

Romans: Let's Do This

“God – Government – You”

Romans 13:1-7

Grace Fellowship Church / Pastor Peter LaRuffa / 17-Apr-2016

A. Genuine love for God & others is shown by submitting to civil authority.

Rom.13:1a ¹ Let every person **be subject** to the governing authorities.

Paul uses a Greek military term for soldiers ranked under and subject to the absolute authority of a superior officer. Christians are to willingly place themselves under all governing authorities, whoever they may be.

Titus 3:1 ¹ Remind them to **be submissive** to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready for every good work...

What does submission to civil authority have to do with the genuine love Paul speaks of? Our earthly, “**horizontal**” relationships serve as indicators of our spiritual, “**vertical**” relationship with God!

B. 5 Reasons Christians are to submit to civil authorities.

(1) All earthly authority figures and structures come from God and are appointed by God.

Rom 13:1 ¹ For there is no authority **except from God** and those that exist have been **instituted by God**.

John 19:11 ¹¹ Jesus answered him, “You would have no authority over me at all unless it had been **given you from above**.”

(2) Resisting civil authorities is rebellion against God, and invites God’s judgment.

Rom 13:2 ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and **those who resist will incur judgment**.

(3) Our earthly government protects against evil and promotes good.

Rom 13:3,4a ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴for he is God’s servant **for your good**.

(4) Resisting earthly government brings about serious consequences.

Rom 13:4b But if you do wrong, be afraid, **for he does not bear the sword in vain**. For he is the servant of God, **an avenger who carries out God’s wrath on the wrongdoer**.

(5) Our conscience bears witness within us that we're supposed to obey the government.

Rom 13:5 ⁵Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of **conscience**.

1 Pet. 2:13-17 ¹³Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, ¹⁴**or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do evil and to praise those who do good.** ¹⁵**For 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.

C. "Christians should submit to the governing authorities—except for when they shouldn't." ~ *Christianity Today*, April 2016

Acts 4:19 ¹⁹But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge, ²⁰for we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard."

Acts 5:19 ²⁹But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."

"At times," Sproul says, "Human rulers require people to do things that God forbids, or forbid them from doing what God commands. The principle is very simple. 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."

Nelson, Ryan. "What Is the Separation of Church and State?" *Faithlife Blog*. 14 Dec. 2015. Web.

D. Other relevant points of application:

- a. **Don't wrap the Bible in the flag.** Our citizenship is in heaven. (Philp. 3:20)
- b. **Pay taxes.** (Rom. 13:6,7a)
- c. **"We salute the rank, not the man."** Remember—even if you didn't put them in office, God *did*. (Rom. 13:7b; 1 Pet. 2:13,17)
- d. **Civil disobedience is rarely necessary** within a political system that allows reform. Proactively work the system, leaving civil disobedience as the absolute last resort. (Rom. 13:1-5)
- e. **There's safety in numbers.** Talk to others who embrace a biblical worldview. See what they think. (Prov. 11:14)