

**Start your study here**

**Read**    Read, Record, Reflect, Respond

Prayerfully	Reflectively	Extensively	Creatively	Intensively	Specifically	Effectively
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Repeated
Alike
Different
Accentuated
Related
<b>Think Context!</b>

**Romans 13:1-14**

- 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.
- 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed,  
     and those who resist will incur judgment.
- 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,  
     for he is God's servant for your good.
- 4 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.
- 5 Therefore one must be in subjection,  
     not only to avoid God's wrath  
     but also for the sake of conscience.
- 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.

- 8 Owe no one anything,  
except to love each other,  
for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.
- 9 For the commandments,  
“You shall not commit adultery,  
You shall not murder,  
You shall not steal,  
You shall not covet,”  
and any other commandment,  
are summed up in this word:  
“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor;  
therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.
- 11 Besides this you know the time,  
that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep.  
For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.
- 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand.  
So then let us cast off the works of darkness  
and put on the armor of light.
- 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime,  
not in orgies and drunkenness,  
not in sexual immorality and sensuality,  
not in quarreling and jealousy.
- 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and make no provision for the flesh,  
to gratify its desires. (ESV)

Review: Love one another and the things that are good, hate what is evil. But in the midst of evil, seek to live at peace with all, not retaliating evil for evil, bless and minister to those who are against you.  
 Observations: 1) What God does and why 2) explanatory clauses “for” 3) “result” or “purpose” clauses  
 Question: How do you respond to the concept of submission? Is submission natural? Why is submission not something we do instinctively?

Topic /Outline:  
 13:1-7 Submission to governing authorities  
 13:8-10 Fulfilling the law of love  
 13:11-14 Moral urgency in light of the “end”

**Romans 13:1-14**

Command

1 Let every person be **subject** to the governing authorities.

Reason

For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God.

2 Result

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

3 Reason

For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad.

Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority?

4

Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, for he is God's servant for your good.

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.

5 Result

Therefore one must be in **subjection**,  
 ❶ not only to avoid God's wrath ← 13:1b-2  
 ❷ but also for the sake of conscience. ← 13:3-4

6 Explanation Reason

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.

Submission to government

God is the Supreme Sovereign and has delegated authority to: governments, church Leaders, parents, husbands

Personal benefits of obedience:  
 Avoid judgment—maintain clear conscience

Practical application:  
 Pay taxes and show submission

Broader perspective—submission is not to be reluctant, but rather than doing just what we are required, Paul instructs us to demonstrate love—what we can do, not just what we must do

8 Owe no one anything,  
except to love each other,  
Explanation for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

In the context, this is not a statement about financial management, other than pay what you owe—it means, “do not withhold what is due to people”. The point is not some much “money” as love. Paul uses the word “owe” to connect two sections not to discuss money before discussing love. But the connection of the love of money, is an interesting issue. Do we love money/possessions more than people?

9 For the commandments,  
“You shall not commit adultery,  
You shall not murder,  
You shall not steal,  
You shall not covet,”  
and any other commandment,  
are summed up in this word:  
“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor;  
Result therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

This assumes that one is loving selflessly as described in ch 12, it also assumes that one is loving in response to who God is and what He has done “love God, love others”

11 Besides this you know the time,  
that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep.

Not a command but statement of reality—part of Paul’s constant teaching

Reason For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.

12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand.

Result So then let us cast off the works of darkness  
and put on the armor of light.

All three verbs (cast off, put on, walk) are aorist subjunctive

13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime,  
not in orgies and drunkenness,  
not in sexual immorality and sensuality,  
not in quarreling and jealousy.

Notice: first two lines seem obvious, but next to this Paul includes what we often see as “acceptable” or less serious sin—compare Romans 1:29-31

contrast

14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and make no provision for the flesh,  
to gratify its desires. (ESV)

The balance between what we have (position) and what we must do (practice)

Contrast this to vv 8-10 love is not lust  
Love is not self-centered, self-gratification  
We don’t love others for our benefit, but for theirs

**Working Idea** (this is to help you see how the main idea was developed)

Having instructed believers to live in peace and not retaliate against those who persecute them

Paul turns to practical applications of that principle

Submitting to the government

because it has been instituted by God

this will result in not being judged and having a clear conscience

Demonstrate love by responding properly to all rather than doing harm to neighbors

Living godly in light of living in the end times

**Main idea:**

Submit willing

Love fully

Walk uprightly

**Teaching idea/explanation:**

This passage has three main sections, each with a primary thought. So in teaching this section you will need to show not only the main theme of each section but possible development and connection between the themes.

The first section, submission to governing authorities is especially relevant in this election year. Please note the appendix: *The Church and the Election Process*, this should provide good discussion material.

The second section should challenge our “me-centered” individualist, independent society. We dealt with the concept of “love” in chapter 12, so the additional thought here may be tied to “fulfilling the Law” and “loving neighbors” rather than doing harm.

In the last section, you will need to explain the concept “the day is near” or “living in the end times.” Remember that the prophetic genre is not just (or even primarily) about future details. Rather prophetic focus is often used to challenge the present generation to right living in light of the end. God is sovereign (we’ve seen that in Romans 9-11) and we know that we are to live in a manner that honors Him (Romans 6-8.) Here Paul combines those two concepts and reminds us that we should be living in light of the coming judgment.

