

## *“What Must I Do To Be Saved?”*

Acts 16:30

### **Learn The Gospel**

John 6:45; Romans 10:17; James 1:22-25

### **Believe On GOD In CHRIST**

Hebrews 11:6; John 3:16; James 2:14-26

### **Confess CHRIST**

Romans 10:9-10; Matthew 10:32-33; 7:21

### **Repent Of Sin**

Acts 3:19; Matthew 3:8

### **Be Baptized Into CHRIST**

Mark 16:16; Romans 6:3-6; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 3:21

## *“Let The Word... Dwell In You Richly”*

Colossians 3:16

The current memory assignment addresses our relationship to God as children. *“Therefore be imitators of God as dear children”* (Ephesians 5:1).

Commit this to memory by reading it, writing it, hearing it, and saying it. Then put it into practice.

# *“Sound Doctrine”*

Titus 2:1

## **CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE**

Bryan Matthew Dockens

In 1849, Henry David Thoreau wrote “Resistance to Civil Government”. Later re-titled “On the Duty of Civil Disobedience”, Thoreau’s essay has influenced generations throughout the world to disobey laws considered to be immoral. Historic applications of the principle of civil disobedience include the Indian Independence Movement led by Mahatma Gandhi in India, the Civil Rights Movement led by Martin Luther King, Jr. in the United States, and the work of the African National Congress led by Nelson Mandela in South Africa. The purpose of this study is to examine whether civil disobedience is scripturally correct.

Inspired by God, the apostle Paul wrote, *“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”* (Romans 13:1-2). The apostle Peter likewise commanded, *“Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake, whether to the king as supreme, 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”* (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:13-14). God clearly requires submission to civil government, describing resistance to that authority as resistance to His own authority.

The requirement to submit to the governing authorities has its exceptions. When the king of Egypt ordered the murders

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## *“The Assembling Of Ourselves Together”*

Hebrews 10:24-25

### **Sunday**

10:15 am.....Worship

Las Vegas Library

833 Las Vegas Boulevard North

### **Wednesday**

7:00 pm.....Various Studies

Jerry & Beverly Dockens residence

### **Friday**

7:00 pm.....Ladies’ Study

Jerry & Beverly Dockens residence

## *“Give Attention To Reading”*

1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 4:13

Sunday...Zech. 14 – Malachi 2

Monday...Mal 3 – Matthew 2

Tuesday.....Matthew 3-5

Wednesday.....Matthew 6-8

Thursday.....Matthew 9-11

Friday.....Matthew 12-14

Saturday.....Matthew 15-17

## *Vegas Valley Church Of CHRIST*

Romans 16:16

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of every male child born to the Hebrews, disobedience became necessary (Exodus 1:15-22). The parents of Moses are honored as champions of faith because *"they were not afraid of the king's command"* (Hebrews 11:23; cf. Exodus 2:1-3). When Darius, king of Babylonia, forbade prayer to God, disobedience was essential (Daniel 6:6-9). Daniel flagrantly violated the decree (Daniel 6:10), yet was subsequently protected from harm because of his faith (Daniel 6:16-27; Hebrews 11:33). On more than one occasion, when the Sanhedrin commanded the apostles of the Lord to cease preaching the gospel, the apostles steadfastly refused (Acts 4:18-20; 5:28-29).

Before concluding that God approves of civil disobedience, however, consider the circumstances of each event. In every case, compliance with civil law would have resulted in disobedience to Divine will. Had Moses' parents, Amram and Jochebed, obeyed Pharaoh's command, they would have been guilty of murder (Genesis 9:6-7). If Daniel heeded the royal decree of Darius, he would have committed idolatry (Exodus 20:3). If the apostles submitted to the Jewish council, they would have disobeyed the command of Christ to proclaim the gospel (Matthew 28:19-20).

Because *"we ought to obey God rather than men"* (Acts 5:29), the Lord indeed expects His disciples to engage in civil disobedience **if the alternative is sin**. Nevertheless, in most cases of civil disobedience, such as those movements led by Gandhi, King, and Mandela, the governing powers did **not** require the people to sin. Rather, those who participated in these historic efforts were protesting their mistreatment by the government.

Christians must learn to tolerate abuse. Jesus preached, *"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' But I tell you **not to resist an evil person**. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also. If anyone wants to sue you and take away your tunic, let him have your cloak also. And whoever compels you to go one mile, go with him two. Give to him who asks you, and from him who wants to borrow from you do not turn away.*

*"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who*

*spitefully use you and persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven; for He makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust"* (Matthew 5:38-45).

Insofar as we are commanded to subject ourselves to the government (Romans 13:1; 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:13), we are servants of the same. Servants must *"be submissive to masters with all fear, **not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh**. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully"* (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:18-20).

This is not to say that one is prohibited from exercising his or her rights as a citizen. On more than one occasion, the apostle Paul invoked his Roman citizenship to be spared persecution (Acts 16:35-39; 22:23-29), yet in doing so he was acting within the law. Contrarily, when one violates the law to demand rights, that one is a criminal deserving of punishment.

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## THE AVERAGE

Author Unknown

If a man were to stand with one foot on a hot stove and one foot in a freezer, some statistician would assert that, on average, he's comfortable.

This reminds me of some who seem to feel that they can come to church on Sunday and yet live like the devil during the week. They say that they are, on the average, pretty good people.

Such a person cannot be "comfortable" any more than the man with his foot on the stove and the other in a freezer. He is *"a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways"* (James 1:8). He has only enough religion to be miserable, but not enough to go to heaven.

Our Lord does not prefer an average. He wants his people to be either *"cold or hot"*. The average nauseates Him. He will spew out of his mouth those who are lukewarm (Revelation 3:15-16).

Brother, you had better get all the way on the Lord's side now, lest you spend eternity with the devil.