

The whole letter of Romans is very systematic in how Paul lays it out for those initial readers and for us as well. Perhaps a better way to see it would be this Paul showed how...

*Human beings lack righteousness with God because of our sin (1–3),  
We receive righteousness when God justifies us by faith (4–5),  
We demonstrate righteousness by being transformed from rebels to followers (6–8),  
God confirms His righteousness for all when God saves the Jews (9–11),  
How we can apply His righteousness in practical ways throughout our lives (12–16).*

And at the beginning of chapter 12 Paul declares what this change in us looks like:

*Romans 12:* <sup>2</sup> *Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.*

- And so in chapter 12 he gives a general and broad teaching on Sanctification
- and then starting in chapter 13 how are God's kids to act in their culture under their government... and in this case the Roman Republic...

*Romans 13:*<sup>1</sup> *Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. <sup>2</sup> So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be **punished**.*

- The word used there for "instituted" is important to remember...*It is the word that means that which has been carefully and purposefully thought through by God.*
- God didn't just throw this commandment out and see how people would handle it. God thought it through. *God not only appointed all authority, He thought through the command to obey that authority.*
- *Remember he is writing to the Roman church ...people who live in the capital city of the Roman Republic...and there are a number of different attitudes, political leanings and differing interactions with the Roman government ...they were Roman citizens people with full legal rights, women and children and slave with no rights, foreigners with few rights...there were wealthy and poor...noble and slaves ...with many of the slaves being captives of war, who despised the Romans...and finally there were Jews!*
- *the Jews were notoriously rebellious! Palestine and especially the Gallilee areas were hot bed of Jewish rebellion against the Roman Government.*

- *and then there were the Jewish Zealots...who were fanatical nationalists sworn to terrorist methods. Not only did they use terrorist methods against the Roman..but they wrecked the homes and burned the farms and sometimes assassinated the families of their fellow Jews who paid tribute and taxes to the Romans...*
- **Paul's charge to this mixed group of new believers...simple submit to Authority! Because the sovereign God assigned it!**
- This is the consistent thinking of the new of the early church...that members of the Kingdom of God must obey those in civil ..... *this theme runs through the New Testament...*

*1Tim 2:1 I urge you, first of all, to pray for all people. Ask God to help them; intercede on their behalf, and give thanks for them. <sup>2</sup> Pray this way for kings and all who are in authority so that we can live peaceful and quiet lives marked by godliness and dignity. <sup>3</sup> This is good and pleases God our Savior, <sup>4</sup> who wants everyone to be saved and to understand the truth.*

*Titus 3:1 Remind the believers to submit to the government and its officers. They should be obedient, always ready to do what is good.*

*1 Peter 2:13 **For the Lord's sake**, submit to all human authority—whether the king as head of state, <sup>14</sup> or the officials he has appointed. For the king has sent them to punish those who do wrong and to honor those who do right.*

- The sovereignty of God means that ***He has total control of all things past, present and future. Nothing happens that is out of His knowledge and control.*** All things are either caused by Him or allowed by Him for His own purposes and through His perfect will and timing (Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6). ***He is the only absolute and omnipotent ruler of the universe*** and is sovereign in creation, providence and the redemption of mankind and creation.
- And if He is fully sovereign then our perspective changes dramatically!
- This is what being fully convinced of God's Full Sovereignty over the affairs of this life look like:
- ***We do our part according to God's Word and know that nothing is going to stop or slow the train of God's sovereign work in our life, in this world and the establishment of His eternal plan. Therefore, everything...and I mean everything, is within the control of Almighty God and because of that I will submit to that thought pattern in my life and not waste any portion of my life pounding the sand of why this world is so messed up. I will submit my mind and***

*heart to a Kingdom mindset which says that my King knows what He is doing and I'm not going to waste my time on worldly affairs but instead be busy about my Father's business.*

**So my work as a child of God is to do obey the laws of the land I live in... WHY?**

It is good for us that there is government rather than anarchy

*Romans 13:3 For the authorities do not strike fear in people who are doing right, but in those who are doing wrong. Would you like to live without fear of the authorities? Do what is right, and they will honor you. <sup>4</sup> The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. <sup>5</sup> So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep a clear conscience.*

- **One of God's purposes in establishing Government is to protect people...Law provides protection and recourse for people who have been don wrong.The government has the authority to punish wrongdoers. And This certainly includes Christians. .**

**Therefore you must be subject:** We must be subject to government; not only because we fear punishment, but because we know it is right before God to do so.

