
STEPPINGSTONES
SCHOLARSHIP



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Civil disobedience is when a person or group protests against a government to bring about change to a biased law, unjust government actions, or environmental issues. The issue we, as Christians, face is between obeying what is right according to our government and obeying what is right according to God. I am going to explain those topics through the example of the Boston Tea Party. The final question is: are there any situations in which civil disobedience is ever justified for Christians? I believe, based on evidence from the Bible, that the answer is no.

The Boston Tea Party was the result of the Tea Act of 1773. This tax meant that when tea was sold to the colonies, the colonists had to pay a tax on the tea. This enraged the colonists. A group of men called the Sons of Liberty, created by Samuel Adams, protested the taxation imposed by the British. On December 16, 1773, a mob of around “150” men boarded the ships and threw the tea overboard into the harbor. (Boston Tea Party Timeline)

In the Bible, Jesus tells us multiple times that we are to listen to God, then to the law. I believe that the British government had the right to tax the people. Romans 13:1-2 says, “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.” (Bible Gateway, New International Version). Romans explains that the government in charge of us has been put in place by God. God has chosen these people for a reason, and if we are to disobey the government, we are disobeying God.

Some people might say that the British government was unjust and that they had no right to tax the colonies. Even though the people in the colonies had no voice back in England, the Parliament was just trying to keep its country out of debt. As Christians, we are told to listen to God over the government. Looking at the Boston Tea Party, the colony’s actions were largely fueled by its anger towards the British government. In Matthew Chapter 22:15-22, the Pharisees come to Jesus and ask him what he thinks of the taxes Caesar has imposed on them. Jesus asks to see the coins they are to pay with, and then He shows them how Caesar’s inscription is on the coin. Jesus said to the Pharisees, “So give back to what is Caesar’s and to God what is God’s.” Jesus basically tells them to pay what they owe to the government and then focus on God. (Bible Gateway, New International Version).

Living during the Revolutionary War would be hard, and if I were given the choice to participate in the Boston Tea Party, I would decline. The reason is that when given a choice, we are supposed to ask God and obey what he has already told us through the Bible. In the Bible, God tells us that we are only supposed to disobey the government if government laws contradict God’s commands. The British government was not corrupt; they were only trying to pay off debt by taxing. It is your lawful duty as a citizen to pay your taxes to the government.

In conclusion, I believe the Boston Tea Party was not justified in any way. We can read in the Bible that God commands us to obey the government and to pay our taxes. If we ever have unjust laws today or our government is corrupt, before responding with protests, we should pray to God and ask for his guidance. We should always rely on God to help us through all our struggles in life, not just the little ones or the big ones, but all of them. I love this country and am so thankful for the freedom and hope it provides. As a young American, I can't wait to see how this country grows.