It will be difficult to do justice to all of these topics in one lesson. My recommendation is to spend most of your time on the first section and use the last section as a fitting conclusion.

**Introduction**

Can a Government legislate morality?

Yes—boundaries yes

No—heart changed no

Do Christians have to be Republicans?

Put these three concepts in the order of priority:

Christian

American

Republican/Democrate



Talk about it

Do you believe that the lines between Christian, American and our political party get blurred? Why?

We are Christians first—servants of God

We are Americans by birth—but still servants of God

Therefore we should not just want what’s best for the United States—but what’s best or most glorifying to God.

We may be Republicans or Democrates—by choice—but we must still be servants of God

## Review

Love one another and the things that are good, hate what is evil. But in the midst of evil, seek to live at peace with all, not retaliating evil for evil, bless and minister to those who are against you.

## Summary

Paul expounded what it means to render to Caesar what belongs to him (Matt. 22:21). This subject has bearing on the spread of the gospel so it is especially appropriate in this epistle. The church is not a nation among other nations as Israel was. Consequently it was important that Paul clarify the duties of Christians to our earthly rulers as well as our duty to our heavenly Ruler.<sup>1</sup>

## Overview

Having discussed the believer's role in humble submission and service to the body, proper relationship with all, and dealing with those who are antagonistic, naturally leads to Paul's discussion of another area that may have been a challenge to the Christians in Rome—submission to the government.

Notice for sake of flow:

the concept of good and evil 12:17, 21;

call to live at peace with all 12:18;

the use of the word wrath 12:19 which is translated punishment in 13:5

It is possible that Paul's exhortation here is related to a historical situation in Roman. It is possible that there were revolutionary groups (as the Zealots in Israel who wanted Jesus to begin a revolution) advocating rebellion against the government. And, while Paul's instruction can be universally applied, it is possible that Paul is warning believers, both Roman and other, not to get entangled with the rebellion.

One other historical issue. It is possible that at the time of writing, Jews were still returning to Rome after the death of Claudius (around 54, during Paul's third journey) who had mistreated them. Paul may be instructing Jewish believers not to be hostile to the state.

### Action of the Justified: Toward the State Romans 13:1-14

**Submission to  
Civil  
Government**

1

7

**Exhortation to  
Love Neighbors**

8

10

**Motivation to  
Godly Conduct**

11

14

## Preview

The passage fits in the context perfectly well: submission to government is part of that 'good, pleasing and perfect will' (12:2b) that Paul has been outlining and is also a specific example of doing 'what is right in the eyes of everybody' (12:17b). Paul may have been aware that the Roman Christians were in particular need of such advice, since there is evidence that various groups in the capital, including Jews, were agitating against the paying of taxes at about this time. (Tacitus, Ann. 15.50ff.). Paul,

<sup>1</sup>Mark Bailey, Tom Constable, Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck, *Nelson's New Testament Survey : Discover the Background, Theology and Meaning of Every Book in the New Testament* (Nashville: Word, 1999), 284.

therefore, counsels that the Roman Christians pay their taxes (6–7) as part of their general obligation to submit to the authorities of the state (1a, 5a). Such submission is called for, Paul argues, because governmental authorities are established by God to serve his purposes of rewarding good and punishing evil (1b–4, 5b).<sup>2</sup>

The first part of v 8 is transitional. *Let no debt remain outstanding* repeats an important implication drawn from the need for Christians to submit to secular rulers (*cf.* v 7a) and is the basis for Paul's reminder that Christians owe one debt that they can never repay: the *continuing debt to love one another*. Paul returns to the theme of love (see 12:9–21), highlighting its importance by presenting it as the fulfillment (8b and 10), or summary (9), of the Mosaic law.<sup>3</sup>

What lies before us as Christians provides essential motivation for practicing these commands. It is important that we follow God's will carefully because the final phase of our salvation (glorification) will take place very soon. We must be ready to meet the Lord and to give an account of our stewardship to Him (Phil. 3:20; 1 Thess. 5:6)<sup>4</sup>

### Catch Phrase / Key Phrase:

Be subject  
Love your neighbor  
Walk properly

### Outline

**I. Prologue:** *Paul's commission to preach Christ to the nations* 1:1-17

**II. Doctrine: Justification—The Righteousness of God Revealed** 1:18–11:36

*God's Gracious Provision of Righteousness is Acquired by Faith in Jesus Christ*

**III. Duties of the Justified—Righteousness of God Reflected** 12:1–15:13

*The Justified Believer is to Act According to His Position before God*

**A. Duty Toward the Assembly** 12:1-21

*Action of the Justified: Toward the Assembly*

**“Therefore” Service** 12:1

1. Foundation of Conduct: Consecration 12:1-2
2. Function of Conduct: Focused on Others 12:3-21
  - a. In humility: Using God-given enablement 12:3-8
  - b. In love: Demonstrate Christian Ethics 12:9-21

**B. Duty Toward the State** 13:1-14

*Action of the Justified: Toward the State*<sup>5</sup>

Second, the righteousness of God should be applied in the state (13:1-14). We demonstrate God's righteousness by submitting even to pagan authorities (13:1-7), and by loving our neighbors (13:8-10). The urgency for such action is due to the fact that “our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed” (13:11)—that is, because of our hope of the Lord's return (13:11-14).<sup>6</sup>

1. Submission to the Government 13:1-7  
*The believer's submission to government indicates his submission to God*
2. Loving Neighbors 13:8-10  
*The believer's love for neighbors fulfills God's law*
3. Proper Conduct 13:11-14  
*The believer's godly conduct is motivated by the nearness of the new day*

<sup>2</sup>Douglas Moo in D. A. Carson Ed., *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

<sup>3</sup>Douglas Moo in D. A. Carson Ed., *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

<sup>4</sup>Mark Bailey, Tom Constable, Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck, *Nelson's New Testament Survey : Discover the Background, Theology and Meaning of Every Book in the New Testament* (Nashville: Word, 1999), 285.

