

What Does Your Attitude Toward the President Say About Your Faith?

Does anyone question that our country is divided?



It seems that half our country hates President Trump. OK, "half" is an exaggeration, but it's clear that large pockets of people despise and vilify the president. They may publicly

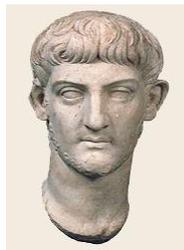
bemoan the antics of pseudo-comedienne Kathy Griffin, but inwardly their own sentiments are just as hateful.

Lest you think I'm censuring one group, let's remember that just last year the other side of the political spectrum hated President Obama. For the eight years of his presidency, we endured hated-filled rhetoric and Internet memes designed to show just how much people despised President Obama.



Such a view from either side of the aisle is unchristian. It's unbiblical. It's wrong.

Consider the words of two men who both lived—and died—under Nero, one of the worse Roman emperors. While still only a teenager, Nero murdered his stepbrother who stood in his way. He had his wife killed because he didn't like her. He married again and then supposedly killed that wife by kicking her while she was pregnant. The next year he would marry his third wife after her husband was driven to commit suicide. Because Nero's mother plotted against him, he likely had her killed as well.



Nero was the first emperor to persecute Christians. He had Christians arrested, punished in horrific ways, and murdered. Yet two of the believers who died violently under his rule wrote these words.

Paul: *"Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that*

which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves" (Rom. 13:1-2).

Peter: *"Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority: whether to the emperor, as the supreme authority, or to governors"* (1 Pet. 2:13-14).

Saul was the first king of Israel, and he was pretty lousy at it. It got to the point that God essentially said, "That's enough. I've raising up a new king." And that king would be David. Saul knew it. David knew it. Everybody knew it. King Saul was the ultimate lame duck.

Everyone knew God had chosen David, yet when David had not one, but two opportunities to kill Saul, he wouldn't do it. C'mon, David. Saul has been rejected; you've been chosen by God to be the king! But David would not raise a hand against "the Lord's anointed" (1 Sam. 24:6).

This is the same David who was a man after God's own heart (13:14).

Let's strive to be people after God's own heart. Do our recent presidents—past and present—deserve our respect? No, but we don't deserve God's grace either. And yet here we are: recipients of something we don't deserve.

Let's respond to His grace with loving obedience to Christ, and that means respecting the authorities God has placed in our lives. And when we do this, we show ...

- ... we are not ruled by our politics.
- ... we are not ruled by our emotions.
- ... we walk in the love of Christ. The absence of hate-filled rhetoric or disrespect makes it possible for others to see the love of Christ in us—and to be drawn to that love.
- ... we are citizens of a greater kingdom, an eternal one ruled by One whose love knows no limits.