

“God, Government and You” Romans 13:1-7

The Book of Romans!

1-11... **Doctrine** 12- 16 ... **Duty**, So 1-11, **Beliefs**, 12-16, **Behaviors**.

Paul has been telling us what a **lover of Jesus looks like, acts like, and what they do...** they are part of a body with diverse gifts to be used to advance the fame of God, we are called to be **authentic in our love**, hate what is evil and tears down the family of God, be patient in tribulations, be hospitable with one another and those outside the family of God.

Paul goes on to say **an authentic Christian** will also **bless their enemy**, we won't be a people who **pay back evil** for evil, we are to be peacemakers whenever possible, that means dying to our rights...

*Today's section of scripture is so controversial that some (few) commentators have tried to say Paul never said such things. Peter, Solomon, Jeremiah, Daniel, and Jesus Himself backed up this section of scripture in many ways...

We are going to see that God is the giver of **governmental authority**, He appoints all world leaders and officials and so Paul tells us **to obey the leaders God has appointed**, whether they are believers or not, good or bad leaders, God appoints them, directs them and uses them.... our **obedience** to local laws will become a **beacon of light** to the unbelieving neighbors and even authorities!

If you can grasp this, what these commands in Romans 12-16 says you will be blessed! These duties and behaviors they put us in place to be used by God. For He is laying out His battle plan, His war cry, His worship tune of which we are His individual notes, making up a sweet melody, that sings out to the lost world... “I am God, and I love you enough to die for you, come home to Me!”

How are we part of this melody, this song? Well, by offering ourselves to God to be used by Him, for His glory we are in the perfect place at the perfect time to be His ministers, servants, His examples of love, and heralds of the good news.

God will use us like the military uses the Navy Seals to go in on a rescue mission to save POWs, or like a doctor in a war zone treating the **wounded and worried... if we are willing**. The **result** of being a living sacrifice, used for **God's purpose** ? people will be saved from **despair, depression, detachment, & destruction!**

How does He use us? **“Duty and behavior”** ... an offered up life **has us doing what God wants us** to do each day, we may not even know it. He doesn't tell us every facet and detail of the plan. Does a general tell the Seal every detail of foreign affairs? No, just the details for the mission the Seal is on.

Where does God want us? **Duty and behavior** will put us exactly **where He wants us**.

Paul is going to continue telling us how to walk in God's will, or what an authentic Christian life will actually look like if we are walking in a love relationship with Jesus...

Paul continues by telling us today... that we are to put ourselves under the authority of whatever government we live under. If in the US then the US, UK, Poland, Ireland, Czech Republic, Congo, China, North Korea, Iran, Iraq...

"Oh, Paul could say that, he lived in Israel where they followed God's laws, he didn't mean in today's time, it was so much easier then"... Remember, Paul lived in a time when Romans ruled over Israel. **Caesar Nero** was the ruler of that day. A vicious man, slept with his mother, had her killed, along with others in his family, who is said to have actually set Rome (his city) on fire in the Great Fire of 64AD, then blame it on Christians and persecute them.

The historian Tacitus describes these atrocities: "Covered with the skins of beasts, [Christians] were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as nightly illumination when daylight had expired." Naked horse run....light of world

This is the Caesar/world leader that Paul appealed to while in Jerusalem, and this is the governing authority of the world at the time Paul wrote... Our country is not this bad not even remotely close! Paul's words should hold some weight!

13 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**.

As Christians we are the **most free people in the world**, set free from all oppression darkness by JC. We might rightfully say "I answer to no one except JC"! Yet here Paul says to **every person**, even those who belong to Christ, be subject to the governing authorities. We are free to honor all of God's commands.

For, All authority upon this earth is God given authority, well what about those in office who don't honor God? Remember Paul's context when writing this, Nero!!

