

God's Authority and Gov't (Romans 13:1-7)

Introduction: There is one thing we face every day that you will never escape...**authority**. Authority existed in the Garden. God is sovereign and created the heavens and the earth including mankind. Adam rebelled against God's authority and perfection rapidly changed.

Authority → Anarchy

Attitude → Accusation

Atmosphere → Agitation

God remains sovereign manifests His sovereignty through delegated authority. Living in America, we know this authority as government.

Interrogative: What is the Christian's response to government?

Proposition: Christians must submit to governing authorities (v.1a)

God's Word lists 4 reasons **why** Christians must submit to governing authority:

Transition: The first reason is that God establishes order through governing authorities.

I. God establishes order through governing authorities (v.1b)

Slide: "Remind them to be submissive to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work, to speak evil of no one, to avoid quarreling, to be gentle, and to show perfect courtesy toward all people" (Titus 3:1-2, ESV).

When Pilate told Jesus that he had power to set free or to crucify, Pilate was reminded that he would have no power at all if it had not been given to him from above (John 19:11).

a. Resistance of authority is an indication of unbelief (v.2a)

Those who rebel against authority malign the Giver of authority. It's a dangerous move to set oneself in opposition to a divinely ordered process.

b. Resisting authority invites judgment (v.2b)

Transition: God establishes order through governing authorities but also protects creation.

II. God protects creation through governing authorities (vv.3-4a)

Slide: “First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,” (1 Timothy 2:1-3, ESV).

Order would quickly turn to chaos without government. We must continue to pray for those God has placed over us.

- Pray for governing authorities, their families, for protection, wisdom, etc.

Transition: God establishes order, protects creation, but thirdly reveals His wrath through governing authorities.

III. God reveals His wrath through governing authorities (v.4b-5a)

a. There are 3 manifestations of God’s wrath in the Bible

i. Future Wrath

1. God will one day pour out His wrath on creation. Evil and those that partake of sin will experience God’s eternal wrath on a continual and consistent basis in a lake of fire.

ii. Present Wrath

1. Paul referred to this wrath back in Romans 1:18 and speaks of it again here in 13:4. When you see justice being served, that is a visible sign of God’s present wrath.

iii. Past Wrath (Gospel, Good News!)

1. This wrath was poured out on Jesus Christ in a period of 3 hours while the world went dark and he faced the wrath on a cross. After experiencing God’s white hot wrath against sin, he died and was placed

in a tomb for 3 days. After 3 days, God raised Jesus from the dead so that all who repent and trust Him will be saved from their sin and from God's future eternal wrath.

- b. Wrong doers should "be afraid".
 - i. Paul uses the word "if you do wrong" which encompasses anything from bad to evil to harmful of other people.
 - ii. There is evil in the world but it's not as bad as it could be. Paul told the Thessalonians that the Holy Spirit literally "prevents" (restrains) lawlessness and this will be so until the Rapture of the Church (2 Thessalonians 2:6-7).
 - iii. The Holy Spirit accomplishes this restraint primarily through governing authorities.
 - 1. If you go fast, you get a ticket. To a certain degree, this is incurring a very small degree of wrath.
 - 2. If you commit grotesque sin (i.e. Murder, exploitation of humans, abuse of minors, etc.) then you will incur a greater degree of God's wrath through the governing authority.
 - a. We do not cover up things here at Woodlands. If anyone here at Woodlands decides to hurt one of our little ones, we immediately involve the governing authorities.
 - b. God always forgives sin (when you repent and seek his forgiveness) but sometimes punishment is the consequence.
 - iv. People that do "wrong" should feel terror at the wrath they could face.

Argument: What if the God given government steps over its bounds?

Obviously this does not happen in every instance. Government sometimes oversteps its rightful domain. When this happens, a Christian will find it impossible to obey the ruler.

- 2 clear examples of civil disobedience are found in Acts.
 1. When Peter and John were told by the Sanhedrin **not to preach in the name of Jesus**, they replied, “Judge for yourselves whether it is right in God’s sight to obey you rather than God” (Acts 4:19). Upon being released they resumed their work and consequently were taken into custody.
 2. To the charge of the Sanhedrin that they had filled Jerusalem with their teaching they replied, “We must obey God rather than man!” (Acts 5:29). **The believer’s ultimate allegiance is to God.** Wherever the demands of secular society clearly violate this higher allegiance, the Christian will act outside the law. This, of course, must not be done in a cavalier fashion.

Transition: Christians must submit to governing authorities because God establishes order, protects creation, reveals His wrath, and finally because governing authorities serve God.

- IV. Governing authorities serve God (vv.6-7)
 - a. Christians must pay taxes.
 - i. Paul again calls secular rulers “servants of God” (see v. 4), but now he uses a different term, *leitourgos* that referred to people who served in the temple.
 1. In the NT it always refers to those who are “ministering” for the sake of the Lord. Paul uses this word to indicate that secular rulers, even if unknowingly, are performing a religious function.
 - ii. Therefore the payment of taxes becomes a responsibility that the Christian owes to God himself.
 - b. Christians are obligated to give in 4 areas (v.7) (Direct taxes, Indirect taxes, Respect, Honor)
 1. Direct taxes
 - a. Paul’s call to “give back” taxes to the secular rulers is reminiscent of Jesus’s demand that his disciples “give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s” (Mark 12:17)

2. Indirect taxes

- a. These taxes include customs duties, fees for various services, tax levied on goods and services (sales of property, houses, hunting licenses, gas, grocery, etc.)

“When they came to Capernaum, the collectors of the two-drachma tax went up to Peter and said, “Does your teacher not **pay the tax?**” 25 He said, “Yes.” And when he came into the house, Jesus spoke to him first, saying, “What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tax? From their sons or from others?” 26 And when he said, “From others,” Jesus said to him, “Then the sons are free. 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.**” (Matt.17:24-27, ESV)

- b. Under the OT covenant,
 - i. God commanded tithes.
 - ii. tithes were given that totaled around 23-28%. (Poor tithe, Festival tithe, Operating the Temple, etc.)
- c. Under the NT covenant,
 - i. God desires giving from the heart!
 1. Give what you want.
 2. God knows your finances and so give back out of desire NOT duty.
 - a. How much CAN I give?
 - b. How much do I WANT to give?
 - c. It's up to you! God knows everything including where your money is going.

3. Respect and Honor

- a. 'Respect' and 'honor' represent intangible obligations required of citizens.

b. Refer back to 1 Timothy 2:1-3

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may **lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way**. This is good, and it is pleasing in the sight of God our Savior,” (1 Timothy 2:1-3, ESV). Christians must make their voice heard. There is nothing like godly influence in an ungodly society. However, this involvement must be tempered with “respect” and “honor”.

- I. God establishes order through governing authorities (v.1b)
- II. God protects creation through governing authorities (vv.3-4a)
- III. God reveals His wrath through governing authorities (v.4b-5a)
- IV. Governing authorities serve God (vv.6-7)

Take Away:

How's should the Christian submit to Gov't?

- Honor
- Obey
- Pay
- Pray