

Romans 13 – Christians and Government

Summary

Paul teaches that our faith is not separate from our civic life. God established government as part of His design for order in the world. While not every leader is godly, the structure of authority itself comes from God. Government is accountable to God to work for the good of people and maintain law and order. As Christians, we are called to respect and honor governing authorities, pay what is owed, and obey laws—unless those laws directly contradict God's higher law. When that happens, we must choose obedience to God above all.

Key Themes:

1. God ordained government (authority is not random).
2. Government is responsible to God.
3. Christians are responsible to both God and government.

Key Scriptures

- Romans 13:1 – “Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.”
- Romans 13:3–4 – “For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad... he is God's servant for your good.”
- Romans 13:7 – “Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes... respect... honor.”
- Acts 5:29 – “We must obey God rather than men.”

Study Questions – With Answers

1.: Why does Paul say that resisting governing authority is ultimately resisting God?

A: Because God Himself instituted the structure of government. Even when leaders are imperfect, the office of authority is part of God's order.

2.How do we reconcile the call to honor authority when leaders are unjust or corrupt?

A: We honor the position, even if we cannot honor the person's actions. When laws contradict God's Word, we respectfully but firmly obey God's higher law.

3: How does this teaching challenge the way you speak about or interact with leaders you disagree with politically?

A: It reminds us to guard our words, show respect, and avoid dishonor. Even in disagreement, Christians should reflect Christlike humility and integrity.

4: According to Romans 13:3–4, what is the government's God-given role?

A: To work for the good of people, maintain order, and punish wrongdoing. Government should be a servant for justice, not a tool for personal gain.

5: What are some biblical examples of civil disobedience? How do they guide us today?

A: Daniel praying despite the king's law, the Hebrew boys refusing to bow, and the apostles continuing to preach in Jesus' name. These show us that when man's law contradicts God's, we must stand with God.

6: What does it look like for you personally to “pay to all what is owed” (Rom. 13:7) in today's context?

A: Paying taxes honestly, showing respect to leaders and officials, honoring the law, and modeling integrity in civic life.

7. Critical Thinking: Why do you think Paul gave this command when Nero, an anti-Christian emperor, was in power?

A: To show that honor isn't about whether the leader is worthy—it's about obedience to God. Faithful Christians can influence culture most when they walk in humility and integrity even under hardship.

Family Spotlight

Illustration: Take two sets of blocks. One set is stacked in random, messy piles (representing chaos without authority). The other set is stacked neatly into a tower (representing order under structure). Ask kids: Which one is stronger? Which one is easier to knock over? Why?

Activity: As a family, write a prayer card for a government leader (local, state, or national). Pray together for them to have wisdom and honor God in their decisions.

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