God appoints even non believing leaders! Take a look around the world, how many good Christ following leaders do you see leading countries, offices, or councils? **Im supposed to listen to their rules?** That's what Paul is saying. **The evidence...**

Moses was told that Pharaoh (world leader) was raised up by God Himself. **Romans 9:17** For the Scripture says to Pharaoh, "For this very purpose **I have raised you up**, that I might show my power in you, and that **my name might be proclaimed** in all the earth."

Daniel, **Dan 4:17** For this has been decreed by the messengers; it is commanded by the holy ones, so that everyone may know that the **Most High rules** over the kingdoms of the world. **He gives them to anyone he chooses**— even to the lowliest of people."

Jer 27:6-8 NLT 6 Now I will give your countries to King **Nebuchadnezzar** of Babylon, who is **My servant**. (world leader) I have put everything, even the wild animals, **under his control**. 7 All the nations will serve him, his son, and his grandson until his time is up. Then many nations and great kings

will conquer and rule over Babylon. 8 So **you must submit to Babylon's king and serve him**; put your neck under Babylon's yoke! (Of the Jew ^)

Pro 8:15 By me kings reign and rulers decree what is just

If that's not enough evidence & you don't believe me, Paul, Jeremiah, or Daniel, Solomon in the Bible, you only answer to Jesus, ok.... **John 19:9** (Pilate) entered his headquarters again and said to Jesus, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. 10 So Pilate said to him, "You will not speak to me? Do you not know that **I have authority** to release you and **authority** to crucify you?" 11 Jesus answered him, "**You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been given you from above.** Therefore he who delivered me over to you has the greater sin." All auth from God alone!

2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities **resists what God has appointed**, and those who resist will incur judgment.

Paul makes the point again, **God has appointed the law makers**. We are to follow their laws & be the very **best citizens** in any nation we live in. If we don't there will be a deserved **judgment**.

Now, Paul isn't suggesting that we submit to the lawmakers as God, in addition to God, alongside God, Make no mistake about what this is saying though... Our **allegiance is to Christ**, God alone. He is our Master, Savior, King of Kings. The government isn't even a second fiddle, not even a close second. But since **God appointed the kings** and princes to be leaders on the earth, when we follow the laws they make **we are listening to God**.

*Like with kids, "**Papa Said**", acting under my authority, even if said in a bad context, the hearer of Papa's word, has to obey the kid, even if smaller than them, all because of the one who sent, who sent the authority. The tone can and often is bad, off, misrepresenting.

So our allegiance, alliance, and **loyalty is to God**. It's **God alone on the throne**, get yourself off it, get your spouse off it, take your **political party** and elected officials off the throne, it belongs to JC alone!

Ever asked, **If God is so good why does He allow people to get away with evil in the world?** Hang on a minute.... Has anyone ever had to use the phone to call 911? Have the police or fire rescue help them from a terrible situation?

The institution of government was introduced to protect mankind from *mankind* in Genesis chapter 9, after the flood God gave Noah a command saying **Gen 9:6** "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image. (Gov was born in the penalty of a person who commits a crime by the governing people)

Can you imagine what the world would look like if God did not give us the police, fire rescue, and penalties for breaking the laws? As bad as any government might be, the world is a better place because of it. **"Only thing worse than a bad government, is no government!"**

3 For **rulers are not a terror** to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then **do what is good**, and you will receive his approval, 4 for he is **God's servant for your good**.

Rulers are not a terror to good conduct but bad,

Example, **1.** driving down the road, stop at stop sign, look both ways, see a police car tucked away clocking and checking ppl. “Oh look at that, a policeman doing their duty, isn’t it great?”

2. driving down the road **doing 80**, look in the median and see black and blue car, the lights go on, terror, horror, fear grips you! Shyla tells me this is true!

Then **do what is good**, and you will receive his **approval**, Sometimes you get approval even when you mess up...if your heart has been bent on order.

Orleans DC, opportunity to visit Orleans DC last month. Though I landed myself in DC because of an infraction, it revealed something deeper, a bigger picture was portrayed here.... What made you see the light of day?

But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not **bear the sword in vain**. For he is the **servant of God**, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer.

