

May 24th, 2026

Title: ***Living in Harmony***

1 Peter 2:13-25

Church Scripture Verse for today:

**1 Peter 2:13-17 (NLT)**

<sup>13</sup>For the Lord's sake, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, <sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>It is God's will that your honorable lives should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. <sup>16</sup>For you are free, yet you are God's slaves, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. <sup>17</sup>Respect everyone, and love the family of believers. Fear God, and respect the king.

***How do you live in harmony with the people you do not like? How do you submit to government and authority? Why does God tell us to do that? Because these people hated the Romans. And then finally, how do wives submit to their husbands, and what does that actually mean?*** Many years ago, my wife approached me after reading the Bible, and this is what she said: **“God told me to submit to you.”** My face lit up like a 7-year-old kid with his favorite chocolate. She said, **“But it will take time for me to know what that means.”** So, what exactly does it mean when it says, **“Wives, be subject to your own husbands?”** Let's get into it.

Previously, we ended with 1 Peter 2:12. Let's pick it up from there.

**1 Peter 2:12 (NLT)**

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.

So now, you are a born-again Christian. When you die, God has a wonderful inheritance in store for you. Until then, God will guard and protect your salvation, your faith. So, until the Lord calls us home, God tells you to **“be**

**holy for He is holy.**” And we understand the word **Holy to mean set apart for God’s purposes.** So living a life of holiness, you find God’s purpose.

So, as we live a life of “holiness,” 1 Peter 2:12 tells us to be “**careful**” with unbelieving neighbors. Why? Because they are going to watch us, the holy people. And how they will see our “**honorable behavior,**” or “they may see **your good deeds,** and **they will give honor to God when Jesus returns to judge.**” So, in other words, **our actions as believers will determine how non-believers will see God.**

So, **what does this honorable behavior look like?**

This is where Peter takes us on the road to what is called **submission.** From 1 Peter 2:13 through chapter 3:1-7, Peter takes us on a journey to understand **honorable behavior so that unbelievers can honor God.**

#### **1 Peter 2:13-14 (NLT)**

<sup>13</sup>For the Lord’s sake, **submit** to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, <sup>14</sup>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.

The word **submit** in Greek is **hypotassō** pronounced **hoop-ot-as'-so**, meaning **to arrange under.** Believers are to place themselves **under proper order [to put things in order],** not to fight for personal supremacy. The opposite of **hypotassō** is disharmony and discord (**tension, strife, or conflict**).

O.K.! So, Pastor Joseph, you are saying that submission actually means harmony? So, when you submit, that will cause harmony. Interesting, right?

#### **1 Peter 3:8 Amplified Bible**

Finally, all of you be **like-minded** [united in spirit], sympathetic, brotherly, kindhearted [courteous and compassionate **toward each other** as members of one household], and humble in spirit;

The word **like-minded** in Greek is **homophrōn** pronounced **hom-of'-rone**, meaning being of one mind. **[to think alike]**

***Submission is like harmony, and harmony is like being of one mind.***

**1 Peter 3:8 NASB**

To sum up, all *of you* be **harmonious**, sympathetic, loving, compassionate, and humble;

So 1 Peter 3:8 in Amplified says **“like-minded,”** and in NASB says, **“harmonious.”** And that is the theme here, **“to be of one mind,” to be living in harmony.** So, when we **submit to all human authority or government, then we will achieve harmony.** This is what Peter is saying.

**Theme:** Being in one mind is to live in harmony.

**Submission = Harmony** (Being of one mind)

This is very important to understand because ***if you do not grasp this principle, you will not have any harmony in life.*** Because we live in this world, we have to understand what this submission means. ***Pastor Joseph, how do we get started on the path of harmony?*** How do we know that we are moving in the direction of “submission” or “harmony”?

**John 15:4 Amplified Bible**

Remain in Me, and I [will remain] in you. Just as no branch can bear fruit by itself **without remaining in the vine**, neither can you [bear fruit, producing evidence of your faith] unless you remain in Me.

So, in other words, ***if you remain with God vertically, you will bear fruit with people horizontally.*** Remember the fruits are the spiritual things like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

So, when God tells us to **“Remain in me”** or **“Abide in me,”** it simply means that ***if you want to bear fruit, you have to connect with God daily*** through prayer, the Word, and following up on what you read, and then you will bear fruit. So, as you connect with God daily, God will help you create harmony with people who don’t speak, think, or act like believers, and this is your honorable behavior.

