



*Dear Phil*

**IS IT WRONG TO BREAK THE SPEED LIMIT?**

***Does the scriptural command, “Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake...” (1 Peter 2:14) include the traffic laws? Some people don’t think so and drive as fast as they desire. Does the Word allow us to decide which laws to obey? —C.J.***

Neither 1 Peter 2:14, Romans 13:1-6, nor any other scripture gives us permission to choose which laws we will obey. Of course, we ought to obey God rather than man (Acts 5:29). But that is only when human law requires us to violate God’s law, and speed limit laws certainly do not qualify for this exemption.

Both Peter and Paul wrote during the reign of Nero, a deranged, cruel, and wicked man who used Christians as torches to light his garden parties. Yet Paul states unqualifiedly that the powers that be are ordained of God (Rom. 13:1). He does not say “only good, godly rulers are ordained by God.” He does state that since God ordains the powers that be, to resist those powers is to resist God (Rom. 13:2). God has given

those in authority the responsibility to reward good and punish evil. He will hold them accountable for that responsibility, but even those who misuse it are ordained by God.

To disobey them is to disobey God’s appointed ministers and thus to disobey God Himself (Rom. 13:4-5). That is why Paul concludes that we must obey the laws of the land for conscience’s sake and not merely to avoid the law’s wrath or punishment (Rom. 13:5). Peter’s command is the same. We are to submit to the ordinance (i.e., authority structure) of men, for the Lord’s sake. Peter didn’t say we had to agree with the laws or even think them just.

Having said that, let me suggest that we need to understand both the spirit and the letter of our laws. The purpose (spirit) of speed limit laws is to promote safety. There are occasions when going 55mph,

although the posted limit, is unsafe and one may be stopped for driving too fast for hazardous conditions. By the same token, there may be times when going 55mph will cause a road hazard if the highway traffic is moving 15-20 miles faster. To go 55 may keep the letter but violate the purpose of the law. Yet, this exception cannot be legitimately used to argue “I can go any speed I want” or “I can go whatever speed I know the police will allow.” We violate Romans 13:1-6 and 1 Peter 2:13-14 when we break the laws of God-ordained authority.

Sincerely,  
Philip Brown ■

*Dr. A. Philip Brown II is a member of the ministerial faculty of God’s Bible School and College. He may be contacted by e-mail at [pbrown@gbs.edu](mailto:pbrown@gbs.edu).*

**THE PRESIDENT’S PAGE** continued

➔(continued from page 3)

Religious sects began to spring up for the sole purpose of explaining and defending the Law. The end result was that Israel trusted in the Law for salvation rather than in the God who gave it. This subversion of the Divine intent perverted the good that was to come from the Law and brought about a subtle form of idolatry that left Israel worshipping the thing made rather than the Maker.

There are Christians today who find it easier to trust in the forms of godliness than in the God Who gives power and meaning to the forms. They find it easier to identify with a group, conform to a code, and embrace a creed than

to cultivate a relationship with the God Who is at the heart of it all. Instead of living in the fear of the Lord they rest in the acceptance of man and man’s tradition. They have chosen the false assurance of religious conformity and missed the real assurance of “Christ in you the hope of glory.”

The trap of spiritual idolatry is subtle but avoidable. Take proactive measures to avoid it. Worship in a church that values and speaks God’s Word. Find friends that challenge you to know God intimately. And never forget that eternal life is in knowing the “true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent.” Don’t settle for anything less! ■