<sup>5</sup>Dr. Harold W. Hoehner's outline (DTS, Spring 1991, Exegesis of Romans 206, unpublished class notes)

<sup>6</sup>Daniel B. Wallace, *Romans: Introduction, Argument, and Outline*, bible.org

## Exposition / Key Exegetical Issues to be Aware



Think about it

### 12—16 “Therefore”

Moving from the more doctrinal to the more practical—keeping the practical anchored in the doctrinal and making sure the doctrinal is practical.

### 12:9–15:12

How do you live in the Body—accepting one-another’s differences while maintaining unity  
How do you live in the world—accepting the reality of rules

### 13:1-14

#### Teachers

You might find it helpful in preparation, if not also in teaching, to review these corollary passages.

**1 Peter 2:13-17** 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. (ESV)

**Matthew 22:21** 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.” (ESV)

**1 Timothy 2:1-5** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. 3 This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior, 4 who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, (ESV)

#### Interaction/Question

How do you respond to the concept of submission?

Is submission natural? If not, why is submission not something we do instinctively?

How do you respond to the concept of submission to government? How do you submit to the government?  
Does speeding mean you are not submitting to the government?

**Teachers**, also see the interaction at the end of this section p. 14.

### 13:1-7 *The believer’s submission to government indicates his submission to God*

#### 13:1a The Command: Submit to governing authorities

Submit—*ὑποτάσσω (hypotasso)* – Subjection, subject oneself, be subjected or subordinated, obey

Here it is a passive imperative—that indicates this is something we allow to be done to us. That is, submission is not something that can be coerced. Leaders may demand submission but will only get acquiesces or outward obedience. Submission is an attitude behind obedience.

Governing authorities—*ὑπερέχω (hyperecho)* – have power over, be in authority (over), be highly placed

Subjection or submission involves placing oneself under the authority of another so that he does what the authority requires. Submission involves an attitude of compliance that is not necessarily present in obedience. The Christian may have to disobey his government (Acts 5:29), but in those cases he must still be submissive and bear the consequences of his disobedience (see Dan. 3:12–17; 6:16–17).<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Mark Bailey, Tom Constable, Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck, *Nelson’s New Testament Survey: Discover the Background, Theology and Meaning of Every Book in the New Testament* (Nashville: Word, 1999), 284.

God has established three institutions to control life in our dispensation: the family (Gen. 2:18-25), the civil government (Gen. 9:1-7), and the church (Acts 2). In each institution there are authorities to whom we need to submit for God's will to go forward. Women are not the only people God commands to be submissive or supportive. Male and female children, citizens, and church members also need to demonstrate a submissive spirit.<sup>8</sup>

### 13:1b-4 Two Reasons

#### 13:1b-2 The Divine Origin of Civil Government

God has delegated authority to government

Authority—ἐξουσία (*exousia*) – power to act, authority, the bearer of authority (officials, government, (Josephus used this word not only to specify rules, but particularly those who rule in the name of Rome over Jews in Palestine)<sup>9</sup>

Instituted by God

Ordained, established by God,

No governing authority exists without God's will and determination.

God has established at least three primary spheres of authority: the family, the church and government. The issue in this section is the believer's relationship to the state and God's wisdom and plan in arranging the superiors and subordinates.

We do have a heavenly citizenship (Philippians 3:20) but we are not excused from submission to our earthly citizenship.

**Romans 13:1-7.** Several important principles are established or reaffirmed in this passage: (1) human government is ordained by God (Rom. 13:1), yet it is a sphere of authority that is distinct from others like that of the home or the church; (2) human government is to be obeyed by the Christian because it is of God, because it opposes evil (Rom. 13:4), and because our consciences tell us to obey (Rom. 13:5); (3) the government has the right of taxation (Rom. 13:6 7); and (4) the government has the right to use force (Rom. 13:4), and this, of course, is the principle which impinges on our subject. The question is, what is included in its right to "bear the sword?"<sup>10</sup>

### 13:2 The Practice/Implications: rebellion against the state is rebellion against God

In verse 2, Paul switches from the first person (he who rebels) to the plural (those who do so)—which may indicate that Paul realizes that for one individual to rebel against the government is futile, it takes organized rebellion.

"will bring judgment on themselves" – through the human government but bearing God's approval

**Matthew 26:52** Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. (ESV)

### 13:3-4 The Divine Purpose for Civil Government

Punishment of evil doers

Paul gives two reasons why believer's should submit—to avoid punishment and for conscience sake. The first one seems obvious. The second one is intriguing.

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<sup>8</sup>Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Romans 2004 Edition* (DTS Professor, © 2004 Published by Sonic Light, <http://www.soniclight.com/>)

<sup>9</sup>Everett F. Harrison, *Expositors Bible Commentary*, (Pradis Bible Software) p. 137.