So, here are three submissions Peter tells us that we need to do:

Harmony with the **authority** (1 Peter 2:13-17)

Harmony with the **workplace** (1 Peter 2:18-25)

Harmony in **Marriage/Family** (1 Peter 3:1-7)

Let's break this down. The first one, "**Harmony with the authority.**"

### 1 Peter 2:13-17 (NLT)

<sup>13</sup>For the Lord's sake, **submit to all human authority**—whether the king as head of state, <sup>14</sup>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. <sup>15</sup>It is God's will that **your honorable lives** should silence those ignorant people who make foolish accusations against you. <sup>16</sup>**For you are free, yet you are God's slaves**, so don't use your freedom as an excuse to do evil. <sup>17</sup>**Respect everyone**, and love the family of believers. **Fear God, and respect the king.**

Now, I want you to take the word "**king**" out of head of state and replace it with the current "Prime Minister of the **UK or India**, or the President of **Korea or the United States.**" I understand that it can be a very sensitive topic for some of you, so I will need you to approach it thoughtfully. Why?

Politics has caused ***so much division in every nation and even within churches***. My hope is that, whatever political affiliation you have, I pray that you will have ***a greater affiliation with Jesus, more than anything else.***

Remember that our king is longer than four years or eight years. He is the alpha and the omega. ***He is the beginning and the end.*** So, we have to trust in the alpha and the omega, who will take us from the beginning to the end.

You have to remember that Peter was talking to Christians who were ***under the heavy iron fist of Rome***. Every nation under Rome's oppression ***had to pay heavy taxes, yet gained no benefit.*** And on top of that, you were Christians, which made it even worse to live among these pagan people. Peter is saying, "**Submit to that authority and respect that Roman Emperor.**"

To understand submission and harmony here on earth, ***we first have to understand what happened in heaven***. Because what happened in heaven came down to earth. In heaven, there was disharmony or discord in the beginning. And, one of the angels who rebelled against God.

**Isaiah 14:13-14 (ESV)**

<sup>13</sup> You said in your heart (**Satan, Lucifer**), 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; <sup>14</sup> I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; **I will make myself like the Most High.**'

Notice Satan says "**I will**" four times. This is pure pride. Here is ***Satan, who was the highest rank among the angels***, but he was supposed to be ***submissive to the authority of God***. As a created angel, he rebelled against God's authority. He wanted to be equal to God.

***Satan did not want to be submissive to God***. And now we see this ***disharmony and discord here on earth***. Because God kicked Satan out of heaven. And now disharmony rules the earth. **2 Corinthians 4:4** says that **Satan is the god of this world**.

Because Satan is "**the god of this world**," and he wants disharmony, conflicts, and discord here on earth. ***So until the day God calls us home, we will see this disharmony***. That is why God is asking us to be Holy, set apart, and live in harmony, because ***the world that we live in does not know what harmony looks like***.

Did you know that in every generation throughout history, there have always been some form of war or conflict? Because there is so much disharmony in the world, **God calls believers to live in harmony so that unbelievers can see God**.

But Pastor Joseph, why did Peter tell the Christians to live under a repressive empire like Rome and be submissive to human authority?

**1 Peter 2:12 (NLT)**

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.

***Living in harmony will bring others to Christ.*** That's why the Bible tells us to be the salt and light of the world, and 2 Corinthians 5:19-20 will start to make sense.

### **2 Corinthians 5:19-20 (NLT)**

<sup>19</sup> For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people's sins against them. And he gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup> So we are **Christ's ambassadors**; God is making his appeal through us. We speak for Christ when we plead, **"Come back to God!"**

So, you and I, as believers, are called to be ambassadors and reconcilers in this ungodly world. ***We are to bring people to be reconciled with God.*** That is why we have to live in ***submission*** or live in ***harmony*** with those around us, ***so that they can see God through us.***

***But Pastor Joseph, these people had to pay heavy taxes to Rome.*** I love what Jesus said to the religious leaders who were trying to trap Jesus, so if he said something wrong, they could arrest Him and persecute Him. So here is the question that they asked and Jesus' response.

### **Matthew 22:19-21 (NLT)**

<sup>19</sup> Here, show me the coin used for the tax." When they handed him a Roman coin, <sup>20</sup> he asked, "Whose picture and title are stamped on it?" <sup>21</sup> **"Caesar's,"** they replied. "Well, then," he said, **"give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God."**

"You hate the Roman government and its human authority, but give to Rome what belongs to Rome and give to me what belongs to me. Pay your taxes!"

