

Let's talk Ethics!

Who's Steering the Ship?

Imagine you're on a boat in the middle of the ocean. The journey is smooth at first, but then the waves start to rise. A storm rolls in. Suddenly, you realize how much you need a skilled captain—someone who can navigate through the chaos, keep everyone safe, and steer in the right direction.

Now, think about leadership in society. Ethical leaders—whether in government, business, or communities—are like those captains. When they lead with integrity, fairness, and justice, we can move forward safely. But what happens when leadership is corrupt or unjust? Do we still have to “submit” to it?

That's exactly what we're unpacking in this issue of Let's Talk Ethics.

What Does It Mean to Submit to Just and Ethical Governing Authorities?

Commitment #08 says:
“To submit myself to just and ethical governing authorities.”

At first glance, the word submit might make some of us uncomfortable. It can sound like we're being told to follow orders blindly. But that's not what this commitment is about.

In this context, submit means:

- Recognising and respecting ethical leadership – Supporting governance that promotes fairness, justice, and the common good.
- Aligning with just laws and systems – Playing our part in upholding ethical policies and structures.
- Engaging with leadership responsibly – Holding those in power accountable and pushing for ethical change when needed.

In other words, this isn't about blind obedience—it's about choosing to stand for ethical governance and actively participating in a just society.

But What If My Government Is Corrupt?

A fair question! If we're called to submit to just and ethical governing authorities, does that mean we can ignore leadership that is corrupt or unjust? Not quite.

This commitment doesn't mean we support corruption, nor does it mean we have to agree with everything a leader does.

What it does call us to do is:

- Support what is ethical – Even in flawed systems, there are laws, institutions, and structures that serve the public good. Upholding those helps prevent complete chaos.
- Hold leaders accountable – Ethical submission includes calling out injustice, advocating for transparency, and using our voices (and votes) to push for better leadership.
- Lead by example – If we want ethical governance, we need to model it in our own spheres—our workplaces, businesses, and communities.

Withdrawing from governance altogether because of corruption doesn't solve anything. Instead, our role is to engage wisely, act justly, and contribute to a system that reflects ethical values.

How Do We Know If a Governing Authority Is Just and Ethical? Not every leader deserves support. So how do we tell if an authority is truly just? Here are three key signs:

- Integrity – Leaders who are honest, transparent, and accountable.
- Justice – Policies and decisions that protect the vulnerable and uphold fairness.
- Service to the common good – Leadership that prioritizes what's best for everyone, not just a select few.

If those qualities are missing, our responsibility is not to abandon governance but to stand up for what is right—peacefully, persistently, and with integrity.

This Isn't Just About Government

This commitment applies beyond politics. We encounter leadership in workplaces, schools, churches, and families. In all these areas, ethical authority deserves respect and support. But when leadership becomes unethical, we have a duty to challenge it and push for change.

At work? Support fair policies and stand against unethical behavior.

In your community? Advocate for justice and accountability. Raising children? Teach them to respect ethical leadership and stand up against injustice.

Ethical governance starts with all of us.

A Call to Action

The world needs more than good leaders—it needs people willing to stand for ethical leadership. Submitting to just and ethical governing authorities isn't about giving up power. It's about making sure that power is used the right way.

So, what role will you play? Will you disengage and let corruption thrive? Or will you step up, speak out, and help steer society toward justice?

The choice is ours. Let's choose well.

Yours in ethics,

Hele Power