



In my own research for today I ran across an online article by John Piper (www.desiringgod.org). He offers six attitudes for us to consider when understanding a modern-day relationship of submissiveness. Basing his discussion of 1 Peter 3:1-6 he challenges the often-wrong assumption of how the world defines being subordinate or submissiveness to others. It is NOT about abdicating completely to the other's authority. Scripturally it is recognizing that in a world of equals, someone has to lead, but leadership is about placing the other as your primary concern. I have said often that I am more than willing to submit to a husband, a government or religious authority that knows and loves me as Christ does, being willing to die for my salvation. In the meantime, we do the best we can. So, with that thought here are John Piper's appropriate attitudes in understanding what biblical submission is NOT.

1. **Submission is NOT agreeing with everything:** *God has made you with a mind. You have to think. You are a person, not a body and not a machine.* You're a thinking being who is able to process whatever facts and information that have been placed before you. Your opinions and ideas matter. The intent of this passage and the scriptures as a whole is for us to work as a team. But each and every one must actively give their all if the Body of Christ is to function fully.
2. **Submission does NOT mean leaving your brain behind.** Similar in content as number one, here we are speaking about leadership. Whether it be priest, president or spouse, becoming one united in purpose takes work – one Church, one nation, one family. A wise leader always takes into consideration others' opinion and views, their needs and feelings. But when consensus cannot be reached or even if everyone agrees but in leadership you know better, someone has to make the decision. Among the Polish community in Detroit I have heard it said that Poland fell at the beginning of WWII because everyone was the general. Leadership is taking the initiative but placing the needs and wants of those he or she serves as primary.
3. **Submission does NOT mean you do not try to influence.** Two negatives make a positive so the upshot of this point is that to be subordinate or subject means you still have a responsibility to influence the outcome. But, in recognizing Christ in the other means the influence must be respectful and courteous. As was said in point one, your opinion and/or ideas matter.
4. **Submission is NOT putting the will of the other before the will of Christ.** As believers our primary allegiance is to our Lord. In knowing what our Lord wants from us, without serious reason, we are in the state of sin if we CHOOSE to ignore that. Example: When my daughter was involved in competitive cheer they were required to attend a weekend training camp that began Friday night and ended late Sunday afternoon. She cheered for a Catholic High School. No accommodations were made for Mass. What do you do? Submit to the will of a teenager who doesn't want to be seen as different or follow what we know is the will of Christ.
5. **Submission does NOT mean getting all of your spiritual strength through the other.** Psalm 139:13 tells us that God created each one of us uniquely, *you knit me together in my mother's womb.* Isaiah 43:1 tells us that God called us by name. *I have called you by name; you are mine.*

In God calling us uniquely to Him, then we must respond uniquely. Imagine a family of clones with everyone acting and responding the same. Or worse yet, the father (or mother) thinking for everyone. Family life is messy but it is in the messiness that we find beauty. God is our hope. God is our strength.

6. **Submission does NOT mean living or acting in fear or pain.** Again, whether it is within the Church, the nation or a marriage, God intends for the relationship to be complimentary with all minds thinking and all voices heard; and that leadership place the needs of the other before their own desires and wants. Abuse or victimization is NEVER of God.

For further reflection consider the following;

Scripture

Christ as our example: John 14:31, John 12:49, Matthew 26:39, Hebrews 5:8;10:5-7

Following Christ requires our submission to Him: Proverbs 3:5-6, Psalm 23, Luke 14:25-27, Ephesians 5:21, Romans 12:2

God created lines of authority: Matthew 8:4-10, Romans 13:2-7, Titus 3:1-3, 1 Peter 2:17-18: 5:5

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Submission: 156, 527

Within Marriage: 1601, 1615, 1617

Submission to God: 154, 341, 396, 1955

Submission to Legitimate Authorities: 2239-40

Refusing to submit to the Pope: 2089

