

**Background/Intro:** Believers should seek to represent Christ well in their communities and world!

**Submit As A Citizen (Romans 13:1-7)** <sup>1</sup> *Everyone must submit to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are instituted by God.* <sup>2</sup> *So then, the one who resists the authority is opposing God's command, and those who oppose it will bring judgment on themselves.* <sup>3</sup> *For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do good and you will have its approval.* <sup>4</sup> *For government is God's servant to you for good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, because it does not carry the sword for no reason. For government is God's servant, an avenger that brings wrath on the one who does wrong.* <sup>5</sup> *Therefore, you must submit, not only because of wrath, but also because of your conscience.* <sup>6</sup> *And for this reason you pay taxes, since the [authorities] are God's public servants, continually attending to these tasks.* <sup>7</sup> *Pay your obligations to everyone: taxes to those you owe taxes, tolls to those you owe tolls, respect to those you owe respect, and honor to those you owe honor.*

- Paul believed a Christian's witness must demonstrate new life in their attitude/action toward governing authority
  - *Everyone must submit* [willing submission] *to the governing authorities* or they are opposing God
  - God ordained government to create/maintain order, to protect citizens, and to provide for the welfare of the citizens
  - Jesus also said citizens are obligated to their government, yet ultimate allegiance is to God (*Mk 12:13-17*)
  - Believers live in a tension of competing claims [government's directives and God's guidelines (these take priority)]
- Paul pointed out that generally *rulers* were no threat to the person who behaves – Just do good and what is right
  - Ideally, government implements God's commission to act in people's best interest
    - Government also has enforcement power to enforce conduct
- *you must submit* – Because of [1] governments' authority to judge/punish wrongdoers, and [2] *conscience* [moral judgment]
  - Pay taxes and *respect* [show reverence for] and *honor* people in authority, they are God's representatives
- Good citizenship is a requirement for Christians – [1] abide by the laws seeking to change unfair ones by peaceful means, [2] take part in electing officials or even serve as one, and [3] assist other who are underprivileged

**Love As A Neighbor (Romans 13:8-10)** <sup>8</sup> *Do not owe anyone anything, except to love one another, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.* <sup>9</sup> *The commandments: Do not commit adultery, do not murder, do not steal, do not covet, and if there is any other commandment—all are summed up by this: Love your neighbor as yourself.* <sup>10</sup> *Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law.*

- Paul next moved from a Christian's obligations to government to Christian's overarching responsibility to others
- Paul was not forbidding the idea of borrowing to meet needs, but he did probably caution against rashly/easily encouraging debt, and believers were also to be diligent in repaying all debts promptly
- Christians are obligated to love one another – Believers were to allow only this debt to remain outstanding, they could never pay it off – Go on owing others the demonstration of love – *Love your neighbor as yourself*
  - *neighbor* – Anyone the Christian encounters [people in our unique people group] who is in need (*Lk 10:25-37*)
  - While we are no longer under the law, those who extend ongoing love for others meet the law's requirements
    - Extending love accomplishes the law's purpose concerning relationships with others

**Anticipate As Times Require (Romans 13:11-14)** <sup>11</sup> *Besides this, knowing the time, it is already the hour for you to wake up from sleep, for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed.* <sup>12</sup> *The night is nearly over, and the daylight is near, so let us discard the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light.* <sup>13</sup> *Let us walk with decency, as in the daylight: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy.* <sup>14</sup> *But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans to satisfy the fleshly desires.*

- Paul reminds Christians that they live in a critical time and believers are to be keenly aware of the significance of living in the era preceding Christ's return
  - The interval of indefinite duration of God's gracious provision of time and opportunity for people to hear the Gospel and place their faith in Christ
  - Paul wanted believers to rise up from spiritual lethargy; be alert and active – Christ's return was eminent
    - Share the Good News
- *night...daylight* – Paul used the images of night and day; night was the present age characterized by evil and was passing away, while the day represented the new age of God's fully realized kingdom after Christ's return
  - Witness by telling the Good News, but also by living decently [as you would in the new age] without exhibiting *carousing...drunkenness...sexual impurity...promiscuity...quarreling...jealousy*

**Are You the Kind of Citizen in Which God Delights?**