in verse 12 you’ve got a **POSITIVE** one.

The **NEGATIVE** one is: “stay away from the things of the old nature, the flesh.”

And here, you’ve got a **POSITIVE**: “have your manner of life among the Gentiles beautiful in its goodness.”

Whenever I sign a copy of our book on Ecclesiastes, I always put a phrase and that phrase is “He makes it beautiful.”

Ecclesiastes 3:11 is one of the neatest verses.

Ecclesiastes 3:11

He makes all things beautiful in His time.

You’ve heard that little chorus “In His Time.” We’ve got the words with us. We’re going to sing that before the conference is over.

He is in the business of making lives beautiful. Now do you understand why Peter begs him? He begs him don’t walk by

the old nature, don't submit to that authority because God wants to make it beautiful. Why does he want to make it beautiful? Because He wants to put you on display. And it's going to be your beautiful life on display that's going to make it possible for others to come to know Jesus Christ because of the quality and the beautiful life that you have.

And see your effect in evangelism and witnessing is the direct result of the kind of life that the world sees. If you find that there aren't many people clambering around you to come to know Jesus then probably there's something wrong with the advertising end of it.

The marketing of the product has got to be beautiful and attractive for people to want to respond. And we reduce this whole business of witnessing and evangelism to performance too.

We meet somebody, we hit them with the four spiritual laws or we get them a track and we put people on a guilt trip every time they don't turn every encounter into an evangelistic effort. And that is NOT New Testament Christianity or evangelism!

God simply means that every believer become beautiful so that person earns a right to witness to others because of his or her life and the focus is on the individual. You say that's way out. I've never heard that before. Well hold onto your hats and we'll get to chapter 3, Peter's going to say that exact same thing.

So he's telling you in chapter 2 that he is preparing you for what's in chapter 3.

“Set apart Christ as Lord in your hearts and be ready always to give an answer to every man who asks you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear” (1 Peter 3:15).

But before that's got to become a beautiful life. A life that is walking in His glory.

Now listen, God is going to give you opportunities beyond opportunity beyond opportunity. People begin to see it—the reality of your faith in the Lord Jesus.

You see, He wants to make it “beautiful in its good.” How does He do that?

Galatians 5:22-23—the fruit of the Spirit's work in my life is this:

Galatians 5:22-23

He will produce this kind of fruit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. And here there is no conflict with the Jewish laws.

And the purpose is there in the last phrase:

“in order that in case they are speaking against you as those who are doing evil, as a result of your good deeds, they are watching, they may glorify God on the day of visitation.”

What does that mean? When the day of judgment comes, they’re going to have to say “Yes”—that person glorified God and I was wrong in my criticism.

And “on the day of visitation” they are going to glorify God because your life was real. Your light did shine. You were a real SALT to society. You were living your life for the glory of God.

Francis Schaeffer in *Death in the City* says:

If we are Christians and do not have upon us the calling to respond to the lostness of the lost and the compassion to those of our kind our orthodoxy is ugly and it stinks. And it not only stinks in the presence of the hippy, it stinks in the presence of anybody whose an honest man, and more than that I’ll tell you something else, orthodoxy without compassion stinks with God.

Flowing out with dynamic life is a compassion that will have an impact on other people’s lives.

Don't tell me you're going to go down the hill and all of a sudden become a great evangelist. You go down the hill and you get your act together and you're going to be beating away the people coming to the Lord.

The opportunities are going to come for you to be a witness for Him.

God just gave a tremendous revelation of this in my own ministry. My first course in doctrinal studies this summer was on the psychology of counseling. I've never done well in counseling. And I've got more cases now than I can handle. And it's simply because I've learned what I need to do to understand.

I've had some really, really difficult situations this summer. Some situations that had been beautiful in their productivity but that have also recognized the fact that I didn't have to look for it, people just come to me when they know they can find help.

Verse 13.

v. 13 Be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether to a king as one who is supreme,

Now, here's the KEY VERSE to the fourth pattern.

Submit to authority. The natural human tendency is of the

flesh to want to do it our way and live life as we please, subjecting ourselves to the authority of no man.

In other words, to live up here ABOVE the realm of authority
And to do what we want to do.

With Frank Sinatra we love and we're touched by singing "I did it my way!"

Oh, we're impressed. The master of my fate—Captain of my salvation.

