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Bible Doctrine Presented in Q&A Format

DOES GOD EVER ENDORSE CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

PASSAGE	TOPIC
Step ONE	Select a topic from BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE (p4). As an example, I'll select "Rahab resists the authority at Jericho."
Step TWO	Read the account in the Bible. In this example, you will read Joshua 2.
Step THREE	Answer the questions on the QUESTIONS page (p5).
	For example, QUESTION #6, "What goal was accomplished in this civil disobedience?" ANSWER: The lives of the Israelite spies were saved, enabling them to return to Israel and report their findings.
	For example, QUESTION #30, "Did anything in this account seem to contradict other doctrines?" ANSWER: Rahab lied in the process, but God still blessed her efforts. While the law of Moses had not been given, Paul wrote about how the law is written on the hearts of the Gentiles (Rom 2:15). It's not clear whether she was punished for the matter or the severity of the punishment.
	The teacher can select which questions the students need to answer, if not all.
<i>NOTE TO STUDENTS: For the discussion to go well, the students should go through the questions before class.</i>	
<i>NOTE TO THE TEACHER: This lesson was designed to have all the question be asked for each biblical account.</i>	

BIBLICAL ACCOUNTS OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

TOPICS	TOPICS
1. The Hebrew midwives resist Pharaoh's command (Exodus 1:15-21)	13. Joab would not number Levi and Benjamin (I Chron 21:2-6)
2. Moses' parents and Pharaoh's daughter (Exodus 2:1-10)	14. They tore down the house of Baal (2 Chron 23:16-17)
3. Rahab resists the authority at Jericho (Joshua 2)	15. Jehoiada has Queen Athaliah killed (2 Chron 23:12-21)
4. Mordecai does not bow down to Haman (Esther 3:1-6)	16. Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego and the fiery furnace (Daniel 3)
5. Esther enters the king's court and saves the Jews (Esther 4-5, 7-8)	17. Daniel and the lions' den (Daniel 6)
6. Gideon tears down the alter of Baal (Judges 6:25-32)	18. The wise men and Herod (Matthew 2:1-12)
7. Saul's decree and Jonathan (I Sam 14:24-46)	19. Jesus and the disciples pick grain on the sabbath (Mark 2:23-28)
8. Saul and his armor-bearer (I Sam 31:4)	20. The disciples teach and preach Jesus (Acts 4:1-31)
9. Israel is rent in two (I Kings 11:32-12:24)	21. The apostles preach Jesus (Acts 5:17-42)
10. Obadiah hides one-hundred prophets (I Kings 18:4)	22. Stephen's ministry and martyrdom (Acts 6:8-7:60)
11. Jehu slaughters those associated with King Ahab (2 Kings 10:17)	23. Paul and Silas get put in prison (Acts 16:16-40)
12. The servants of King Joash rise up against Joash (2 Kings 12:19-21)	24. The saints and the mark of the beast (Revelation 13)
CONCLUSION: Only when there is a clear contradiction to the law of God can God's children partake in civil disobedience.	

QUESTIONS REGARDING CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

QUESTIONS	QUESTIONS
1. Which secular law was disobeyed?	18. Was it God's will for them to engage in civil disobedience?
2. Was a commandment in the Bible disobeyed? If so, which one?	19. Were their actions based on a direct command or a broader principle?
3. Who instigated the action of civil disobedience?	20. Did anybody come to Christ?
4. If God instigated the civil disobedience, what was the purpose?	21. Did their actions spawn from a corrupt government?
5. What was the goal in this civil disobedience?	22. Were their actions due to evil men in power?
6. Was the goal accomplished?	23. Were those engaging in civil disobedience selfishly motivated?
7. Who were the villains in this account?	24. Were the motives of the said persons to honor and obey God?
8. Was there any ignorance on the part of the villains?	25. Can you name a justifiable case of civil disobedience in current events?
9. Was there any willful stubbornness on the part of the villains?	26. Have you ever participated in civil disobedience?
10. Were any lives saved in this account? Were any lives lost? Why?	27. Were your actions justified by the Word of God?
11. Was anybody punished in this account?	28. How about discussing a case you are facing at present?
12. Were there any adverse consequences from the actions in this account?	29. Have you witnessed a justifiable case concerning civil disobedience?
13. What type of blessing came from the civil disobedience?	30. Did anything in this account seem to contradict any other doctrines?
14. How did this account magnify the Word of God?	31. Is evil men in power an excuse not to pay taxes? [The answer is "no."]
15. Did God approve of the civil disobedience?	32. Is a corrupt government an excuse not to obey the law?
16. Is it clear that the civil disobedience was actually correct?	33. Is it easy to disobey in any context and say that it is approved by God?
17. Were there any gray areas regarding morality of their actions?	34. How do you keep men from twisting doctrine as a pretense to disobey?
CONCLUSION: Civil disobedience that is approved by God comes from not submitting to the laws set by the governments that run contrary to the Word of God.	

