

INDUCTIVE LESSON THREE

SUBMISSION 101

Our country seems to be suffering from selective amnesia as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the Beatles' first song reaching the top of popular music charts. Collectively we have chosen to remember the pleasant nostalgia of the summer of love while ignoring the social revolution that came from the "Turn on, tune in, and drop out" counterculture. Many of the premises of this movement are in direct conflict with biblical instruction, but none more so than the shift in attitude toward authority spawned by the music and teaching of that generation. The T-shirts and bumper stickers encouraging us to "Question Authority" are in direct opposition to the principles Peter shares with us in this week's passage. Having lived through that period, I have enjoyed watching my generation apply the "Question Authority" mantra to their own childrearing, only to discover that their message should have been "Question authority, except your parents."

In stark contrast to the wisdom of the 1960s, Peter tells us to submit to authority. This submission is not based on the merit of the individual in the superior position, but on the institution of the position itself. The word for *submit* (*hupotasso* in the Greek) is a military term for obedience to someone of superior rank. Submission is to be rendered by believers unto governmental rulers and ordinances, slaves unto their masters, and wives unto their husbands. At the time Peter wrote this epistle, the king to be honored was none other than Emperor Nero, the preeminent persecutor of the church throughout recorded history.

To understand Peter's imperative to submit to authority, we need to look at the source of authority. To give us a heavenly perspective on the subject of authority, Paul writes in Romans 13:1–2, "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves." As Peter wrote his epistle, I'm sure he remembered the words of Jesus given in Matthew 28:18 (just before He delivered the Great Commission): "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." To willfully defy authority is literally to defy Jesus. By contrast, to submit to authority is to be in the middle of God's will and bring Him glory.

Most commentators feel that the relationship between master and slave most closely parallels the roles of employer and employee in today's society. The principal difference is that today we voluntarily put ourselves under the authority of our employers. How many of us have acted like an onboard terrorist, sowing seeds of discontent within the workplace by undermining the authority of our employer in words and deeds, all while bearing the name Christian? Peter calls us to a higher standard of conduct in the workplace.

One caveat or warning with respect to submission to authority is in the case of actions which are in direct opposition to the revealed will of God. The Old Testament is full of examples of disobedience to the will of one in authority based upon obedience to the will of God. Three examples of civil disobedience from the Book of Daniel include, refusing to eat the king's delicacies (Daniel 1), refusing to bow before the golden idol (Daniel 3), and refusing not to pray to God (Daniel 6). In a similar fashion, Peter and John, after threatened by the Sanhedrin for preaching about Jesus, replied in Acts 4:19–20, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard."

Our conduct counts, for by our conduct we can silence critics and win souls for Christ. The world is watching and our life is the only Bible that many will ever read.

Prayer

Start by praying over the passage and asking the Holy Spirit to give you fresh insights and wisdom in understanding it. Then read through the entire passage two or three times.

Memory Verse

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. 1 Peter 2:15

Inductive Method Step 1: Observation

My Observations: In the left column, write down observations you make directly from the text. Things to look for:

What are the promises?

What are the commands?

What are the sources of conflict?

What are the cause/effect relationships?

What are the repeated words and ideas?

What do we know about who is speaking and who is receiving the message?

What comparisons and contrasts can you identify and what do they illustrate?

Do you have unanswered questions on part of the passage? (Share them with your group.)

Digging Deeper: In the right column, write down any additional observations you can add from other sources such as:

Other scriptures that apply (cross references)

Dictionaries for specific words (English or Greek dictionary)

Bible dictionaries for historical information

Commentaries (See the Tool Box at the end of the study for suggested sources.)

Parallel passages in other books. Accounts found in parallel passages, while very similar, often reveal small but critical details omitted by another author.

Inductive Method Step 2: Interpretation

Webster tells us that *interpret* means “to explain the meaning or make understandable.” What is the spiritual truth or lesson that God is trying to teach in this passage? Don’t isolate the passage but read into it and read out of it. Look for commands, imperatives, promises, or warnings. What is God saying to those people at that time? (You will share what God is saying to you in the next section.) State the spiritual truth or lesson in a single sentence.

Inductive Method Step 3: Application

This is where you purpose to do what God has taught you in your time with Him. It is through applying the Word that God changes lives. Application does not happen by osmosis but by intent. God enlightens us with His Word, we apply what we’ve learned with our wills, and the Holy Spirit empowers us to carry out these choices. The goal of all application is to glorify God by becoming more like Jesus. 2 Timothy 3:16 says, “All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for . . .”

Teaching: What did I learn?

Reproof: Where do I fall short? Why do I fall short?

Correction: What will I do about it?

Training in righteousness: How can I make this principle a consistent part of my life?

Study Text / Worksheet

Write down your observations, comments, or questions directly on the text as you go over it.

Sojourners and Pilgrims

1 Peter 2:11–25

11 Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, 12 having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation. 13 Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, 14 or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— 16 as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. 17 Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king. 18 Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. 19 For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. 20 For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this

is commendable before God. 21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow His steps: 22 “Who committed no sin, Nor was deceit found in His mouth”; 23 who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; 24 who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. 25 For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

My Observations

Digging Deeper

Interpretation:

Application:

Submission to Authority

1 Peter 3:1–12

1 Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they

observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. 3 Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel— 4 rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the incorruptible *beauty* of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is very precious in the sight of God. 5 For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husbands, 6 as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror. 7 Husbands, likewise, dwell with *them* with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as *being* heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered. 8 Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous; 9 not returning evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary blessing, knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing. 10 For “He who would love life and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking deceit. 11 Let him turn away from evil and do good; let him seek peace and pursue it. 12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* on the righteous, and His ears *are open* to their prayers; but the face of the Lord *is* against those who do evil.”

My Observations

Digging Deeper

Interpretation:

Application:

Parallel Passage

Paul gives a similar call for radical living in his epistle to the Romans. Our attitude and actions should be so different from the unsaved that the world will look in wonder and declare, as with Peter and John in Acts 4, that the difference is because we've been with Jesus. Look for additional imperatives beyond those of the original passage in the following verses.

Living Sacrifices

Romans 12:1-21

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is* your reasonable service.

2 And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.

3 For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think *of himself* more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. 4 For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, 5 so we, *being* many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. 6 Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, *let us use them*: if prophecy, *let us prophesy* in proportion to our faith; 7 or ministry, *let us use it* in *our* ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; 8 he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. 9 *Let love be* without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 *Be* kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. 14 Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. 15 Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. 16 Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. 17 Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. 18 If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men.

19 Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but *rather* give place to wrath; for it is written, “Vengeance *is* Mine, I will repay,” says the Lord. 20 Therefore “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.”²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

My Observations

Digging Deeper

Interpretation:

Application:

Take Away / Summary

If one of your friends at work or a neighbor were to ask you what you did on Tuesday, you would tell them you went to a Bible study. The next question would likely be, “What did you learn?” We often summarize an entire athletic contest or a movie in a few brief sentences and easily convey the essence of the event. Now apply these same skills to give a summary of the passage in a sentence or two. Then, in an additional sentence or

two, describe what impact this passage will have on how you live.

Memory Verse

For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men. 1 Peter 2:15

Key Words/Phrases

Write out the definition of these key words. You can use a regular dictionary or go to one of the Greek sources listed in the Tool Box at the end of the study. You may also use a concordance to see where else and how the word is used in the Bible.

Sojourners and Pilgrims (1 Peter 2:11)

Submit Yourselves (1 Peter 2:13)

Tool Box

Step 1: The Bible. Read the passage in a couple of different versions. If you are having trouble understanding a passage, choose a more dynamic version such as *New Living Translation* or *The Message*). To focus in on the exact meaning of a verse, choose a more literal translation such as *New American Standard Bible* or *New King James Version*.

Step 2: Study Tools. Use these to help you dig deeper. Background Information: 1) Unger's Bible Dictionary 2) Bible Dictionaries online at biblestudytools.com and blueletterbible.com. Word Studies: 1) Zodhiates' *The Complete Word Study New*

Testament 2) Vine's *Complete Expository Dictionary* 3) Strong's *Dictionary of Bible Words* 4) The two websites listed above

Step 3: Commentaries. Commentaries should not be used in place of studying God's Word directly, but they can give you additional insights. Some good commentaries include: John MacArthur, J. Vernon McGee, *The Expositors Commentary*, NIV Application Commentary, William Barclay (great for background and culture but be careful of his spiritual applications).

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