

**BOOK OF ROMANS**  
**THE BELIEVER'S CIVIC DUTY**  
**ROMANS 13:1-7**

**Introduction:**

There are three **INSTITUTIONS** that have been **ORDAINED OF GOD and BY GOD** in this world. In each of these, understand there are **LEVELS OF SUBMISSION and AUTHORITY**.

Those three **INSTITUTIONS** are:

1. **MARRIAGE and the FAMILY.** (*Matthew 19:4-6; Genesis 2:24*)  
*Matthew 19:4-6*—“4 And he answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that he which made them at the beginning made them male and female, 5 And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? 6 Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

*Genesis 2:23-24*—“23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man. 24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh.”

**MARRIAGE** was instituted by **GOD** to be between a **MALE** and a **FEMALE!** (I'm not going to elaborate on this because I plan to elaborate on it in an upcoming series on **BLURRING THE LINES**...and this is one area where **SATAN** and his children are especially blurring them!)

2. **The CHURCH.** (*Matthew 16:16-19*)

**CHRIST** established the **CHURCH** to be local **ASSEMBLIES** made up of **BAPTIZED BELIEVERS** in the **GOSPEL** of the **LORD JESUS CHRIST!** These **ASSEMBLIES** are to have as their interest the **WORSHIP** and **SERVICE OF GOD**, including the carrying out of **CHRIST'S GREAT COMMISSION** and **OBSERVING** the **TWO ORDINANCES** of **BAPTISM** and the **LORD'S TABLE** as well as the **MUTUAL CARE OF ONE ANOTHER** as **MEMBERS OF CHRIST'S BODY!**

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The **HEAD** of the **CHURCH** is the **LORD JESUS CHRIST**. The **WHOLE CHURCH** is to **SUBMIT TO HIS LEADERSHIP!**

Under **CHRIST** is the **PASTOR**, as the undershepherd, then the other members of the congregation. When **GOD'S ORDER** is **MAINTAINED** in the **CHURCH** there is **BLESSING** and **HARMONY**. When **GOD'S ORDER** is **VIOLATED**, there is **DIVISION** and **HURT**.

3. **The GOVERNMENT.** (*Romans 13:1-7*)

**GOD** has ordained **CIVIL GOVERNMENT** and generally requires that we **OBEY** those who are over us in those roles **with some exceptions** as we will see in a moment. (*Romans 13:1-2, 5-7*)

Understand that **where there is NO GOVERNMENT** or **where those in GOVERNMENT fail to do what GOD placed them there to do**, then there is **ANARCHY** because of the **SIN** and related **SELFISHNESS** of fallen mankind!

**GOD** established **GOVERNMENT** to **MAINTAIN** an **ORDERLY SOCIETY**—that is, they are given to **HELP MAINTAIN PEACE and ORDER** in this **WICKED WORLD!** They are to **PUNISH EVILDOERS** (including **capital punishment** where it is warranted *Genesis 9:5-6*) and they are to **REWARD RIGHTEOUSNESS!** (*Romans 13:3-4; 1 Peter 2:14*)

Now, understand that while **GOD** wants **HIS PEOPLE** to **OBEY CIVIL GOVERNMENT**, there is a limit to that **OBEDIENCE!** We are not to **OBEY** if they call for us to violate **SCRIPTURE**.

*e.g. Daniel 3:14-18—The three Hebrew Children*  
*e.g. Daniel 6:10-11—Daniel*  
*e.g. Acts 4:18-21—Peter and John*  
*e.g. Acts 5:27-29—Peter and the other Apostles.*

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The **GOVERNMENT** is made up of a community of people who are brought together under an established **CENTRAL LEADERSHIP**—e.g. **A King, A President, etc.**

The **GOVERNMENT** is to have as their **INTEREST** the **MUTUAL GOOD** of **ALL CITIZENS** under their **LEADERSHIP**.

The **SUBMISSION** of the **CITIZENS** to the **AUTHORITY OF ESTABLISHED GOVERNMENT** is intended to help produce a tranquil society.

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Now it is the last of these three **INSTITUTIONS** that is addressed in the verses we want to look at this evening. Since we live life in a **SOCIETY**, we have certain responsibilities to that **SOCIETY**.