That's the natural human tendency. What are the consequences of doing that? Take a real good dose of Jacob then you'll understand it.

I'm looking forward to visiting with Jacob. I don't know how in the world after that all-night wrestling match with the Lord and he got his hip thrown out of joint that he didn't ever have to have a hip replacement for the rest of his life.

Here I am, kind of messing around with the fact that it's inevitable. I'm going to have a good talk with him when we get up there.

You see, it is "subject to every human institution."

Are you really living comfortably under authority in every area of your life?

You know, we talk about spiritual things and we kind of make that the only focus is the Lord in our life. All I want to know, is it in every other area? Because if it's in one, it will probably be in the other.

You know the same thing is true of discipline. If you're disciplined in one area of life, it will probably be in all the other areas. Are you like that? Most people are. If you're not disciplined in your physical fitness, you're probably not disciplined in your eating either.

Physical fitness—eating. I want to tell you something else. Time in the Word goes with that. Because the more you're disciplined in your physical fitness, the more you're disciplined in your eating, the more you can sit down and spend time with God and be fresh and alert and be in the Word. God made us as integrated individuals to function on all cylinders when it penetrates every area of our life.

I'm not going to sit here and listen to some pious little statement of a story back when you were a child and you made Him Lord in your life and He's been Lord ever since.

I want to know if He's been Lord in your life, then are you subject to the authorities of this country? Is your marriage and your family working comfortably because the authority structure is set and you're living in that?

You see, it shows up in all these other areas. And that's why he says "Be subject to every human situation or institution."

And why do you do it? “For the Lord’s sake.”

Now it’s pretty tough to turn the Lord down. It is His desire and you’re doing it for Him to be submissive to the authority that’s over you. And to turn Him down would be unheard of as a believer!

2 Corinthians 5:14, 15

Whatever we do it is certainly not for our own profit but because Christ’s love controls us now. He died for all so that all who live having received eternal life from Him might live no longer for themselves or please themselves, but to spend their lives pleasing Christ who died and rose again for them.

You see, we’re practicing this pattern “for the Lord’s sake.”

You can take all four of them if you want to. Don’t get shook, God has control for His sake. Get tough and start growing for His sake. You are part of a group of these people for His sake! You’re a stone in a building. Now, submit to authority.

Verse 14.

v. 14 or to governors as those sent by Him to punish those who are doing evil and to give praise to those who are doing good.

Verse 15.

v. 15 For so is the will of God, that by doing good you might put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

“For so is [WHAT?] the will of God, that by doing good you might put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.”

See, by doing that you're whipping those guys that are opposing you who are not believers and you're demonstrating to them a quality of life that they don't understand.

Verse 16.

v. 16 As free and not as those who are using their freedom as a covering for evil but as bondslaves of God.

You say, “I don't understand that.” That verse starts with FREEDOM and it ends up with BONDSLAVES. How do the two go together?

The real freedom comes in your life when you become a servant.

When you become a servant, authority is no longer an issue. It's incredible! When you men decide you're going to serve your wife unselfishly, and your kids, and you're going to be sacrificially involved in their lives. You'll have no more

problem with authority in the house.

You just don't fight with a servant. Because every time he comes back he's coming back with "what can I do to help?" and you can't fight that!

It's tough to fight with somebody who says "I love you and I refuse to fight." And it's tough to carry on a one-sided fight.

And that's it right there! You become FREE when you release the fight and you begin to serve! And there's no fighting over who is the boss around here. It just automatically begins to solve the problem.

William Barclay says:

Even the great pagan thinkers saw quite clearly that perfect liberty, in fact the product of perfect obedience. Steneka said no one is free who is the slave his body and liberty consists in obeying God. Cicero said "we are the servants of the laws that we may be able to be free." We may put it this way: Christian freedom is always conditioned by Christian responsibility. (source unknown)

You see, when you submit to the authority that's over you, there's instantaneous freedom.

John 8:32

You shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free.

Maybe when we get over to the marriage relationship tomorrow, Wednesday—whenever we’re going to get there, if the Lord doesn’t come before then—we’ll talk more about that. Because it might be that some of you sitting here with lives that are tied up in horrendous knots right now about the whole business of submission in the marriage relationship, it’s simply because you haven’t learned to be a servant. Or maybe you feel like you’re being used. We’ll discuss it further.

