

Parson to Person

ROMANS 13 PART 2

“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).

The expression, “When the plain sense, makes the most sense, seek no other sense,” should be the rule when interpreting Scripture. In the case of Romans 13 (especially during the present late/post Covid-19 “government” overreach), handling this text in honesty and without manipulation has proven to be a problem for those who are (rightly) upset with policies, ordinances, and the enforcements recently experienced. Moreover, the present Biden/Harris administration has so many problems it begs for rejection, disdain, and pushback. Many on the “left” are in favor of the removal of all references to the God of the Bible, support the continual push toward the deconstruction of biblical marriage, support the LGBTQ agenda, BLM and its Marxist ideologies, Critical Race Theory, Systemic Racism, “Wokeism,” and the “right” to murder babies in the womb—and for some even shortly after birth. They promote open borders and globalism (all in the name of “good”), and most support a welfare state in contradiction to the biblical standards found in the passage which reads, *“if anyone will not work, neither shall he eat”* (2 Thessalonians 3:10 NKJV).

More could be said herein about individual God-given freedoms and biblical instruction regarding such things as forced vaccinations, or a person’s ability to protect their family, friends, or themselves against those who wish to harm them, etc. And, we all know all too well that these things tend to incite rebellion and pushback against “authorities” and the authority they are entrusted with—even when that authority is given by God and ratified by “We the People.” (Don’t think to argue here about the recent election and the likely criminal cheating that may clearly be revealed in the near future. Think about all the rest that occurred long before the recent election... BLM, LGBTQ, Abortion, Globalism, etc.)

All of this must be understood by the careful examination of the Scriptures. And, a proper exegesis of the passage above does not lead to blind subservience. In fact, the Bible endorses righteous anger and indicates that submission to governmental authority does not always mean unquestioned obedience. Why? Because obedience to Government must be secondary to a believer’s obedience toward God. For example, in the home a woman is to be *“[submissive] to [her] own husband”* (see Ephesians 5:22–24, 1 Peter 2:5), but only *“as is fitting in the Lord”* (see Colossians 3:18). Therefore, when Paul says *“be subject to rulers”* (Titus 3:1) and *“submit yourselves to every ordinance of man”* (1 Peter 2:13) or, as is expressed in our text, *“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities”* (vs. 1), he is not suggesting that the governing authorities are always right, or that blind obedience is intended in the command. The Scriptures do not instruct a wife to obey her husband if his command demands her disobedience to God.

Submission in this context, then, must be understood as submission first and foremost to the Lord, and then to the governing authorities. Authority and the “Authorities” are the God-ordained persons and powers He has put in place in order to keep the world, nations and the peoples from degrading into total chaos. God desires order in the family, the Church, and for societal life. Even the Law of Moses has civil law as well as the ceremonial and moral.

Notably in this passage is the fact that the God-ordained authority/authorities are to hold to and contend for good. *“When the righteous are in authority, the people rejoice; but when a wicked man rules, the people groan”* (Proverbs 29:2).

May we all support and contend for righteousness and good in our day and in our land.

I love you all,

Pastor Paul