<sup>10</sup>Charles C. Ryrie, *The Doctrine of Capital Punishment* -- BibSac Vol 129 #515 -- Jul 1972 -- 215

When Paul states that we are to obey for conscience sake, he seems to have the idea of obedience without looking over your shoulder.

Let me illustrate.

When you are driving down the highway and you are going the speed limit—seeing a police car does not raise a concern.

But what about when you are driving above the speed limit? How you do respond when you see a police car? What about when you see flashing lights or hear a siren?

If your heart starts to race or you are constantly looking in your rearview mirror, then your conscience is telling you something.

But the concept may even be deeper than simply that “inner voice” that convicts or informs our moral choices.

The word “conscience” (*syneidesis*) usually refers to that faculty within human beings that informs us of the morality of our actions after they have taken place. But the word can be used more broadly, and this seems to be the case here. *Syneidesis* here refers to our consciousness of God and of his will for us. Because we understand that God has appointed secular rulers, we must submit to them.<sup>11</sup>

The situation Paul describes does not take into account the fact that a government may be corrupt and reward evil and suppress good.

Interesting to note that even under Nero, who so viciously persecuted Christians, the state did not persecute them for their good works or directly for their faith, but “because of. . . the mistaken notion that the peace and safety of the state were imperiled by the Christian’s refusal to honor the gods.”<sup>12</sup>

Paul then is not dealing with the Church’s need to rebel. However, it might be said that the Church should not lead a rebellion; Christians might be involved as citizens of the country but should always be in submission. That submission would not necessitate total obedience. But we must understand that God might want to accomplish His will (plan) even in the midst of difficult or evil situations (Romans 8:28). So our participation in rebellion against the state should be done with extreme caution. And the priority of the glory of God and the gospel be considered.

Bear in mind the American Revolution (war), Romanian Revolution (peaceful), and the growth of the church in China under an oppressive communist government.

There are two possible ways to explain this verse that on the surface seems very naive. Each of these interpretations will have very different results for those who hold them. The problem, of course, is that rulers are sometimes, perhaps often, a cause of fear for those who do right. Government authorities sometimes abuse their powers for selfish ends. If they do not but serve the welfare of the people as they should, we have no fear of them and can submit to them fairly easily. What if they are evil?

The first way some people have interpreted this verse is to assume that Paul was speaking only of the norm. The normal situation would be a good government that punishes evil and rewards good. Obviously rebellion and revolution would be wrong in such a situation. However those actions might not be wrong if the state ceased to serve its God-given function and began denying the rights and removing the liberties of its citizens. Moderate advocates of this interpretation usually do not suggest that the church as an institution should lead a revolution. Most of them would say, however, that Christians as individuals could justifiably participate in a revolution against such a government. Christians should speak out against

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<sup>11</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 423.

<sup>12</sup> Everett F. Harrison, *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, (Pradis Bible Software) p. 138.

such abuses at least. We must be careful not to confuse submission with silence. Silence can express approval.

The second way of interpreting this verse is to take Paul's words at face value and trust in the fact expressed in 8:28. The Christian who takes this view would not participate in a revolution though he might speak out against a government's evils. He should prepare himself to accept the consequences of his actions. Such was the position of some pastors in Nazi Germany during World War II, for example, who went to prison not for revolting against the government but for speaking out against it. Another alternative might be to flee from the persecution of a hostile government (cf. Matt. 10:23). This is what the Huguenots, who fled from France to England, and the Puritans, who fled from England to America, did.

I tend to prefer the second option mainly because I am uncomfortable if I assume that Paul meant something that he did not state. I prefer to accept what he said at face value. In this case the rulers would be a cause of fear for the Christian neither if the rulers were just nor unjust. The Christian would be obedient to God by submitting in either case. The problem with this view is that evil governments do not praise those who oppose them. But in a sense they do. For example, a German pastor whom the Nazis jailed for disobeying the law received the commendation of the rest of the world. The martyrdom of Christians by Nero shortly after Paul wrote Romans was an indirect praise of them for their fidelity to Christ. The evil government may not issue a certificate of commendation to the faithful Christian, but his or her submissive conduct can be the cause of his praise. Even if no other human being ever learned of the martyr's conduct, God would know about it and would praise him or her.<sup>13</sup>

#### God's Servant

They are there because of God and for God's use, but not necessarily using direct revelation (the Bible) but definitely what is commonly given to all men (Romans 2:14-15).

**Daniel 2:21** He changes times and seasons; he removes kings and sets up kings; he gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding; (ESV)

#### Use of the Sword

The point is that God has delegated the role of punishment of wrong doers to government not to individuals.

This *may* include capital punishment (See Genesis 9)

#### 13:5-7 The Moral Necessity of Being in Subjection

Subjection: Because of Conscience 13:5

Because of the threat of punishment

The reason for this appeal is the personal advantage: self-preservation. The desire to not be punished

Because of Conscience

That is: because the believer understands what God wants from him and what God has done in establishing governments, he (believer) should be guided by this knowledge.

#### 13:6-7 Support: Because of Commandment

Practical application: Pay your taxes

Assumed 13:6

Commanded 13:7

#### Taxes versus Revenue

It is customary to consider φόρος ("tribute") as a direct tax, such as a property tax or a poll tax, and τέλος ("revenue") as an indirect tax, such as customs.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Thomas L. Constable, *Notes on Romans 2004 Edition* (DTS Professor, © 2004 Published by Sonic Light, <http://www.soniclight.com/>)

<sup>14</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1995).

