

## Romans Chapter 13

**Romans 13:1 "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God."**

In this scripture, being subject to a "higher power" comes from a Greek word used of a soldier's absolute obedience to his superior officer. Scripture makes one exception to this command: when obedience to civil authority would require disobedience to God's Word.

Unto the higher powers speaks of every position of civil authority without regard to competence, morality, reasonableness, or any other caveat.

Since God alone is the sovereign ruler of the universe, He has instituted 4 authorities on earth:

1. The government over all citizens;
2. The church over all believers;
3. The parents over all children;
4. The masters over all employees.

God instituted human government to reward good and to restrain sin in an evil, fallen world.

In our society today, authority of every kind is being challenged. It begins in the home. In God's plans, the daddy is the head of the house. Mother should be over the children, as well. Secular humanism has taught our children that they are the center of everything, and because of this, children are rebelling.

In most large schools in our country today, crime is very evident. A few years ago, this was not true, because everyone had respect for the teachers and principal. Even in the military, we saw a breakdown of authority. Many young men burned their draft cards and refused to go to war for their country. No earlier than World War 2 that would have been total disgrace.

These people have been looked on as if they were heroes. We have even lost respect for our government officials. Even employees are telling their boss that they will not do what they are asked to. It seems that the whole world has gone mad.

2 Timothy We can read of all this in 2 Timothy:

2 Timothy 3:1-5 "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come." "For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy," "Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good," "Traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God;" "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away."

1 Peter 2:13-16 "Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;" "Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the

punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well." "For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:" "As free, and not using [your] liberty for a cloak of maliciousness, but as the servants of God."

If we question too strongly the person in authority, we need to first stop and think who gave him or her that authority. God gave them the authority, and if we are fighting against them, we are in a sense fighting God.

**Romans 13:2 "Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation."**

Since all government is God ordained, disobedience is rebellion against God.

**Titus 3:1 "Put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work,"**

This is just one more word of caution, that we are not above the law just because we are Christians. The only time it is permissible to disobey authority is when it is in opposition to God's teachings.

**Romans 13:3 "For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:"**

Even the most wicked, godless governments act as a deterrent to crime so that peaceful and law abiding citizens need not fear the authorities. Few governments will harm those who obey their laws.

Proverbs 14:35 "The king's favor [is] toward a wise servant: but his wrath is [against] him that causeth shame."

1 Peter 3:13 "And who [is] he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

**Romans 13:4 "For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil."**

This is saying that if we have broken the law, we can expect to be punished. If we speed and are caught, we will probably pay a fine. Other sins require other punishment, but you can be sure God has marked it down for later review.

Speaking of the sword symbolizes the government's right to inflict punishment on those who do wrong, especially capital punishment.

In the Old Testament when someone was murdered, the closest relative went out and found the criminal and killed him. Swift justice, wouldn't you say?

Numbers 35:19 "The revenger of blood himself shall slay the murderer: when he meeteth him, he shall slay him."

**Romans 13:5 "Wherefore [ye] must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake."**

Christians need to, out of a sense of obligation to God to keep a clear conscience to follow him, not merely obey for the sake of avoiding punishment from the civil authorities.

Acts 24:16 "And herein do I exercise myself, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God, and [toward] men."

2 Corinthians 1:12 "For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, we have had our conversation in the world, and more abundantly to you-ward."

You have heard the expression "let your conscience be your guide". If you are a Christian, that is very good advice. The Christian has the laws of God written on the fleshly part of his or her heart. We are guided by what is pleasing unto God.

Psalms 37:31 "The law of his God [is] in his heart; none of his steps shall slide." There will come a time when we will not be taught at all of man, but will be totally taught of God.

Hebrews 10:16 "This [is] the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;"

We can see from this that the heart of mankind is his conscience.

**Romans 13:6 "For this cause pay ye tribute also: for they are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing."**

Paying tribute is the same as "paying taxes". Paul uses the term in the broadest possible sense to speak of all kinds of taxes.

That tax was usually a combined income and property tax. Because God ordained human government and demands submission to it, tribute or taxes came into being. The Greek word for taxes referred specifically to taxes paid by individuals, particularly those living in a conquered nation to their foreign rulers, which even makes the taxes more distasteful.

Jesus explicitly taught that taxes are to be paid, even to the pagan Roman government. He set an example by willingly paying the temple tax as we see in Matthew.

Matthew 17:24-27 "And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received tribute [money] came to Peter, and said, Doth not your master pay tribute?" "He saith, Yes. And when he was come into the house, Jesus prevented him, saying, What thinkest thou, Simon? Of whom do the kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?" "Peter saith

unto him, Of strangers. Jesus saith unto him, Then are the children free." "Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them, go thou to the sea, and cast a hook, and take up the fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for me and thee."

**Romans 13:7 "Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute [is due]; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honor to whom honor."**

“Render” translates a Greek word that signifies the payment of something which is owed and is not a voluntary “contribution” as seen by the word “due”.

We are to show sincere respect and attitude to all public officials, including “tax collectors” from which the government provides for our “safety and protection”.

1 Peter 2:17 "Honor all [men]. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."

In our society today, it has become fashionable to disrespect authority of all kinds. A few years ago our mother taught us to respect others. This is the same thing God says in His Word.

Even the world who does not have Jesus should be shown respect, if they are in higher office. It is really respect for the office we are showing. We must remember that a person is in that particular office because God put him there.

In summing up this lesson, we can see the importance of having great respect for God. We must respect Him and trust Him enough that we will also respect the people He has put in authority. Remember if we do not respect those in authority, then we are saying that God was not wise in choosing that person for that job. We must not question or accuse God, He knows best.

### **Romans Chapter 13 Questions**

1. Let every soul be subject to the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. There is no power but of \_\_\_\_.
3. In God's plan, who is the head of the home?
4. What has taught our children that they are the center of everything?
5. In 2 Timothy chapter 3, this time is called what?
6. Describe the people of this day from 2 Timothy 3.
7. For whom should we submit to those in authority?

8. When we question the authority of someone, who are we really fighting?
9. In Romans 13:2, Whosoever resisteth the power will receive what?
10. In Titus 3:1, who are we reminded to obey?
11. Who are rulers a terror to?
12. Who are they who can harm you, if you are good?
13. If we have broken the law, what can we expect?
14. In numbers 35:19, who shall do the punishing?
15. In Romans 13:5, we are not to obey just because we are afraid of God's wrath, but because of what?
16. Why should a Christian let his or her conscience be their guide?
17. Where is the conscience located?
18. If Jesus did not owe taxes, why did He pay them?
19. Where did they find the money to pay the taxes for Jesus?
20. Render therefore to all their \_\_\_\_\_.
21. Honor all \_\_\_\_\_.
22. Love the \_\_\_\_\_.
23. Fear \_\_\_\_\_.
24. Honor the \_\_\_\_\_.
25. Who first taught us to show respect?
26. When we show respect for the president, what are we really showing respect for?
27. Sum this lesson up by telling how much respect for God we should have.