- **Our witness includes our walk in our society...to say I follow God and am a law breaker is hypocrisy...a clear conscience is when our walk matches our talk.**
- remember Paul wrote this during the reign of the Roman Empire. It was no democracy, and no special friend to Christians – yet he still saw their legitimate authority.
- iii. **“Your Savior suffered under Pontius Pilate, one of the worst Roman governors Judea ever had; and Paul under Nero, the worst Roman Emperor. And neither our Lord nor His Apostle denied or rejected the ‘authority!’**
- **Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God:** Since governments have authority from God, we are bound to obey them – unless, of course, they order us to do something in contradiction to God's law. Then, we are commanded to obey God before man (as in Acts 4:19).
- e. **Those who resist will bring judgment on themselves:** God uses governing authorities as a check upon man's sinful desires and tendencies. Government can be an effective tool in resisting the effects of man's fallenness.
- **then Paul hits the pocket book...**

*Romans 13:6 Pay your taxes, too, for these same reasons. For government workers need to be paid. They are serving God in what they do. <sup>7</sup> Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority.*

- **You also pay taxes... Render therefore to all their due:** We are also to pay the taxes **due** from us, because there is a sense in which we support *God's work* when we do so.
- By implication, Romans 13:6 also says that the taxes collected are to be used by government to get the job done of restraining evil and keeping an orderly society – not to enrich the government officials themselves.
- **Taxes... fees... respect... honor:** We are to give to the state the money, honor, and proper reverence which are due to the state, all the while reserving our right to give to God that which is due to God alone (Matthew 22:21).
- In light of this, is rebellion against government ever justified? If a citizen has a choice between two governments, it is right to choose and to promote the one that is most legitimate in God's eyes – the one which will best fulfill God's purpose for governments.
- So the argument of the text is clear. Submit to civil authority 1) because it's instituted by God, 2) because it is good for you that there is civil authority, 3) because you will get punished if you don't, and 4) because if you don't, your conscience will condemn you for breaking the higher moral law of God.

Now, this brings us to the critical problem with our understanding of this text.

- Historically and biblically we know that civil authorities do not always reward the good and punish the bad.
- They often reward bad behavior and punish good behavior We also know from the Bible that God has approved of his people not submitting to some civil authority.
- So the questions we need to ask include: 1) What is the evidence from the Bible that God sometimes approves of his people not submitting to the very authority he had put in place? 2) When is such civil disobedience right, and what should it look like? 3) How does such civil disobedience fit with Romans 13:1-7, and

why are the statements about the goodness of government stated here with such unqualified absoluteness?

*Acts 4:18-20* <sup>18</sup> *So they called the apostles back in and commanded them never again to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.* <sup>19</sup> *But Peter and John replied, “Do you think God wants us to obey you rather than him?”* <sup>20</sup> *We cannot stop telling about everything we have seen and heard.”*

*Acts 5:28* “We gave you strict orders never again to teach in this man’s name!” he said. “Instead, you have filled all Jerusalem with your teaching about him, and you want to make us responsible for his death!” <sup>29</sup> *But Peter and the apostles replied, “We must obey God rather than any human authority.* <sup>30</sup> *The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead after you killed him by hanging him on a cross.*

*Romans 13:*<sup>8</sup> *Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God’s law.* <sup>9</sup> *For the commandments say, “You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet.” These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”* <sup>10</sup> *Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfills the requirements of God’s law.*

- Verse 8 holds the key. It uses the word “owe” in a positive way. It says, “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.”
- And the one debt that is forever incurred is love...we owe love always On a personal level, the only “debt” we are to carry is the “debt” to love one another – this is a perpetual obligation we carry both before God and each other.
- We may pay our taxes and be quiet. We may give respect and honor where they are due and have no further obligation. But we can never say, ‘I have done all the loving I need to do.’ Love then is a permanent obligation, a debt impossible to discharge.” (Morris)
- **You shall love your neighbor as yourself:** Paul echoes Jesus’ words as recorded in Matthew 22:36-40. This is one of the two commands upon which *hang all the Law and the Prophets*.

And then Paul says why this is such a big deal. Why is ordering our life according to God’s standards so important? I mean what’s the big deal if I have a couple secret sins here or there or like to blow off some steam here and there?:



### **Romans 13:11-14 (NLT)**

<sup>11</sup> *This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed.* <sup>12</sup> *The night is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living.* <sup>13</sup> *Because we belong to the day, we must live decent lives for all to see. Don't participate in the darkness of wild parties and drunkenness, or in sexual promiscuity and immoral living, or in quarreling and jealousy.* <sup>14</sup> *Instead, clothe yourself with the presence of the Lord Jesus Christ. And don't let yourself think about ways to indulge your evil desires.*

There goes that idea again about being transformed by the renewing of your mind.

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- Your personal life is to reflect your family ... God's Family... not to continue to be formed by the culture you live in....
- Stop making excuses... stop justifying your behavior... let God change you... get rid of those sin clothes like they are soiled linens and put on your righteous clothes that were given to you at the moment of your salvation!
- If Paul was saying that time was running out around AD 56 then how much time do you think we have now? ***We are in the 11<sup>th</sup> hour. Christ is coming back and He's coming soon.*** All you have to do is be a simple student of Scripture and to look at the world around us and the news that is reported everyday and you have to know that ***the timeclock on this life is coming to a rapid and destructive end.***

And when Christ comes it says this about the time of His coming:

**2 Timothy 3:1** *You should know this, Timothy, that in the last days there will be very difficult times. <sup>2</sup> For people will love only themselves and their money. They will be boastful and proud, scoffing at God, disobedient to their parents, and ungrateful. They will consider nothing sacred. <sup>3</sup> They will be unloving and unforgiving; they will slander others and have no self-control. They will be cruel and hate what is good. <sup>4</sup> They will betray their friends, be reckless, be puffed up with pride, and love pleasure rather than God. <sup>5</sup> They will act religious, but they will reject the power that could make them godly. Stay away from people like that!*

**Matthew 24:6** *And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately. <sup>7</sup> Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and*

earthquakes in many parts of the world. <sup>8</sup> But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come.

<sup>9</sup> “**Then** you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers. <sup>10</sup> And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. <sup>11</sup> And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. <sup>12</sup> **Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold.** <sup>13</sup> But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

Then there’s this...

**Matthew 24:**<sup>37</sup> “When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah’s day. <sup>38</sup> In those days before the flood, the people were enjoying banquets and parties and weddings right up to the time Noah entered his boat.<sup>39</sup> People didn’t realize what was going to happen until the flood came and swept them all away. That is the way it will be when the Son of Man comes.

**\*The Point: Jesus is standing at the threshold of Heaven waiting for the Go sign from the Father. Let us walk as Children of Light who have been transformed by His power. Let us not look like the world. Let us no longer make excuses but let us submit ourselves to the Holy Spirit’s sanctifying work in our life. When Christ comes let Him find a Bride who is ready for their Groom.**

end

**Matt 22:** <sup>15</sup> Then the Pharisees met together to plot how to trap Jesus into saying something for which he could be arrested. <sup>16</sup> They sent some of their disciples, along with the supporters of Herod, to meet with him. “Teacher,” they said, “we know how honest you are. You teach the way of God truthfully. You are impartial and don’t play favorites. <sup>17</sup> Now tell us what you think about this: Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

<sup>18</sup> But Jesus knew their evil motives. “You hypocrites!” he said. “Why are you trying to trap me? <sup>19</sup> Here, show me the coin used for the tax.” When they handed him a Roman coin,<sup>(u)</sup> <sup>20</sup> he asked, “Whose picture and title are stamped on it?”

