

## Parson to Person

### ROMANS 13 PART 1

*“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor” (Romans 13:1–7 NKJV).*

In recent months there has been an increasing push back on biblical passages regarding submission to government and authority. In America’s ‘60s the “Hippies” pushed back against government partly inspired by the Vietnam War. In the early ‘70s (from the continuing developments of the ‘60s) an expression emerged suggesting that one could not trust anyone over 18 years of age. Over the past several years, there has been a resistance toward objective absolute truth and an embrace of situational ethics and subjectivism. Today there is a push against gender absolutes and the authoritative nature of biological identification and true science. Authority is questioned on nearly every level. In fact, pushback against truth and authority has dated back to the Garden of Eden—when Satan questioned God’s authority and trustworthiness.

Romans 13 (like the teachings in 1 Peter 2) relates to government, governance, and authority from a Christian perspective. It declares that we as believers are to be cooperative and submissive toward government and authority. Both the Old and New Testaments provide substantial content and instruction regarding law, order, obedience, rebellion, and discipline. Therefore, the student of the Bible should feel very comfortable with law, rule, authority, government, and submission. Even the order God has ordained for the home, headship and submission, is common to the believer. However, by experience with ancient and modern history, we can see that there are times when submission to government is inappropriate. Fundamentally this occurs when influencers, authorities, governors, and/or a governmental rule require the believer to disobey God. This has been recently illustrated (both locally and abroad) when “authorities” called believers to break biblical mandates in order to submit to contradictory Federal, State, or local laws. For this reason, submission to authority requires biblical evaluation and definition. We need to understand where authority originates, how authoritative enabling is granted, the responsibilities of the authorities, and cautiously navigate submission and/or resistance, while graciously handling those who are in the place of power.

Fundamentally, Romans 13:1–7 defines what governance should look like when those in authority are doing good and right. However, it does not take much study to recognize that the Roman government (in the day Paul wrote this) was corrupt and power mongering. Nonetheless, Paul established the principles of authority and submission—and called the Roman Christian to be submissive to authority unless they were called upon to disobey the Lord. The Romans were instructed to observe and obey rule—otherwise disorder is the rule and chaos the result. They were told that the government officials were granted their authority first and foremost by God, and then by appointment (understanding the Roman form of government) to obey, to pay taxes, and to recognize that the government has the authority to punish evil doers—even to the point of capital punishment.

Americans have a unique issue/responsibility. We have a representative government—subject first to God, then to the U.S. Constitution, the Bill of Rights, State constitutions, laws and ordinances. Rule and law is therefore subject to God and the stated and layered authorities listed above. However, the responsibility for the upholding of such rule is under the accountability of *“We the people...!”* We are first called to obey God, and then take responsibility for law(s) and the representatives who serve us. If things go wrong, it is our responsibility/fault. We cannot blame the Lord. If appointed leaders go bad, we need to remove them. If there are “bad” laws, rules, and/or regulations, we are responsible—and are called to stand against them.

From my perspective we have been given a God-ordained right to life, the privilege to worship God, and the pursuit of “happiness”—depending on how the latter is defined. However, liberty and freedom, the right to own property, etc. depend on behaviors and responsibilities.

As believers we take seriously the call described here in Romans 13—and throughout the Scriptures. As believers we take seriously our responsibility to manage right and wrong! As believers we are called to provide leadership, safety, and protection to our families! As *American* believers we take responsibility for our National standards and will either celebrate freedom or suffer the consequences of negligence.

I love you all,  
Pastor Paul