He says “As free and not as those who are using their freedom as a covering for evil.” How do you do that?

Freedom always allows the person to have the privilege of being lazy and to live on the food stamp program. That’s the tragedy of freedom. Because you can be free to let everybody else do it for you and that’s what really gripes everybody in a democracy. When somebody is willing to sit down and let everybody else do the work. And that really hurts when we see someone else doing everything.

I think Paul Harvey’s great little story of the little red hen probably best describes the horrendous frustration that every one of us feels when it comes to this. Have you heard that one?

Once upon a time there was a little red hen. She scratched about and uncovered some grains of wheat. She called her barnyard neighbors and said, “If we work together and plant this wheat we will have some fine bread to eat, who will help me plant the wheat?”

“Not I” said the cow, “Not I” said the duck, “Not I” said the goose. “Then I will” said the little red hen and she did.

After the wheat started growing the ground turned dry and there was no rain in sight. “Who will help me water the wheat” said the little red hen. “Not I” said the cow, “Not I” said the duck, “Not I” said the pig, “Equal rights” said the goose. “Then I will” said the little red hen, and she did.

The wheat grew tall and ripened into golden grain. “Who will help me reap the wheat?” asked the little red hen. “Not I” said the cow, “Not I” said the duck, “Out of my classification” said the pig, “I’d lose my ADC” said the goose. “Then I will” said the little red hen, and she did.

When it came time to grind the flour—“Not I” said the cow, “I’d lose my unemployment compensation” said the duck. When it came time to bake the bread—“There’s overtime for me” said the cow. “I’m a dropout and never learned how” said the duck. “I’d lose my welfare benefits” said the pig. “If I’m the only one helping, that’s discrimination” said the goose. “Then I will” said the little red hen, and she did.

She baked five loaves of fine bread and held them up for all of her neighbors to see. “I want some” said the cow. “I want some” said the duck. “I want some” said the pig. “I demand my share” said the goose. “No” said the little red hen, “I can rest for a while and eat the five loaves myself.”

“Excess profits” cried the cow, “capitalistic leech” screamed the duck, “company fink” grunted the pig, “equal rights” screamed the goose. They hurriedly painted picket signs and marched around the little red hen singing “We Shall Overcome” and they did.

For when the farmer came to investigate the commotion he said “you must not be greedy little red hen, look at the oppressed cow, look at the disadvantaged duck, look at the under-privileged pig, look at the less fortunate goose. You are guilty of making second class citizens of them.”

“But...but...but...I earned the bread” said the little red hen. “Exactly,” the wise farmer said. “That is the wonderful free enterprise system. Anybody in the barnyard can earn as much as he wants. You should be happy to have this freedom. In other barnyards you would have to give all five loaves to the farmer. Here you give four loaves to your suffering neighbors. And they all lived happily ever after, including the little red hen, who smiled, and smiled and clucked “I am grateful, I am grateful,” but her neighbors wondered why she never baked anymore bread.

(source unknown)

Says it, doesn't it? Same thing is true in the body of Christ. You've got a bunch of people who want to just sit down and stuff themselves with the bread of the Word of God but they won't get off their duff and do anything.

They're the ones who are singing "Standing on the Promises" while they're sitting on the premises. They do absolutely nothing. And there are those in the body of Christ who are working their heads off.

I think where that great Oklahoma football coach who was asked after winning 40-something consecutive games—Bud Wilkinson—the commentator says "Is football contributing to the physical fitness of our country?" Wilkinson said "Absolutely not." He says "When you've got 11 men on the field desperately needing rest and 50,000 people in the stands desperately needing exercise, how can you say that football is contributing to the physical fitness of our country?"

You see, freedom provides the right to be lazy—occupy space.

I'm writing my doctrinal dissertation on retirement. I can't find any passage of scripture that says there's a place for that. Where you can just sit around and do your own thing anymore. God's got you here for an assignment, no matter what your age is.

Verse 17.

v. 17 Honor all men; be loving the brotherhood, be fearing God, be honoring the king.

Isn't that great about Peter? When he gets through saying it all, he just gives you a four-point summary. There it is.

1. "Honor all men;"
2. "be loving the brotherhood"—that's how you're going to live comfortably with authority.
3. "be fearing [and respecting] God,"
4. And then "be honoring the king."

What a way to wrap it up.

Keith Miller wrote a book called *Habitation of Dragons*. And at the end of the book he has a prayer. He says this:

Lord, thank you that you have not called me to be all powerful or omnipresent, but only to be a part of a larger family; a team. Forgive me when I try to pitch, catch, hit and manage the entire team all the time. But help me to have enough sense and courage to play the position you have given me in this changing world, even if it is not in the big leagues. Somehow in my megalomania it is hard for me to participate when I cannot lead or when I cannot at least see the hope of solving the whole problem through my efforts. Help me to learn the value to you, of a cup of cold water where it is really

needed and how to use a bucket to wash some tired smelly feet without an audience.

(source unknown)

Did you learn that? What it is to be a servant that others might be free. Living comfortably under divine authority.

These four observations come to my attention as we get ready to wrap up this morning's story.

#1: Are you living comfortably under His authority?

Are you and God on good speaking terms and you're living comfortably under His authority?

These are questions to probe.

Question #2: Are you victorious in all areas or is the flesh in control?

Are you victorious in all areas or is the flesh in control? You can deal with that personally.

#3: Being a servant is the right use of freedom.

Being a servant is the right use of freedom.

And my last one is a question.

#4: Are you fighting the flesh in the power of the Spirit?

Are you fighting the flesh in the power of the Spirit?

You don't know there's a war going on, then you've got a problem in that. You don't take new ground and new territory without a war going on.

Can I give you a couple of verses?

Matthew 11:28-30

Come to all you who are weary and heavy laden, I'll give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of Me. [Yoke means submitting yourself to His authority.] My yoke is easy and my burden is light. Come, you'll find rest for your soul.

When you're living with authority properly, there is an incredible rest of the people of God. There's just a serenity and a peace to know that everything is all okay.

Father, we bow before these verses. We confess that many times our eager enthusiasm and excitement about doing things has been used selfishly by others. And we've gotten weary in well-doing so we've thrown in our hand. Father, teach us in our walk with You to know when to hold 'em and to know when to turn and walk away. Help us to discern those selfish thoughts and feelings inside, that in our hearts are secret rebellion but before God they're open rebellion in heaven. Enable us to recognize it and to deal with those things

that keep our lives from being beautiful. Thank You that You're famous for making beautiful people—people who look like Your Son. We pray that from these studies and work together, we go down the mountain with a pattern of beauty—the pattern for godliness. The place where You want us to function, where we might shine as a witness for Your glory and honor. Please protect and provide each one this day a real joyous experience. May You fill us with wonder and awe as we see more of Your spectacular creation today. We thank You. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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PATTERN NUMBER FOUR – SUBMIT TO AUTHORITY – 1 PETER **2:11-17**

KEY VERSE 2:13

v.11 Beloved, I am begging you as aliens and exiles to keep away from the desires of the flesh, which are waging war against your soul.

v.12 Having your manner of life among the Gentiles beautiful in its goodness, in order that in case they are speaking against you as those who are doing evil, as a result of your good deeds, which they are watching, they may glorify God on the day of visitation.

v.13 Be subject to every human institution for the Lord's sake, whether to a king as one who is supreme,

v.14 or to governors as those sent by Him to punish those who are doing evil and to give praise to those who are doing good.

v.15 For so is the will of God, that by doing good you might put to silence the ignorance of foolish men.

v.16 As free and not as those who are using their freedom as a covering for evil but as bondslaves of God.

v.17 Honor all men; be loving the brotherhood, be fearing God, be honoring the king.

NOTES

QUESTIONS:

1. Read 1 Peter 2:11-17 and in your own words pull out the main thought of this passage.

2. What does Peter ask us to do, according to verse 11?

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3. What kind of life does he want us to have, according to verse 12?

4. Why is it important for us to have this quality of life in verse 12?

5. What are we asked to do in verse 13?

6. Who is it that sends the governors and what is the governors' responsibility in verse 14?

7. What is the will of God in verse 15?

8. What four things are we asked to do in verse 17?

9. Which verse in the study has meant the most to you?

10. What lesson have you learned from this study?

LESSONS FROM THE PASSAGE:

What are some of the lessons we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: Are you living comfortably under His authority?

LESSON #2: Are you victorious in all areas?

LESSON #3: Being a servant is the right use of freedom.

LESSON #4: Are you fighting the flesh in the power of the Spirit?