

Right in God's Sight

Studies from the Book of Romans

Lesson 17

Romans 13:1–14

Romans 13:1–7 Submit to Government Authorities

In chapter 14, Paul continues to explain the practical implications of what it means to be a living sacrifice by shifting the focus from exercising spiritual gifts to submitting to civil authorities, loving one another, and walking in the light as we await Christ's return.

Read Romans 13:1–14, focusing on verses 1–7.

At the time of Paul, Christianity was considered a faction of Judaism, subject to the governing laws of Rome. Paul's readers lived with the awareness that they were under the rules and regulations of the world's most powerful civilization, but also that they were citizens of Christ's kingdom. As such, Paul defines their duty to obey and honor those placed in authority over them.

1. What is Paul's exhortation to the believers? What reason does he give? vv. 1–2
 - a. If someone opposes this authority, who are they actually resisting?
 - b. What does Paul say they bring upon themselves for their disobedience?
2. Because governing authorities are put there by God, what is the outcome for those who do what is right? vv. 3–4
 - a. What can those who break the laws expect in return?
3. State the two good reasons Paul lays out for submitting to authorities. v. 5

If we obey the laws of the land we need not fear; if we don't, we are subject to justice. The only time Christians are permitted to disobey the law is when it directly contradicts the Word of God and then we must defer to the higher authority of God.

4. Personal: Have you ever been placed in the difficult position of having to choose between orders given by someone in authority over you or honoring what God's Word says? If so, how did you handle the situation? What would you do differently if given that same opportunity today?

5. Not only are we instructed to submit to authorities, we are called to support them by doing what? v. 6

- a. Why should we pay our taxes?

Look closer:

Paul followed the example of Jesus' teaching on the subject of paying taxes. Look up the references that follow and write down the reasons Jesus gave for paying what is owed.

- a. Matthew 22:21

- b. Matthew 17:24–27

- c. How does understanding what Scripture has to say on the matter encourage you to do what is right?

Memory Verse:

"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."
Romans 13:11

Word Wealth:

Using the resources you have on hand (i.e., additional Bible translations, dictionary, Bible dictionary, concordance, etc.), write a definition for the words below.

subject (13:1, 5) _____

neighbor (13:9-10) _____

armor (13:12) _____

Romans 13:8–10

The Debt of Love

Paul had earlier stated that we are indebted to Christ for the sacrifice His love bestowed on each of us. Since we can never out love or out give God, we will always be obliged to let Him love others through us!

Read Romans 13:1–10, focusing your attention on verses 8–10.

Paul moves from the believers' obligation to authorities to the more personal note of what we owe to others.

1. What is the one debt we should always strive to pay? Why—what does Paul mean by this? v. 8

Selah . . .

Will you ever be able to repay the debt of love that *you* owe? How does that realization affect your perspective?

Paul says that if you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements (v. 8) of God's law (speaking of the law of Moses).

2. Paul quotes specific commands from the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20. What God's people are *not* to do toward one another?
 - a. v. 13
 - b. v. 14
 - c. v. 15
 - d. v. 16
 - e. v. 17
3. Paul sums up the law by quoting directly from Leviticus 19:18; what does he say?
4. It is *love*, not mere conformity to rules that is the fundamental nature of the law. How does Paul conclude his point?

Look closer:

The believer will always be "in debt" in loving others. What do the following verses teach you about this life-long balance owed? Please put your answers in your own words.

- a. John 13:34–35
- b. 1 Corinthians 16:14
- c. Ephesians 5:2
- d. 1 John 3:14, 23
- e. 1 John 4:7, 11, 21

Romans 13:11–14

Wrapped in Christ

The daily pressing out of divine love is the believer's ongoing responsibility, but it is particularly important in light of Christ's imminent return.

Read Romans 13:8–14, focusing on verses 11–14.

1. What does Paul emphasize that every believer is to do? v. 11

2. Why is it so critical for Christians to *understand the time*—literally, *know the season*? State the main point in the verses below.
 - a. 1 Peter 5:8

 - b. Ephesians 5:14–16

Every Christian must realize the need of the hour is to remain alert and vigilant. The *night* Paul refers to in verse 12, speaks of the present evil; and the *day* refers to the closeness of the Lord's return.

3. What does Paul urge all believers to do? v. 12

4. In order to *walk properly* (v. 13), what are the works of darkness to avoid? As you list these, take these words of Paul seriously to your own heart. If you are guilty of any of these sins, take time now to confess it to the Lord, asking His forgiveness.

Look closer:

Paul compares Christians to soldiers on the battlefield, equipping themselves to fight a war. According to Ephesians 6:10–17 and 1 Thessalonians 5:8, what are the parts of armor we are to put on? As you note these in your lesson think about the purpose of each one.

“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.” Ephesians 6:13

- a. v. 14
- b. v. 15
- c. v. 16
- d. v. 17
- e. What critical action on the believer's part keeps all the armor in place? v. 18

For group discussion:

- 5. What is the only way a believer can keep from not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh?
v. 14
 - a. In your own words, summarize how this can be done. See Romans 12:2; Ephesians 4:20–24; and Colossians 3:10.
 - b. You were clothed in Christ at salvation; now it is up to you to *daily* put on the armor of God. What step can you take to ensure you follow through?

My Roman's Road

Listen . . . Learn . . . Live . . . God's Truth!

Take a look back at this week's lesson. Briefly recap what you learned this week and how you intend to live it out.

1. What lesson in your study became real to you this week?

2. How do you intend to apply this lesson to your daily life?

Memory Verse:

Write down what you learned about God from this week's memory verse.

Write out the verse from memory.

Prayer Request:

Write out your most earnest prayer request and lift it to the Lord.

Notes

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