We are to fear God, it's the beginning of wisdom, fear the powers He put into place...if we are doing wrong! Bearing the sword, commentators say is a **reference to capital punishment**, back to Gen 9 again. But it can also relate to wordly legal consequences to breaking the law.

Unlike worldly authorities...Sword of the Lord, **Hebrews 4:12** For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged **sword**, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

For he is the **servant of God**, Government officials are servants of God. Ministers even. just because God appoints them does not mean God anoints them to follow Him. There are many in office today that are there by the will of God alone, who are not honoring the word of God, most. They **will be accountable** for their position one day. But we are still called to follow the laws put into place, as long as they don’t conflict or go against what the **Lord tells us is right** in His sight in the Word of God, **Bible**. We are called to respect an **honor their position**, take Paul for an example in Acts on mission with Jesus...

Acts 23:1 And looking intently at the council, Paul said, “Brothers, I have lived my life before God in all **good conscience** up to this day.” 2 And the high priest Ananias commanded those who stood by him to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him, “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall! Are you sitting to judge me according to the law, and yet contrary to the law you order me to be struck?” 4 Those who stood by said, “Would you revile God's high priest?” 5 And Paul said, “I did not know, brothers, that he was the high priest, for it is written, **‘You shall not speak evil of a ruler of your people.’**”

Ecclesiastes 10:20 Even in your thoughts, **do not curse the king**, nor in your bedroom curse the rich, for a **bird of the air will carry your voice**, or some winged creature tell the matter.

How do you deal with discontent of the elected officials or the direction of society these days? Grumble and complain? It's going to destroy your witness and alienate your ability to share the gospel with people. Live in a democracy, go vote, shut up, leave it up to God...and go live gospel lives that changes the culture you so wish would change by your complaining!

5 Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to **avoid God's wrath** but also for the **sake of conscience**.

By the blood of JC we were given a **victory... to respond in love** to what Jesus did on the cross for us.

Not out of **fear of getting caught**, (legalism), but do it out of love, for our conscience should be telling us, Jesus loved you enough to die for you, and gave Himself to you, shouldn't you just love Him and lay down your life to Him and for Him, even if it the laws say to wear a red hat on Tuesdays or go to jail,,,ok. Or paying more on your taxes because you don't cheat or hide cash...

6 For because of this you also **pay taxes**, for the **authorities are ministers of God**, attending to this very thing.

7 Pay to all **what is owed** to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

Keeping **evil at bay costs money**, keeping roads safe too, funding hospitals and public safety We need to pay our taxes to pay for police, military, fire, school teachers, roadways, snow plow removal in NE.... "But they spend way too much on stupid things" you might say...so what? God says let me worry about that, you just trust in Me, follow MY commands, I've got the rest...

Ephes 6:1 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right.

Taxes, none of us like them, but we all need what we get from them... But how did the Jews view taxes?.... They hated tax collectors, (Levi, Zacheus) and the ruling authorities that hired the tax collectors! Paul is saying is so **counter culture** here. Well, what did Jesus say about this, not alot...

Jesus....**Matthew 22: 17** Tell us, then, what you think. Is it **lawful to pay taxes** to Caesar, or not?" 18 But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why put me to the test, you hypocrites? 19 Show me the coin for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. 20 And Jesus said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" 21 They said, "Caesar's." Then he said to them, "Therefore render to Caesar the **things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.**" 22 When they heard it, they marveled. And they left him and went away.

Jesus **didn't say much** at all when it came to government on earth, it was of little importance to Him...Yet, He **never broke** a single local **law** all His life, except when it came to God things! He lived above reproach so no one could discredit His witness for God!

There are a recorded **few** times when Peter and the gang did not obey the law of the land, only when the law or order was in direct defiance of God's will, still then the apostles were never rebellious in nature.

Acts 4:18 So they called them and **charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.** 19 But Peter and John answered them, “Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, 20 for we **cannot but speak of what we have seen** and heard.” 21 And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them...

Case of **Daniel and the 3 amigos**... **1.** Wouldn't eat the meat dedicated to false gods, they were polite and asked permission not to eat it Dan 1. **2.** Darius makes a law not to pray to anyone but himself, he is tricked into this, loves Daniel.... Daniel **doesn't protest**, he doesn't **lobby for prayer rights**, what does he do? He just goes back to where he always was, **and prays**, he gets in some deep water over that that lands him in a den with some cuddly kittens... **3.** Sharack and the boys will not bow down to a 90ft tall statue made to be worshipped as a god, the refuse, and are sent to the furnace....

In all these cases though, you **don't see the Christian yelling**, defaming, defiling, and slandering the local governments. Don't see them posting all over facebook how ridiculous the new law is, or how bad this politician is. YOU don't even see the trying to change the laws outwardly or directly.

How do they try to change the laws against God, or the un-Biblical laws of any land....they don't! They simply **live good obedient lives**, that sing out the **good news** of Jesus Christ, and they **prayed!** Imagine if we **prayed for our lost, God appointed leaders** as much as we posted bad press about them on social media, or talked smack about them on the softball field, at work, wherever? The apostles Peter, Barnabas, Andrew, Philp, Paul all led a **charge to share Jesus Christ**. *THAT* was their focus, *THAT* was their ministry. *THAT* was what took up their time and energy. These guys also lived lives that were exemplary among their peers, in all phases of life.

Ultimately their faith is what cost them their lives, but it wasn't their political views and mocking mouths....

God has such bigger plans than seeing the government at peace or giving us a perfect little Christian culture to live in.... He has placed us in a wonderful country that actually has a very Christ like legislature, or has for many many years. We have the ability to vote, and we should. But we've actually grown a little spiritually dim because of the ease we have... and what a decline in Christian leadership as the ppl pull away from Jesus. DOES that mean that Jesus somehow lost control of the US? NO!

Places of persecution... Iran fastest growing Christian rate on the planet! Persecution is drawing ppl closer to the truth. China, a self professed atheist country is believed to have the biggest population of Christians on the planet by 2030, over 300 million!

Peter said what Paul said, it's backed up...and summed up. Why do we listen to authority? Its god ordained and it's a witness of GOD's glory to the world!

Why do we submit to authority...?

1 **Peter 2:12** Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

Submission to Authority

13 **Be subject** for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, 14 or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. 15 For this is the will of God, **that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people.** 16 Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. 17 Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. **Honor the emperor.**

Applies not just to our president and politicians, but our employers also! Good or bad....quit grumbling! 18 Servants, be subject **to your masters with all respect**, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. 19 For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. 20 For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. 21 **For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you**, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. 22 He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. 23 When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. 24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. 25 For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls

Wives and Hubbies, submit as unto the Lord

1 Peter 3:1 Likewise, wives, be subject to your own husbands, so that even if some do not obey the word, they may be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, 2 when they see your respectful and pure conduct.

Husbands!!!

1 Peter 3:7 Likewise, husbands, live with your wives in an understanding way, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.

Ephesians 5:22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord.

Eph 5:25 Husbands, **love your wives**, as Christ loved the church and **gave himself up** for her, ...28 In the same way husbands should love their wives **as their own bodies**. He who **loves his wife loves himself**. A true lover will leave his own desire behind, and be excellent at grace and forgiveness, dying to one's own ways and needs all for the object of his love...

33 However, let each one of you **love his wife** as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.

Why do I present these examples? Living sacrifice, offered up life, will show the glory of God, reveal the nature of Christ to a world that is dying to know Hope, and we get to display hope in all these ways.

So much more than just blind obedience and submission to authority just for authority's sake.

By loving one another, offering ourselves up to be used by God in a body and family, sharing what we have, loving our enemies, letting vengeance be on God's terms, by obeying the law of the land....people notice and there is validity to what we say about Jesus by the visual story our tale our lives tell about Jesus....before we even open our mouths!

We let go, give over, give way... giving all the glory to God!