**Jesus tells us to submit to human authority, or man-made laws, so we can live in harmony, but spiritual matters belong to God.** Because, as believers, when we die, we will not take any material things to heaven. So submit to the human authority, which will bring harmony.

**But Pastor Joseph, was there ever a time when we could go against government or human institutions?** Yes, when it is against God's moral laws.

In Daniel 3, we see King Nebuchadnezzar very angry with **Sadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, servants of the king**, who refused to worship a golden image. And that was the law of the land, that everyone should bow down to the golden image when they hear the trumpet sound. But **they refused to bow down to a human law**. If you do not bow down, then you will be in a super-hot furnace. They did not care. **They feared God more than any man's law**. And we all know the story, that when they put their faith and trust in God, God came and rescued them. Because of that, the king promoted **Sadrach, Meshack, and Abednego to a higher position in Babylon**. God's moral law was greater than man's created law.

In Exodus chapter 1, we see Pharaoh, the most powerful man at that time, **telling the Hebrew midwives to kill all the firstborn males**. Because they wanted to control the growing Hebrew population. He ordered all the Hebrew midwives that if it is a son, then kill them. But **Shphrah and Puah**, the midwives, **feared God more than Pharaoh**, and so they didn't kill baby boys. The Bible tells us in Exodus 1:21 that **because they feared God, He gave them families of their own**. These midwives broke the human laws because they feared God's law more than any man-made laws.

**So, when man's law goes against the Bible, we need to follow God's law more than any human law.** Now, with that said, because man-made laws are not always good for mankind, the **Bible tells us to pray for our leaders**, as they are human and make mistakes. So it is important to pray for our elected leaders.

## Harmony in the Workplace

### 1 Peter 2:18-20 (ESV)

<sup>18</sup> Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle **but also to the unjust**. <sup>19</sup> For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and **suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God.**

When we hear words like "servants" or "slaves" submitting to their masters, **we have to understand that this was the reality of that time.** The Roman Empire was flooded with slaves everywhere you went. Even in China, Korea, and Japan, there were slaves as part of their world in ancient times. Some **historians tell us that there were more slaves than freed men.** A typical Roman household had one or two slaves. Wealthy people had much more.

**So does God support slavery?** No! Far from it. So here is the idea: you had slaves who were getting saved by followers of Christ. Jesus set them free, in the spirit and in their heart.

### Galatians 3:28 (ESV)

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither **slave** nor **free**, there is no male and female, **for you are all one in Christ Jesus.**

Jesus was saving the non-slaves and the slaves to have freedom in Christ. Peter compares this unjust slavery with the suffering of Jesus.

### 1 Peter 2:21-23 (ESV)

<sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because **Christ also suffered for you**, leaving you an example, **so that you might follow in his steps.** <sup>22</sup> He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; **when he suffered, he did not threaten**, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Here, Peter compares slavery with masters to Christ's suffering. **"I want you to take comfort from the example of Christ, who endured suffering in the worst situation He was in. He was nailed to the cross."**

**Mark 15:17-19 (NLT)**

<sup>17</sup> They dressed him in a purple robe, and they wove thorn branches into a crown and put it on his head. <sup>18</sup> Then they saluted him and taunted, **"Hail! King of the Jews!"** <sup>19</sup> And they **struck him on the head** with a reed stick, **spit on him**, and dropped to their knees in mock worship. . . . Then they led him away to be crucified".

You are in a difficult situation. You are suffering. You are being mistreated. And because of that, **I want you to draw on the example of Christ, who was beaten and suffered.** I want you to endure suffering as He endured suffering, and I want you to honor your boss even through your suffering.

In today's culture, the ***idea of servant to master would be your place of work.***

*This is a story from a person who told me how difficult his work environment was. His supervisor did not believe in God, and he cursed every other word because he did not like Christians at all. So his supervisor and another employee came up with a scheme to try to get him fired or moved to a different department. But because **he kept honoring God first, he was always praying for his boss.** The scheme to fire him backfired. The company conducted a performance evaluation and found that the boss and another employee were performing poorly. So **they let go of the other employee and moved the supervisor to a different department.** And the Christian man became the new supervisor.*

Listen, when you fear God above all else, the Lord will fight on your behalf. Now, I am not saying this will happen all the time, but Peter is telling us to have harmony in the workplace.