In *chapter 12*, **PAUL** spoke at length of our **DUTIES** on a **SPIRITUAL** and **SOCIAL LEVEL**!

In this chapter, he turns the focus to **SECULAR** matters. How are we to relate to those outside the **CHURCH**, especially those who have the **RULE OVER US** in **SOCIETY**? This obviously is a very important matter. So, let's look at **THE BELIEVER'S CIVIC DUTY AS A CITIZEN**.

**I. THE SUBMISSIVE ASPECT OF OUR DUTY. (Vs. 1-5)**

Now nobody likes the word "**SUBMISSION**". After all, we all want to be **IN CONTROL**. However, we need to realize that often we are **NOT IN CONTROL**!

If there was ever a place where this is true, it is in the world around us, and especially in the **GOVERNMENT**. These verses clearly tell us that we have a **DUTY TO SUBMIT TO THE AUTHORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT**!

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- A. We See The Command Of GOD. (Vs. 1a)**  
When you consider the political climate in **ROME** when **PAUL** wrote these words, they are quite remarkable!

**ROME** was being ruled by a man named **NERO**. He was one of the most **WICKED** of the **ROMAN EMPERORS**, even having his own mother and wife executed. He is most notorious for blaming a tragic fire that decimated **ROME** on **CHRISTIANS**. This resulted in 10's of thousands of **CHRISTIANS** dying by way of **PERSECUTION**. Yet, it is to this man and his government that **PAUL** issued the command for **SUBJECTION**.

Of course, **PAUL** had no illusions about **NERO**. What **PAUL** is commanding here is not a blind allegiance to wicked men, but **WILLFUL OBEDIENCE** to the **COMMANDS OF GOD**!

This **COMMAND** has nothing to do with the **RULER** and everything to do with the **SPIRITUAL CONDITION** of the **BELIEVER**. The **COMMAND** is **SIMPLE** and the **COMMAND** is **CLEAR: BELIEVERS ARE TO WILLFULLY SUBMIT TO SECULAR AUTHORITIES**!

I know there are many who may have a problem with this. Yet, it is still the **CLEAR COMMAND** of the **LORD** to **HIS PEOPLE**!

However, there does come a time when **CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE** is in order! When the state comes to the place of trying to **GOVERN THE CONSCIENCE OF MAN**, then **GOD IS TO BE OBEYED OVER THE STATE**!

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Here is the **TRUTH** that is in view here. When the **LAWS OF THE STATE DO NOT CONTRADICT THE LAWS OF GOD**, then the state is to be **OBEYED** without question.

However, when **OBEYING THE LAW OF THE STATE** forces you to **VIOLATE THE CLEAR TEACHINGS OF GOD**, then **GOD IS TO BE OBEYED**, regardless of what the state says. This is what the **DISCIPLES** did when they were called before the local authorities.

*(Acts 5:25-42; Note also: 1 Peter 2:13-17)*

*We See The Command Of GOD.*

**B. We See The Control Of GOD. (Vs. 1b)**

The reason these things are said is that **GOD** is **SOVEREIGN** above all and oversees the events of history.

Regardless of who is in power politically, they are there because the **LORD GOD** has allowed it to be so **TO FULFILL HIS OWN PURPOSES. THE LORD HOLDS ALL POWER WITHIN HIMSELF. HE GIVES POWER TO WHOSOEVER HE WILLS, and HE DOES SO FOR HIS OWN SOVEREIGN PURPOSES!**

If there is any lesson that is clear in the, book of **DANIEL** or in the **HISTORY OF ISRAEL**, it is the lesson that **THE LORD SETS UP AND PULLS DOWN HUMAN GOVERNMENTS AT HIS DISCRETION! GOD IS IN CONTROL!**

*Daniel 2:20-21; 4:34-37*

*Proverbs 21:1—"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: He turneth it whithersoever he will.*

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**C. We See The Counsel Of GOD. (Vs. 2-4)**

With those truths in mind, we are left with the **LORD'S COUNSEL** for **HIS PEOPLE**.

There are two basic ordinances **GOD** has in mind for us.

**1. Obey Governmental Laws. (Vs. 2-3)**

Since rulers rule by the consent of the **LORD**, if we rebel against the rulers of the land, then we are really rebelling against the **LORD**.