The command to pay taxes in verse 7 is most likely influenced by the Jesus tradition (Mark 12:13–17 = Matt. 22:15–22 = Luke 20:20–26).<sup>27</sup> The command to “pay to all what is due” (ἀπόδοτε πᾶσιν τὰς ὀφειλάς, *apodote pasin tas ophailas*) reflects Jesus’ words to “pay to Caesar the things of Caesar” (ἀπόδοτε τὰ Καίσαρος Καίσαρι, *apodote ta Kaisaros Kaisari*, Luke 20:25). The Pauline wording has its closest links with the Lucan tradition (Luke 20:20–26) since Paul reflects knowledge of Lucan material elsewhere (cf. 1 Cor. 11:23–26 and Luke 22:17–20), and Luke mentions specifically the civil authority of Rome (Luke 20:20).

Two different words for paying taxes are used, φόρος (*phoros*, tax) and τέλος (*telos*, custom). On the one hand, φόρος refers to the taxes paid by a subject nation (Luke 20:22; 1 Macc. 10:33). Direct payment is involved in this case, and taxes such as the property tax or the poll tax would be included (see Weiss, *TDNT* 9:81; Rebell, *EDNT* 3:436–37; Fitzmyer 1993c: 669). Roman citizens would have been exempt from this direct taxation. On the other hand, τέλος refers to taxes that were levied on goods and were therefore an indirect form of taxation (Sanday and Headlam 1902: 368; Fitzmyer 1993c: 670). Sales taxes and tolls would fit in this latter category. That Paul distinguishes between direct and indirect taxes is probably an indication that he had heard about the tensions over taxes in Rome (Walters 1993: 132). Nero considered abolishing all indirect taxes but upon reflection declined to do so.<sup>15</sup>

### Respect versus Honor

The two words overlap and describe the respect and honor that should be rendered to those who have authoritative positions.<sup>16</sup>

They are to respect and honor governing authorities, “not because they are powerful and influential *men*, but because they have been appointed by God.”<sup>75</sup> The social benefits that come from a properly managed state place the Christian under obligation to abide by the accepted regulations. Undergirding all secular law and order is the authority of God delegated to those who rule.<sup>17</sup>

### Summary

Paul’s teaching on subordination is no interruption of his theme or emphasis, but rather an extension of it. From verse 1 of chapter 12, Paul has been teaching the importance of subordination. We must subordinate our lives to God, presenting our bodies as living sacrifices to Him. We must subordinate our interests to the interests of others if we are to walk in love. We must also subordinate our lives to those in authority over us as civil servants.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Those who argue in the affirmative include Sanday and Headlam 1902: 371; Cranfield 1979: 669–70; Allison 1982: 16–17; M. Thompson 1991: 112–20 (only in the call to pay taxes, not in the exhortation to fear and honor rulers); Stuhlmacher 1983: 248; Stuhlmacher 1994: 200; Weiss, *TDNT* 9:82. Käsemann (1980: 352; cf. also Neiryneck 1986: 286–91) resists this conclusion since no christological motivation is included, but such is not necessary for a reference to the Jesus tradition to be present.

*TDNT Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich; translated and edited by G. W. Bromiley, 10 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964–76)

*EDNT Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, edited by H. Balz and G. Schneider, 3 vols. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1990–93)

<sup>15</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, vol. 6, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 686.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas R. Schreiner, *Romans*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 687.

<sup>75</sup> Barrett, *Romans*, 248. φόβος as respect toward governing authorities is considered a higher form of reverence than τιμή. Cranfield questions whether τῷ τὸν φόβον in v. 7 refers to the magistrate and suggests that exegetes not dismiss too cavalierly the possibility that it refers to God (*Romans*, 670–73).

<sup>17</sup> Robert H. Mounce, *Romans*, Logos Library System; (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1995), p.245.

<sup>18</sup> Robert Deffinbaugh, ©1996 by Community Bible Chapel, 210 Abrams Road, Richardson, TX 75081, <http://www.bible.org>.

*Correlation: Biblical Teaching on Civil Government*

Governmental Authority and Warning

**Ezra 7:26** Whoever will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed on him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment.” (ESV)

**I Peter 2:13-14** 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. (ESV)

**Isaiah 10:1-2** Woe to those who decree iniquitous decrees, and the writers who keep writing oppression, 2 to turn aside the needy from justice and to rob the poor of my people of their right, that widows may be their spoil, and that they may make the fatherless their prey! (ESV)

Positive Commands

Obedience

**Proverbs 24:21** My son, fear the Lord and the king, and do not join with those who do otherwise, (ESV)

**Titus 3:1** Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, (ESV)

Pay Taxes

**Matthew 17:27** However, not to give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook and take the first fish that comes up, and when you open its mouth you will find a shekel. Take that and give it to them for me and for yourself.” (ESV)

**Matthew 22:21** 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.” (ESV)

Obedience to government. Without question, "obedience" is the key word the Apostles use to describe the Christian's responsibility to civil government. In Romans 13:1-7 Paul commands obedience and submission for several reasons: because authority is ordained of God (v. 1); because resistance to government is, in the final analysis, resistance to God (v. 2); because government generally opposes evil (v. 4); and because man's conscience tells him to obey (v. 5). Eight or nine years and several imprisonments later, during which time Paul had ample opportunity to rethink his position, he gave the same advice: "Put them in mind to be subject [this is the same verb as in Rom. 13:1], to obey magistrates, to be ready for every good work" (Titus 3:1). Mistreatment at the hands of the Roman government was not considered sufficient grounds for changing his mind!<sup>19</sup>

However, Paul does not use the word obedience. He does require submission, but in failing to use the term obedience, he may be hinting at the fact that there cannot be blind obedience.