**Colossians 3:23-24 (NLT)**

<sup>23</sup> **Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people.** <sup>24</sup> Remember that the Lord will give you an inheritance as your reward, and that the **Master you are serving is Christ.**

Listen, some of you will be working tomorrow. You may be thinking you are serving man, but ultimately you are serving God, because ***you are placed where you need to be in such a time as this.***

The ***idea of harmony is not that everything is joyful and peaceful***, but that even in difficult, challenging situations, ***we will still honor the Lord above all else.*** Because when you honor the Lord first, your work will have more purpose and meaning.

### **Harmony in Marriage/Family**

#### **1 Peter 3:1-2 (NLT)**

<sup>1</sup> In the same way, you wives **must accept the authority of your husbands.**

Then, even if **some refuse to obey the Good News, your godly lives will speak to them without any words.** They will be won over <sup>2</sup> by observing your pure and reverent lives.

In the NIV, it says, **“Wives, in the same way submit yourselves to your own husbands.”** In the ESV, it says, **“Wives, be subject to your own husbands.”** Why? It says, **“If some refuse to obey the Good News or if any of them do not believe the word, they may be won over without words by the behavior of their wives.”**

*When I got married, I was just a Sunday church attender. I wasn't really involved spiritually with other believers, nor was I really involved with any ministries at church. Because I was very busy. **I had my own business and was working long hours, so I put work at the top of my to-do list.** But there was one thing that impacted my spiritual life to the next level, and that was what my wife did. She didn't bash the Word of God over my head; **she just quietly and consistently read her Bible, and she prayed a lot.***

Every time I see her read, reflect on, and meditate on the Word, I was so intrigued by what she is reading that I start asking her questions. She would explain what she read not as a teacher-type lecture, but as an account of **how the Words of God were impacting her life**. So it was more of a testimony than a teaching. Hear me out, ladies, **grown men, naturally or in nature, do not like to be lectured by their wives or women in general**.

What impacted me was **Jackie's gentle, loving spirit**. So one of the things I started doing was taking my Bible to work early and spending time reading and praying before I opened my business. Because of Jackie's gentle spirit, I am now a pastor. **Women's power has great influence over men**.

The key thing here is that **because my wife submitted to God first** and then to me as the leader of the home, **I eventually submitted to God, which led to harmony in the home**. Not a perfect marriage, but harmony in the home. Because of that, we now have a "**missional marriage**," which means the husband and wife share a missional purpose.

Look, it took a long time for my wife to learn what it meant to submit to her husband. But **because of her willing and intentional submission**, we have harmony in our marriage and a missional purpose.

I think **this will help married women understand how to foster harmony in their marriages**. In Hebrew, the man is called "**Ish**," and the woman is called "**Isha**," which also means helper. But help the man with what? Picking up all the heavy furniture chairs? The word "**Isha**" **means to help the man see God**. And that is exactly what my wife did.

So, as a believing woman in marriage, one of your duties as a helper is to "**help your man see God**." As co-laborers for the kingdom of God, **wives have one of the greatest powers to move their husbands closer to God**. Isha, the helper, has great power.

Now in **Ephesians 5:21**, it says, "And further, **submit to one another out of reverence for Christ**." I want to remind everyone that above all, we do have to respect and honor one another. O.K.! I want to talk to the married men.

### 1 Peter 3:7 (NLT)

<sup>7</sup>In the same way, your husbands must **give honor to your wives**. Treat your wife with understanding as you live together. **She may be weaker than you are**, but she is your equal partner in God's gift of new life. Treat her as you should, **so your prayers will not be hindered**.

In other words, **if you are not honoring your wife, your prayers will be hindered**. That is a very strong statement. Men, God will not hear our prayers when we do not honor or love our wives.

### Ephesians 5:25 (ESV)

For husbands, this means **love your wives, just as Christ loved the church**. He gave up his life for her.

I want to make this clear. I have not yet perfected this. But this is the goal for married men, right? This is hard work, but we have to do this for the sake of harmony. So when **we honor and love our wives just as Christ loved the church, then, men, we can live in harmony**.

