

(1) Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. 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. 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. For because of this you also pay taxes...for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing! 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. 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." 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. 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. Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires.

Think on These Things

- 1) We can all find reasons to object to this passage. Who hasn't had a city mayor, governor or president with whom they've been unhappy, who legislated matters with which we strongly disagree?! Keep in mind the politics of Paul's era here: Paul was imprisoned and just a few years away from death by Roman decree, and Rome was maliciously prosecuting Christians, burning them on crosses and feeding them to the lions for entertainment. And what does Paul say? Government leaders are put in place by God. So even living at a time of evil government, Paul says to submit to their authority as godly obedience. How do you respond to this?

Personal responses. Maybe aware of v. 7, some folks will respond that they try and show respect and honor to the "office" of mayor/governor/president. Though they strongly disagree with an individual's politics, they remain distantly courteous due to this teaching.

- 2) All countries have governments; this is how humanity developed civilization. What do we learn is the purpose of government in vs. 1-4? Who should live in fear of the government?

Governing authorities exist to provide law, order and civic control/organization for their communities. They are God's agents (servants and avengers, v. 4) to watch over the good behavior of citizens and to punish those who are wrongdoers. Those who do wrong should be fearful of the government's authority to deal with them.

- 3) From v. 3b, what is God's expectation of Christians living in their societies under civil laws? What word is used on Romans 13:13 to describe this behavior?

Christians are expected to “do what is good, and...receive the ruler’s approval” (i.e., mayor, governor, or president).

Word from Romans 13:13? Christians are to “walk **properly**” as in the daytime! The opposite of this would be to be active in the darkness [night]...something we should *not* be known for... (in this verse, partying, drinking, immorality, sexual innuendo, quarreling, and jealousy)! People commit sins under cover of darkness.... (John 3:19; 1 Corinthians 4:5; Ephesians 5:11)

- 4) Paul again uses a hard word: *submit* (v. 5, NIV, “be in subjection”, ESV)! We intentionally decide to obey civic authorities because in doing so we obey God’s command...and this may be difficult! We must put aside what we want, to comply with the decisions they make for where we live. Is it right to avoid paying taxes to cities, counties, states, and the federal government (IRS)? If we dislike or despise a leader, why should we show respect or honor anyway? See Matthew 22:15-22, Acts 4:18-20, Philippians 3:17-21 and 1 Peter 2:13-17.

Paying taxes? **Romans 13:6 makes it very clear that we are obligated to pay our taxes.**

Showing honor and respect? **Governing ‘authorities’ are ‘ministers of God’ (v. 6), fulfilling an organizational structure God has instituted (v. 2). Therefore, we are to bestow respect and honor to the office of those whom God has allowed to be in charge---despite differing politics.**

Other passage teachings: **Matthew says give to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s. Acts records that obedience to God takes precedence over obedience to men’s laws. Philippians says we must now live as ‘citizens of heaven.’ 1 Peter says we must give regard to human institutions and **do good** so as to silence critics. Living as free people, we are not to use our freedom to cover up doing evil. Honor everyone...the Emperor!**

- 5) According to vs. 8-10, how does love “fulfill” the Law? How much love should we have for others? See Matthew 5:17, John 13:34 and 1 John 4:7-12.

Love does no wrong to a neighbor (v. 10), whether adultery, murder, coveting or anything else. We must ‘love our neighbors as we love ourselves’ (v. 9). Christ came to FULFILL the Law, not abolish it (Matthew). We must love others as Jesus has loved us (John). If we love God, we ought also to love one another; anyone who doesn’t...doesn’t really know God, for God is love (1 John).

- 6) From v. 11, how close is your salvation (deliverance) today? What day draws near (vs. 12)?

Our salvation is ‘nearer’ today than the day we came to believe! This is our ‘day of Salvation.’

- 7) After we put on the armor of light --- clothe ourselves in Jesus Christ --- what are we commanded NOT to do (v. 14)? See Galatians 5:16-18, 24-25, Ephesians 6:10-20 and Colossians 3:5-10. Can you share your progress (testimony) with others in our class today?

We must ‘make no provisions’ (allowances) for our fleshly desires or seek to gratify them. Galatians says we can accomplish this task by embracing the Holy Spirit and walking in His

strength. Ephesians adds that we must 'remain alert' and 'put on the armor of God' to withstand (overcome) the wiles of the devil. Colossians states we must put to death our old lives and 'put on the new self' which is being renewed by God, its Creator.

Class testimonies are optional....

People and situations I want to pray for this week: