

- Romans 12:1-2 – Offer as living sacrifices, transformed by renewing of the mind. – Is the First part of the great commandment. Love the Lord Your God with all your heart.
- This leads us to Love our neighbor as ourselves and the rest of Romans 12-5 is all about what that looks like and how to do it.
- Chapter 13, (no chapter breaks) our attitude toward government.
- Connects with how to deal with those who persecute you just before this.
- How does God keep control over the world? Provide peace and order and punishment when necessary. He delegates authority. He does, not us.
- Without authority under God, everyone’s every action would be based on their own desire and direct submission to God. But many people don’t submit to God at all. So how is there order?
- At work does every person just do what they believe God is telling them to do because He is the only authority or is there a boss and a supervisor?
- God’s way of ruling the world is based on authorities. God designates authority. This includes the government.

Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. ² Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. ³ For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong. Do you want to be free from fear of the one in authority? Then do what is right and you will be commended. ⁴ For the one in authority is God’s servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for rulers do not bear the sword for no reason. They are God’s servants, agents of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience. ⁶ This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God’s servants, who give their full time to governing.

- This is written in the time of Emperor Nero. Paul has been flogged by government authorities and Paul has been the persecutor himself.
- I don’t believe this passage is telling us we can never disobey the government. After being commanded by the authorities not to teach about Jesus. Acts 5:29, *“Peter and the apostles replied ‘We must obey God rather than people.’”*
- It says, “Be subject to”. As living sacrifices with a new mind, we are to think differently and one of these ways we think differently is how we think about government and authority.
- Let’s just get to the main points.
 1. **Governing authorities are from God.** (local, state, national).
Verse 1, 2, 4 & 6 underlined above
- Not just the positions instituted by God, but the people.

What kind of Government is from God? Whatever government you find in any place and time is instituted by God for that.

- Now governments can change and that can be good. This isn’t endorsing any type of government, but simply saying that the governing authorities, whatever or whoever, are from God.
- It doesn’t say God is dictating the actions of a leader or government.
- **God has a purpose, and our attitude should be a recognition of that authority.**
- The Biblical pictures is that God not only sends us good men sometimes to lead and heal, but also that He sends us bad men to punish and bring wrath and when He does its because we deserve it.

David Guzik *“God appoints a nation’s leaders, but not always to bless the people. Sometimes it is to judge the people or to ripen the nation for judgment.”*

2. **Governing authorities are for our Good.** Vs. 2 & 4 in (BLUE)
 - Not saying there’s never an evil ruler or that you have to agree with them.
 - He’s saying, in general, God has designed govt. authority and He has given it for our Good.
3. **Governing authorities serve on behalf of God whether they understand it or not.** (God’s servants) vs. 3,4 & 6 (GREEN)
 - Some things the government has no right to do.

Matthew 22 ¹⁷ *Tell us then, what is your opinion? Is it right to pay the imperial tax to Caesar or not?”* ¹⁸ *But Jesus, knowing their evil intent, said, “You hypocrites, why are you trying to trap me?”* ¹⁹ *Show me the coin used for paying the tax.”* They brought him a denarius, ²⁰ *and he asked them, “Whose image is this? And whose inscription?”* ²¹ *“Caesar’s,” they replied. Then he said to them, “So give back to Caesar what is Caesar’s, and to God what is God’s.”* ²² *When they heard this, they were amazed.*

- Jesus makes clear there are things the government has command over. Property, taxation, services provided by taxation, laws.
- It has authority because it’s there by God’s command to serve *His* purpose.
- But God has authority over what His image is on which is the Spirit of man.
- The govt is under the authority of God so it has no right to command us to disobey God or to forbid us from obeying God’s word.
- We have the right to resist oppression and religious persecution by nonviolent means, but not to resist legitimate functions of government.

⁵ Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.

- If you are driving down the freeway at 90mph, you’re looking to not get caught breaking the law. Paul says, you should obey the law not just because you are afraid of getting a ticket, but because your conscience tells you its wrong to disobey God’s authority through the law.

⁷ Give to everyone what you owe them: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor. ⁸ Let no debt remain

outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for whoever loves others has fulfilled the law.

- Submission, honor and taxes are something we owe. A debt you can fulfill.
- The only debt that can never be paid in full is the debt of love to one another.
- Ever owe someone money? It's what you think about when you are together. Are they thinking about it. That's how we should be with love.

You owe a debt of love to every person you meet.

- Now it shifts to what NOT TO DO.

⁹ The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

- Not saved by loving people. The law is fulfilled in Christ's actions, not yours.
- This means that love goes beyond the law of simply not injuring someone. Its not just don't sleep with his wife, or don't kill him, or don't take his stuff. It goes beyond that to love, bless, help, minister.
- If you concern yourself with paying the debt of love you owe each person, you don't have to be worried about breaking these commands. If I love you, I won't sleep with you wife or steal his stuff, I won't kill you, I won't covet.

When David slept with Bathsheba and killed Uriah, He was not offering himself to God as a living sacrifice with a renewed mind with a debt of love due to Uriah and Bathsheba. He was practicing deeds of darkness. Look at verse 11-14.

¹¹ And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. Ever wake up and realize you are late? Scrambling.

You were asleep, People can talk, walk, think, and be asleep.

- You wake up in a panic & realize you're running out of time. You're late!
- Jesus could come at any moment. Anybody else here have grey hairs?
- Because our time is limited *¹² The night is nearly over; the day is almost here.* Time is funny. Before salvation, time is short till wrath. Now it's blessing and loving.
- And here's what Paul says those of us with a renewed mind and limited time should do. *So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armor of light. ¹³ Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy.* I think we all know what these are.
- It says to put these aside and put on the armor of like.
- *¹⁴ Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.* Put on Jesus. I can't wear Jesus and carousing, drunkenness, sexual immorality and debaucher at the same time.