<sup>21</sup> “Caesar’s,” they replied.

“Well, then,” he said, “give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.”

<sup>22</sup> His reply amazed them, and they went away.

then once Paul hits chapter 12 the rest of the letter is about this one word:

### **Sanctification**

....**Sanctification**- God does not want to just see us as righteous; He wants to actually make us righteous/holy. Justification took place at a point in time (the cross);

***Sanctification is a process that lasts for the rest of our lives while here on earth.***

Sanctification in the present tense of salvation...what God is doing in us through the Holy Spirit.

- In a democracy we understand that there is a sense in which we *are* the government, and should not hesitate to help “govern” our democracy through our participation in the democratic process.

## **Not Merely Theoretical**

These questions are not merely theoretical for any of us today. If you are a Christian living in China or North Korea or Viet Nam or several Islamic states, you are confronted with the question of civil disobedience daily. Just being an obedient Christian can be a breach of the civil law. Here in America our history is defined by the way we have qualified Romans 13. The Declaration of Independence justified the abolition of British government over the colonies.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.—That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving



their just powers from the consent of the governed,—That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness.

You can hear the roots of this document in the way it argues. The impulse is not Romans 13. It is the man-centered Deism of Thomas Jefferson and Benjamin Franklin. “Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.” Romans 13 says that governments derive their just powers from God. It is probably true that democracy is the best kind of government to protect us from the tyrannical opposition to God that rules in every human heart apart from Christ. But the way to get there is not by denying the deity of Christ, putting God at a deistic distance and elevating man. However you understand the Declaration of Independence, one thing is clear: America’s very existence hinged on the way Romans 13 was or was not understood and obeyed

- One of the greatest demises of our culture has been the refusal to submit to those in authority. Our moms and dads used to call it: Good ol’ fashioned Respect.
- For some reason we have forgotten that we can respect the position even when the authority figure might not always be honorable.
- ***I wonder what it would look like if God’s people spent just as much time praying for those in positions of authority in our local and federal government as we did bashing them?***
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- *(Explanation of God’s sovereignty)*
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- The sovereignty of God means that ***He has total control of all things past, present and future. Nothing happens that is out of His knowledge and control.*** All things are either caused by Him or allowed by Him for His own purposes and through His perfect will and timing (Romans 11:36; 1 Corinthians 8:6). ***He is the only absolute and omnipotent ruler of the universe*** and is sovereign in creation, providence and the redemption of mankind and creation.
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- And if He is fully sovereign then our perspective changes dramatically!

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- This is what being fully convinced of God's Full Sovereignty over the affairs of this life look like: ***We do our part according to God's Word and know that nothing is going to stop or slow the train of God's sovereign work in our life, in this world and the establishment of His eternal plan. Therefore, everything...and I mean everything, is within the control of Almighty God and because of that I will submit to that thought pattern in my life and not waste any portion of my life pounding the sand of why this world is so messed up. I will submit my mind and heart to a Kingdom mindset which says that my King knows what He is doing and I'm not going to waste my time on worldly affairs but instead be busy about my Father's business.***
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- The word used there for "instituted" is important to remember. ***It is the word that means that which has been carefully and purposefully thought through by God.*** God didn't just throw this commandment out and see how people would handle it. God thought it through. God not only appointed all authority, He thought through the command to obey that authority.
- **Then Paul says one great Financial Peace Statement, and then goes in to the great why of all of this life-change we should be participating in...**