Submission

**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. (ESV)

**I Peter 2:13-14** 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. (ESV)

Honor

**I Peter 2:17** Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor. (ESV)

Pray For

**Jeremiah 29:7** But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare. (ESV)

<sup>19</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Perspectives on Social Ethics-Part IV: Apostolic Perspectives on Social Ethics* -- Bib Sac Vol 134 #536 -- Oct 1977, pp. 314-315.

**1 Timothy 2:1-2** First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 2 for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. (ESV)

#### Be Righteous

**Proverbs 14:34** Righteousness exalts a nation, but sin is a reproach to any people. (ESV)

**Proverbs 11:11** By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown. (ESV)

Exceptions: Must accept the negative consequences for disobedience

#### **Daniel 3**

**Acts 4:19-20** 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.” (ESV)

#### **Acts 5:29-41**

**Acts 5:29** But Peter and the apostles answered, “We must obey God rather than men. (ESV)

#### *Implications/Application*

We must be aware of our natural tendency to look for the exception before doing the obvious. We tend to look at passages like this which do not give “an out” and say, “Yeah, but.” We know that obeying the Lord by keeping these commands may cost us—and we naturally look for exceptions.

About the same time Paul wrote to Titus, Peter wrote to people in various parts of the empire that they should submit for the following reasons: submission shows the believer’s obedience to God Himself (1 Pet 2:13); it is the will of God (v. 15 ); and it is a good testimony to the unsaved (v. 15 ). Both the Pauline and Petrine teachings were written under the reign of Emperor Nero (A.D. 54-68). The Epistle to the Romans was written during the first part of Nero’s reign, the celebrated quinquennium, which was characterized by good government. Reportedly, Seneca said of Nero during this time that he was incapable of learning cruelty. Royal intrigue involving his mother resulted in her death in A.D. 60. A marked change followed in the life and government of Nero, who plunged deeper and deeper into personal dissipation and brought the empire to the point of bankruptcy. On July 18, A.D. 64 Rome began to burn, and whatever may or may not have been Nero’s part in the holocaust, suspicion was thrown on the emperor. In order to divert attention, Nero attempted to lay the blame on the Christians. Tacitus described the matter this way:

Wherefore in order to allay the rumor he [Nero] put forward as guilty, and afflicted with the most exquisite punishments those who were hated for their abominations and called “Christians” by the populace.... Therefore, first of all those who confessed [to being Christians] were arrested, and then as a result of their information a large number were implicated, not so much on the charge of incendiarism as for hatred of the human race. They died by methods of mockery; some were covered with the skins of wild beasts and then torn by dogs, some were crucified, some were burned as torches to give light at night.... men felt that their destruction was not on account of the public welfare but to gratify the cruelty of one [Nero].<sup>1</sup>

Some place the writing of 1 Peter shortly after the beginning of Nero’s persecution, which makes Peter’s teaching very significant. Furthermore, if Peter were in Rome when he wrote the letter (which seems likely from 1 Peter 5:13), what he had to say about civil obedience is even more startling.

Subjection to authority is to flow from the believer’s own will. The verb “be subject” is in the middle voice in each of the Romans and Titus passages cited above. This indicates that obedience is to be given freely of one’s own accord.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Tacitus *Annals* 15.44.

<sup>20</sup>Charles C. Ryrie, *Perspectives on Social Ethics-Part IV: Apostolic Perspectives on Social Ethics* -- Bib Sac Vol 134 #536 -- Oct 1977 pp.315-316

### ***Application***

#### First Contextualization

How is our democratic government like or unlike the monarchs during Paul's (and Peter's) time?

We can vote (representation)

We have a constitution that establishes some "unalienable rights"

Does this negate any of the teaching by Paul and Peter?

No

What are our General Responsibilities?

To submit to the governing authorities over us, to be law abiding, good citizens

To support the government through paying taxes, doing what is ordered, and prayer

What are our Responsibilities when the Government is Corrupt?

When it is greedy?

When it is evil (harsh)?

When it goes against what God has commanded?

Submission but perhaps not obedience

The principle we can draw from Daniel 3, Acts 4 and 5 is that when it come to the gospel and the honor of God we may have to obey but we must still submit.

Notice that in Daniel 3, Daniel's friends disobeyed but submitted to the government, taking the punishment.

The same thing is true in Acts 4 and 5, the Disciples determined that the human law violated their divine mandate, but when they disobeyed the submitted to the punishment.

#### **Interaction: Appendix: Discussion Points: The Church and the Election Process**

Having looked at Paul's instructions to the Christians in Roman in the first century—we need to understand how they apply to our situation in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania in the democratic republic of the United States of America.

Notice the flow of the discussion points—general to specific.

What aspects seem easy to agree with?

Are there elements of this statement that you struggle with?

Is your world view formed or only informed by Scripture?

That is, are you conscious of why you believe what you believe?

Have you considered what Scripture says about:

Life, the poor, oppression, supporting the less fortunate, patriotism, war and peace, marriage, sexual orientation, etc.?

Can you tell where your "political views" are more informed by your culture and perhaps a political party than Scripture?

Can you tell where your allegiance to Christ causes you to disagree with what "everyone believes?"

How will being a Christian form your decision in the fall on whom you are voting?

**13:8-10** *The believer's love for neighbors fulfills God's law*

**Interaction:**

We are naturally self-centered. Our society is a “me-centered,” individualist, independent society.

So how do we learn to demonstrate love?

Why does or how can Paul only state that the law is summarized by “loving your neighbor” when Jesus stated, love God and love others?

There are two kinds of debts: those with the lender's consent and those without his consent. It is the second type to which Paul referred here. We do have a debt that continues forever, namely, our obligation to seek the welfare of fellow human beings (Rom. 8:4).<sup>21</sup>

The centrality of Lv. 19:18, the 'love command', was stressed by Jesus himself (Mt. 5:43; 19:19; 22:39; Mk. 12:31; cf. Jn. 13:34–35), and is echoed throughout the NT (cf. Gal. 5:14; Jas. 2:8; 4:11–12; 1 Jn. 4:11, *passim*). What Paul means when he insists that obedience to this commandment 'fulfills' or 'sums up' all the other commandments is not the idea that all we need to do to please God is to 'love'—with the implication that as long as we have a 'loving' feeling, we can do anything else we please. Nor does Paul mean that loving others is simply the most important commandment in the law, or the spirit in which all the others are to be obeyed. Rather, he is saying that Christians now fulfill all the demands of the Mosaic law (at least those that relate to our obligations to other people) by loving. For love is at the heart of the 'law of Christ' (Gal. 6:2 cf. 1 Cor. 9:20–21), the law that Jesus made regulative of life in the new realm in which we live. And this law itself 'fulfills' the Mosaic law (see Mt. 5:17).<sup>22</sup>

**13:11-14** *Motivation for Godly Conduct: The return of the Lord*

Understanding the times

Putting on Christ to live rightly

**Interaction:**

Paul assumes we are conscious of living in the end times, perhaps even anticipating the return of the Lord. Are you?

What does this passage say is the difference created from living with the end in mind?

Do you see that in your life? Why or why not?

Eschatology, an understanding of the times in which we live, should govern our conduct. We need to recognize both what God is doing and what he plans to do and then live accordingly. The verses of the paragraph fall neatly into these two basic categories: Understanding the times (13:11 – 12a, the “indicative”) leads to right living (13:12b – 14, the “imperative”).<sup>23</sup>

As Paul began this section on general Christian ethics with a reminder of the new situation in which believers now live—no longer 'of this world' (12:2)—so he concludes it. Believers must understand *the present time*: a time in which we expect imminently the dawning of *the day* (12), that 'day of the Lord Jesus' that will bring our final salvation. As Paul has made clear (5:9–10), *salvation* is a process that is completed only when we are delivered from the outpouring of God's wrath on the last day (see also Phil. 1:19; 2:12; 1 Thes. 5:9). This day comes progressively nearer as the present age runs its course, and casts its light back into the time in which we now live. Hence his appeal to act as those who live in *the daytime* (12b–13) and to refrain from those actions that are characteristic of the *darkness*, that world system in opposition to God. V 14 makes the same point in different language:

<sup>21</sup>Mark Bailey, Tom Constable, Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck, *Nelson's New Testament Survey : Discover the Background, Theology and Meaning of Every Book in the New Testament* (Nashville: Word, 1999), 285.

<sup>22</sup>Douglas Moo in D. A. Carson Ed., *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), Ro 13:8.

<sup>23</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 439.

we are to surround ourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ in such a way that all we do is done through him and for him, and we are not even to give thought to any of those sinful desires that stem from this fallen and sinful world (Gk. *sarx*, 'flesh', *sinful nature*; see the note on 7:5).<sup>24</sup>

When the Lord Jesus calls us to Himself, a new day will begin for us in which we will walk and live in sinless light. In view of this prospect we need to prepare for it by laying aside evil deeds as a garment and putting on deeds of holiness. Paul referred to these new clothes as "armor" because we are still at war with sin and the forces of evil (Eph. 6:11). Our behavior, and especially those things Paul called on his readers to do in Romans 13:1–10, should be distinctively Christian since we live among unbelievers. There must be a deliberate turning away from desires to indulge in sin (Romans 6; 2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Pet. 2:11).<sup>25</sup>

From this brief foray in other Pauline texts we can conclude that the alteration between the indicative (you have been clothed with Christ and laid aside the old person) to the imperative (put on Christ and lay aside the old person) is characteristic of Pauline thought. Thus the imperatives that dominate this text should never be sundered from the indicatives. Romans 13:11–14 reminds us, however, that the indicatives do not rule out the need for imperatives. **Even though believers have already "put on Christ" (Gal. 3:27; Col. 3:10) and put off the old person (Col. 3:9), they must also put on Christ (Rom. 13:14) in the concrete circumstances of everyday life. The desires of the flesh (Rom. 13:14) still threaten believers, and thus a conscious effort is needed so that no provision is made for them.** The tension between the indicative and imperative is due to the already-but-not-yet paradox that characterizes Paul's theology. The recognition that the decisive act of salvation has been accomplished and that the end is impending motivates believers to live in a new way.<sup>26</sup>

What Paul hints at in [Romans 13](#), then, he makes explicit here: We display the "deeds of light" not only because the day of the Lord is coming, but also because we already participate, by faith, in that day.<sup>27</sup>

#### ***Implications/Application***

Christ is our Savior  
Christ is our focus  
Christ is our model

His coming our hope  
His coming our motivation  
His coming our purification



Talk about it

### **Key Points**

Be willingly in submission to governing authorities as you would submit to God

Love your neighbor fully as you would want to be loved

Walk uprightly and properly, understanding the nearness of the end



What do we learn  
About God?

