

Romans- Let's Do This!

63 -"Living as a Citizen"

Romans 13: 1-8

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Romans 12 tells us a lot about how believer's are to personally live. As we transition into **Romans 13**, Paul focuses on the believer's public life. This is a timely subject in an election year as biblical Christianity and secular culture have been at odds.

"Do not let anyone claim to be a true American if they try to remove religion from politics."
– George Washington

Evangelical Christians, who are committed to a biblical faith of trusting in a crucified Savior as their only hope, and live a life of truth and love, are increasingly being marginalized, even commanded to be silent. All of this is done in the name of tolerance, which is only tolerance for anything but the gospel.

Romans 13:1-8 does not deal with America. It does NOT address who you vote for, who will be our next Supreme Court Justice or if Planned Parenthood has any value, but what it does teach has far reaching implications on how Christians are to live publically before God and as a witness to what we hold dear.

How should Christians live in light of their citizenship?

1. You are to live "responsibly" and lawfully in submission to the government (vv1-3a) *except when you should not* (3b – ch. 14).

The default position of the Christian (every Christian) to the state (any state) is to submit. – Tim Keller

- a. The default position is to submit- doing what is right that benefits the government (vv. 6 – 7). Pay taxes, obey laws, serve the common good- that which promotes respect for all life, stands against evil, and reflects your values as a citizen.

Yet, also note, as a Christian you are born again to a higher citizenship. See **Philippians 3:20**.

There is a vast difference between making a decision that you don't want to go to hell, and committing your life to Christ. Biblical Christianity is not ascending to a general belief God, or even Jesus. It is committing your life to him. It is getting off the throne of your life, choosing to turn your life over to him.

- b. It is responsibly seeing the law and doing what, under law, you are to do, because it is good, until it is not, *which means you obey TO A POINT*. That point is where Government asks you to **actively do** what God says not to do.

If any ruler—a governing official or body, school teacher, boss, or military commander—commands you to do something God forbids or forbids you from doing something God commands, not only may you disobey, but you must disobey. If it comes down to a choice like this, you must obey God. -RC Sproul

When a government authority commands us to do something immoral, it's a different matter entirely. We have a duty to disobey that command (cf. Acts 5:29). Peacefully, calmly and respectfully, we must do as God commands.

Very rarely, we may be called to take up arms and fight to protect the innocent from especially cruel regimes. But when that does occur, it is only right to fight. - Chuck Swindoll

2. You are to live “pro-actively” engaging the state and exercising the privileges granted to you by God.

As citizens of the U.S., or any country, vote, stand-up and speak up in light of biblical values and your true citizenship as Christian's (Phil 3:20).

"The biblical teaching that all human beings are created in the image of God and therefore have equal status before God had a significant influence on the thinking of the Founding Fathers of the United States and their bold declaration that 'all men are created equal' This stood in clear contrast to the prior assumption in many European nations that there was a special group of human beings known as “royalty” who had the hereditary right to rule over ordinary people". - Wayne Grudem

If Christians do not speak up and if they do not seek to influence for the good, then who will? Who will determine direction for teaching in schools and who should protect the innocent and enforce appropriate laws and justice?

“The only thing good men need to do for evil to prosper is to do nothing.” -Edmund Burke

But there is a subtle danger lurking in the shadows for us. It has two fangs:

a. “For God and country”

Some professing believers are more concerned with who sits in the White House than who is firmly on the throne in their life and the lives of their neighbors, and because of this, they lack peace.

b. “What’s in it for me?”

We face the danger of just voting for who will benefit us and put down what we despise.

Micah 6:8 He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?

What does this all look like today? The answer is found in a question. Do you live with “love” as your language?

3. You are to live in absolute trust in God’s ultimate control, thereby incurring the only debt Paul encouraged us to have – the debt of love toward all (vv 8, 9, 10)

As believers, citizens of life in Christ, we should be focused on being who we are in Christ.

Here is the order: God, Government, You

Doing the right thing looks like this: trust God, submit to government, and love, even in the face of mounting resistance.

Trust God. He is on the throne! As a backdrop of everything we do, God actively works, limiting, ordering and controlling all things for His glory and our good. And both exist, in perfect harmony. We must work to maintain this truth in every part of our brains and emotions. It is the place of battle, for as you think, your emotions kick in.

The hallmark of Christians in the first century was not their wealth. They had none. It was not their theology either. – Andy Stanley

1 Peter 2:13-17 ¹³Be subject for the Lord’s sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good. ¹⁵For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. ¹⁶Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. ¹⁷Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.