

# **Romans 13**

## **Submission to Governing Authorities**

*1 Let everyone be subject (obey) to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.*

The connection between Romans 12 and Romans 13 is clear. If the Christian is not to seek personal vengeance, it does not take away the government's authority to punish wrongdoers. (Guzik)

Q. How does this verse look during election time?

Q. Why does God appoint evil men? (Herod, Nero, Hitler, Stalin...etc)

Q. When is it right to rebel?

Q. Was the revolutionary war just or an act of sinful rebellion?

*2 Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*

Q. Is Government good or bad?

*3 For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended.*

God uses Government to keep in check evil doers. When the government ceases to uphold that responsibility, the nation is in trouble.

Many Governments have been overthrown due to evil and injustice.

Assyria, Babylon and Persia. God uses the Kingdoms of this world to accomplish His purpose for human history. All governments are temporary until Jesus Christ sets up his forever Kingdom.

*4 For the one in authority is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God's servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer.*

Q. Should Christians support capital punishment?

**The sword** is a reference to capital punishment. In the Roman Empire, criminals were typically executed by beheading with a **sword** (crucifixion was reserved for the worst criminals of the lowest classes). Paul, speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, has no doubt that the state has the legitimate authority to execute criminals. (Enduring Word commentary).

*5 Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.*

God places an order of submission through the Bible. It allows the creation to run effectively. We are to submit to Government.

*6 This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.*

Those in Government are called ministers. Christians should pay taxes.

*7 Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor.*

We owe submission to those God has established in our lives.

Q. Why is submission so hard?

Q. What does submission look like?

Creatively cheating the system is not a Christian trait.

### **Love Fulfills the Law**

*8 Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.*

Pay off your debt.

Some take this as a command to never borrow, but Jesus permitted borrowing in passages like Matthew 5:42. That isn't the sense of what Paul is saying here, though the Scriptures do remind us of the danger and obligations of borrowing (Proverbs 22:7). (Guzik).

Loving one another fulfills half of the law.

Loving God fulfills the rest.

The law deals with wickedness and godlessness. Wickedness is sins against people and godlessness is sins against God. The Ten Commandments deals with both.

Matthew 22: 37-40 *Jesus replied: “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’[a] 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”*

**9** *The commandments, “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not murder,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not covet,” and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”*

**10** *Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*

Q. How do we love our neighbor as ourselves?

Q. How do you grade yourself?

Thank God salvation is not by works.

### **The Day Is Near**

**11** *And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.*

The coming of Jesus is imminent ...closer now than ever.

**12** *The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light, 13 Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. 14 Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.*

Put on Jesus Christ. The imagery of dressing is used by Paul to tell believers how to live. Put off the old deeds and put on the new man.

This is a call for believers to take off and put on. It speaks as to the will of a man to live right toward God.