DOCTRINES REGARDING CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

VERSE	TOPIC	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
On the Definition	Civil disobedience occurs when a party disobeys a law of the land. When you bring in the factor of God's law, it's easy to run into contradictions. Civil disobedience can include overt or covert actions like Daniel continuing to pray to God and Daniel's friends' lack of submission to the king respectively.	When serving the Lord, the situation will be rife with opportunities to engage in civil disobedience.
Acts 5:29	From the time after the flood, there has always been governments who establish secular laws that run contrary to the Word of God. When there is not a contradiction between the law of God and the secular law, then the secular law needs to be obeyed. Peter and the rest of the apostles knew it was necessary to continue to obey God in giving out the gospel of Jesus Christ.	Where society runs contrary to Christ, you have to be willing to accept whatever persecution that would come from the decision.
Acts 4:19	With the devil being the god of this world, you can know that the prevailing values will be contrary to the word of God. All will stand before Christ one day and give an account of their life. Since salvation is only found in Jesus Christ, it is imperative that we give out the gospel wisely on a regular basis regardless of the consequences in doing so.	Praying for boldness obviously is a good move for believers living in such societies that blatantly defy the Word of God and the gospel.
I Samuel 15:23	Due to pressure from the people, Saul kept the best of the livestock for sacrifice. Then, after being confronted, he remained defiant (15:20), claiming that he had obeyed the Lord, which made the situation worse. It's disobedience that needs atonement; obedience does not. "A rebellious, stubborn heart rejects God just as certainly as someone rejects God by occult practices or idolatry." (David Guzik) Obedience under a law that runs contrary to the Word of God, or obedience that when the value system runs contrary to the Word of God is tough. It's really tough.	Doing one-hundred rights will not undo one wrong. If you do not sin, confession and repentance will not be necessary. God wants obedience.
I Corinthians 14:40	Even when civil disobedience is warranted, the situation must be thought out well by the servants of the Lord. Having a well-constructed argument from scripture and having a doable plan is a good start. In fact, sometimes it is not necessary to draw up a doable plan. Other times, a plan is not necessary. You simply abide by God's law, and the rest of the story falls together naturally.	Disrespectful parades and violent rallies are not approved by God. They only cast doubt on the ones participating in the parades.

DOCTRINES REGARDING CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

PASSAGE	TOPIC	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Romans 13:1-7	The apostle Paul discusses the importance of submitting to secular authority figures. Most laws do not run contrary to Christianity. On the contrary, most laws will help society, even secular society, from falling apart. If Christians are leading the way regarding civil disobedience when it is not okay, what does that do to the spread of the gospel? It is our responsibility to accurately apply these passages.	Without saying it, the lost man watches the saved man, noting every time a professing Christian violates the law.
I Peter 2:13-15	Peter also addressed the issue of submitting to government officials, reminding all believers to submit to institutions, even if secular. Interestingly enough, Peter brings up the concept of good and evil in verse 14. Even the lost man knows about the relentless struggle between good and evil in the earth. This is why the blameless testimony of the saved man silences the lost man (I Peter 2:15).	In terms of approved civil disobedience, it is easy for people to run straight to the exceptions in order to twist God's law in their favor.
Matthew 17:27	By paying the tax, Jesus walks the talk, and thereby he also was an example to his disciples.	Jesus displays a willingness to submit to human institutions. Only when there was an issue between the law of the state and the law of God did Jesus engage in civil disobedience.
	While this passage does well to prove the deity of Christ in performing a miracle, but for our purposes, we can see he was willing to submit to the tax laws.	
	Obviously, he did not work for this money, but then again, he is the creator of the universe. Adding one coin to the economy will not cause an undue amount of inflation.	
	The government of a country has all kinds of expenses, which have to be paid for by someone.	
Mark 12:17	Jesus acknowledged the validity of human government, avoiding the trap they were trying to set up for him. "This answer is full of consummate wisdom. It establishes the <i>limits</i> , regulates the <i>rights</i> , and distinguishes the <i>jurisdiction</i> of the two <i>empires of heaven and earth</i> ." (Clarke) "When the State treads on this ground that belongs to God, we are duty bound to obey God before the State." (David Guzik)	Even though secular government officials may be corrupt, declaring corruption is not an excuse to stop paying taxes to the state.

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