Sovereign

He established human government for a purpose



Act on it

<sup>24</sup>Douglas Moo in D. A. Carson Ed., *New Bible Commentary : 21st Century Edition*, (Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994), Ro 13:11.

<sup>25</sup>Mark Bailey, Tom Constable, Charles R. Swindoll and Roy B. Zuck, *Nelson's New Testament Survey : Discover the Background, Theology and Meaning of Every Book in the New Testament* (Nashville: Word, 1999), 285.

<sup>26</sup>Thomas R. Schreiner, vol. 6, *Romans*, Baker exegetical commentary on the New Testament (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 1998), 701.

<sup>27</sup> Douglas J. Moo, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Romans*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 2000.) p. 443.

Evaluate your submission and honor of the government.

How will you participate in the political process this fall?

How will you speak about different political parties and candidates?

How will you behave if your preferred candidate does not win?

Of the three main sections—in which one aspect do you know you need the most growth? What do you need to do?

## **Appendix: Discussion Points: The Church and the Election Process**

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1. Christ's Church is a supranational body comprising the visible expression of the kingdom of heaven (kingdom of God) on earth in this age.
2. Every born again Christian is a citizen of the kingdom of heaven (Philippians 3:20), and his first loyalty is to his Lord and His kingdom. The interests of the kingdom of heaven come first, even if those interests are against his own nation's interests (Matthew 6:33).
3. Every Christian is also a citizen of a kingdom on earth, with responsibilities to that kingdom as long as they don't conflict with the responsibilities to the kingdom of heaven. We are salt and light (Matthew 5:13-14. See point 9)
4. The "politics" of Jesus (His will and requirements regarding how a society should function) take precedence to any other politics. The church is responsible to represent the "politics" of Jesus, speaking prophetically to the world as a representative of God's kingdom. We are suprapolitical, not apolitical. The politics of Jesus are to be discovered in Scripture, not in a party agenda. The politics of Jesus do not depend upon the use of secular power, but of spiritual weapons, (2 Corinthians 10:4). The church is to speak God's will, no matter what the political fallout is.
5. The saving and sanctifying purposes of God cannot be achieved through human politics, but God can sovereignly use human politics to further His purposes. Law can contribute externally to sanctification in that it aims to restrain evil, but it cannot transform evil people.
6. The earthly nation which is the focus of God's kingdom purposes is the nation of Israel, to be restored through God's work in His time. No other nation fits God's primary prophetic plan, although any nation can be used by God for His purpose, and therefore for His glory.
7. Authentic, effective Christian leaders are more preferable for a nation than are non-Christian leaders. "Authentic" assumes that they are genuinely submitted to the lordship of Christ; effective means that they can effect positive change and good for the nation through the political process, as empowered by God.
8. In a democratic republic, every citizen is potentially a participant in the election process, and has freedom to exercise righteous participation at many levels of public service. One motivation to be involved in the election process is gratitude for the freedoms we enjoy.
9. Christian citizens are responsible to love God and to love their neighbors, which includes the responsibility to seek authentic, effective Christian leaders who will pursue God's will and principles in public policy. There are no perfect candidates or parties in the political process.
10. God's will and principles are determined from Scripture, not from a political agenda, and therefore an individual's agenda should be based on Scripture.
11. At Calvary Church we will encourage Christian citizens to seek to influence society for God's glory when participating in the election process, becoming informed of moral issues and candidates' positions, and seeking to further God's agenda according to Scripture. We will not support any specific candidate or party, and will seek to avoid political polarization within the church.

## **Romans 13:1-14**

- 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.
- 2 Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed,  
and those who resist will incur judgment.
- 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,  
for he is God's servant for your good.
- 4 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.
- 5 Therefore one must be in subjection,  
not only to avoid God's wrath  
but also for the sake of conscience.
- 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.

- 8 Owe no one anything,  
except to love each other,  
for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.
- 9 For the commandments,  
“You shall not commit adultery,  
You shall not murder,  
You shall not steal,  
You shall not covet,”  
and any other commandment,  
are summed up in this word:  
“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”
- 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor;  
therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.
- 11 Besides this you know the time,  
that the hour has come for you to wake from sleep.  
For salvation is nearer to us now than when we first believed.
- 12 The night is far gone; the day is at hand.  
So then let us cast off the works of darkness  
and put on the armor of light.
- 13 Let us walk properly as in the daytime,  
not in orgies and drunkenness,  
not in sexual immorality and sensuality,  
not in quarreling and jealousy.
- 14 But put on the Lord Jesus Christ,  
and make no provision for the flesh,  
to gratify its desires. (ESV)

**Action of the Justified: Toward the State**  
**Romans 13:1-14**

**Submission to  
Civil Government**

1

7

**Exhortation to  
Love Neighbors**

8

10

**Motivation to  
Godly Conduct**

11

14