Of course, we need to remember that there is a difference between **LAWS THAT ARE ACCEPTABLE** and **THOSE THAT MUST BE IGNORED!**

Let me repeat what I have already said: The clear principle in the **WORD OF GOD** is that we are to place **GOD'S WORD FIRST** in our list of priorities! When man's law contradicts **GOD'S WORD**, then **GOD'S WORD** must be followed regardless of the **CONSEQUENCES**. And there may be and most probably will be **CONSEQUENCES!**

**PAUL** tells us that **RULERS** are not against those who do good. Now understand that the idea here is **NOT** that they will always respect our **WAYS** or our **WORKS**.

The **SPIRITUAL** end of our behavior is not what we are discussing. The idea is that when we **FOLLOW THE LAW OF THE LAND**, we will be found in **FAVOR WITH OUR LEADERS**.

But, when we break the **LAWS OF MEN**, we will **RECEIVE JUDGMENT**. There is a price to pay for **BREAKING MAN'S LAW**.

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*e.g. PAUL felt this personally. HE OBEYED GOD'S LAW and preached the GOSPEL, even when man's law executed him for his efforts. 2 Timothy 4:6-8.*

Notice that there is no condemnation of the STATE from PAUL for what he was about to suffer.

*Obey Governmental Laws.*

**2. Observe Governmental Leaders. (Vs. 4)**

The BIBLE makes it clear that the GOVERNMENT is the ARM OF THE LORD to MAINTAIN ORDER IN SOCIETY.

To walk in step with the LAWS OF MEN is to enjoy PEACE. To REBEL is to feel that WRATH OF MEN.

GOD has handed JUDGMENT to men and we are under an obligation to OBEY them as they rule our countries, even when we disagree with how they lead, unless OBEYING would violate SCRIPTURE!

*THE SUBMISSIVE ASPECT OF OUR DUTY.*

**II. THE SUPPORTIVE ASPECT OF OUR DUTY. (Vs. 6-7)**

**A. We Have A Duty To Render Monetary Support. (Vs 6-7a)**

These verses have to do with the matter of paying taxes. Now, there is not a person in this room who likes to pay their taxes. In truth, many of the taxes we pay are unnecessary and many others are unethical! (*e.g. income redistribution*)

However, we are obligated to pay them nonetheless. Of course, most folks look for any way they can to get out of paying their taxes. In fact, the IRS says that the gap between what people owe in taxes and what they actually pay is estimated to be over 540 billion dollars per year now.

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But understand, the LORD would have us to pay the taxes we owe to the GOVERNMENT. We may not like it, but we honor the LORD by doing so!

**B. We Have A Duty To Render Moral Support. (Vs. 7b)**

Here we are COMMANDED to FEAR and HONOR those who have the rule over us. Even if we cannot RESPECT the PERSON for their POSITIONS, their BELIEFS, or their ACTIONS, we still owe them a DEBT OF RESPECT because of the POSITION they occupy.

Remember, they would not be serving there unless they had been allowed to by GOD! Therefore, RESPECT given to those in AUTHORITY, is, in effect, RESPECT GIVEN TO GOD!

**We have a duty to render PRAYER SUPPORT!**

*(1 Timothy 2:1-3)*

*THE SUBMISSIVE...THE SUPPORTIVE ASPECT OF OUR DUTY.*

**Conclusion**

As we look at the world around us, there is much reason to be CONCERNED and DISCOURAGED by what we see. Yet, we need to understand that the POWERS THAT BE are there because they have been ORDAINED BY GOD! (*Even the BABYLONIAN EMPIRE was raised up to punish ISRAEL by carrying them out of their land into captivity! God held the BABYLONIAN EMPIRE responsible for mistreating ISRAEL.*)

Therefore, we are to RESPECT their POSITION and OBEY THEIR LAWS except those LAWS VIOLATE GOD'S LAWS and let us PRAY! And, we are to realize that if we have to violate their laws, we may suffer!

For in doing so, we'll actually be performing a service of worship to the glory of GOD and demonstrating to the rest of the world how godly people live their lives. When we do this, GOD is honored, JESUS CHRIST is exalted, and the saints prove the reality of their testimony.