This is what every marriage wants, right?. People want to live in harmony. Nobody gets up in the morning and says, **"You know what? I want to pick a fight with someone today. I want to get up in the morning and have disharmony with the people around me."**

And when it says in 1 Peter 3:7 that a **woman is a weaker vessel**, it doesn't mean she is weaker in terms of importance or role, but just physically weaker. **God has made men and women to be different, biologically**. And my wife knows that, takes advantage of it, and tells me to **"Move this furniture, take out the trash, and open this bottle and put that there because I am the weaker vessel, remember."** And I say, **"Yes, Ma'am!"** Women, you have a lot of power. Maybe a bit too much.

**Pastor Joseph, what about husbands who are not so good husbands?** Now, I am not talking about abusive husbands, and that is a different story, but

**most men try to do the right thing**, and they sometimes fail and make mistakes in life. So Peter gives us a good example.

### 1 Peter 3:6 Amplified Bible

just as Sarah **obeyed Abraham** [following him and having regard for him as head of their house], **calling him lord**. And you **[believers] have become her [Sarah] daughters** if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear [that is, being respectful toward your husband **but not giving in to intimidation**, nor **allowing yourself to be led into sin, nor to be harmed**].

Let's break this down. Sarah called her husband "lord."

The word "lord" in Greek is *kyrios*, pronounced **koo'-ree-os**, meaning to whom a person or thing belongs, about which he has power of deciding; master, lord. A **common expression of acknowledgment of authority**.

In the ancient Near East, the term "lord" was a **common expression of respect and acknowledgment of authority within the household**. In other words, she was showing respect to her husband by calling her "lord." So when she is saying "lord" or "master," she is not stating subjugation by force, but is **honoring God's design for marriage**.

In other words, "**I give my husband respect**." For the sake of context, Abraham and Sarah are husband and wife, and they love each other. But there was a time when Abraham made some major mistakes in his life; **he threw Sarah under the bus, his own wife**.

There was famine in the land, and Abraham took his wife and family to another foreign country. And in those foreign countries, if they wanted your wife, they would **kill your husband and take your wife**. Now Abraham knew that, and he didn't want to die. So, he would tell them, "**Hey, this woman is not my wife, but she is my sister. So if you want to take her, then she is all yours**." Abraham didn't want to die, so he told them, "**If you want her, she is all yours**."

Even with all that, Sarah still called her husband “lord.” ***Even after he tried to throw her under the bus.*** After all the trials and heartaches in their marriage, Sarah kept her integrity, not out of fear of man or intimidation, nor did she fall into sin, but continued to keep her respect for Abraham. She kept the focus on honoring her husband and obeyed him.

Listen to the result of her submission and the harmony in the family.

### 1 Peter 3:6 Amplified Bible

just as Sarah obeyed Abraham [following him and having regard for him as head of their house], calling him lord. And **you have become her daughters** if you do what is right without being frightened by any fear [that is, being respectful toward your husband **but not giving in to intimidation, nor allowing yourself to be led into sin, nor to be harmed**].

**“You have become her [Sarah’s children] daughters.”** So Sarah is called **“her children”** or **“her daughters,”** signifying a spiritual lineage through Sarah.

In other words, because of Sarah’s faith, obedience, and submission, **all her children received the blessings from God.** So, because she lived a righteous life, even though Abraham made some big mistakes, ***she is now honored with a wonderful, beautiful spiritual lineage.***

She was made holy by her faith, trust, and obedience in God. That’s why she had no fear of giving in to intimidation and trusted in God’s purpose. **2**

**Timothy 1:7 (ESV):** “For **God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.**”

O.k.! Let’s put submission and harmony in action. We’re going to put it all together. The meaning of harmony is under proper order or arrangement, and being of one mind.

The word **submit** in Greek is ***hypotassō*** pronounced **hoop-ot-as’-so**, meaning **to arrange under**. Believers are to place themselves **under proper order [to put things in order]**, not to fight for personal supremacy. The

opposite of *hypotassō* is disharmony and discord (**tension, strife, or conflict**).

### **As the Deer Panteth for the Waters**

As the deer panteth for the water  
 So my soul longeth after Thee  
 You alone are my heart's desire  
 And I long to worship Thee  
 You alone are my Strength, my Shield  
 To You alone may my spirit yield  
 You alone are my heart's desire  
 And I long to worship Thee.

Have one group sing the first line: ***As the deer panteth for the water***

2nd Group: ***So my soul longeth after Thee***

3rd Group: ***You alone are my heart's desire***

4th Group: ***And I long to worship Thee***

Everyone together:

***You alone are my Strength, my Shield***

***To you alone my spirit yield.***

***You alone are my heart's desire***

***And I long to worship Thee***