

“The Christian And The State”

Romans 13:1-7

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Teaching Aim: To understand the relationship between the Christian and the State from God’s perspective. To encourage every Christian to live peaceably as a model citizen in his or her own country. To recognize the governing authorities have been ultimately appointed by God and only in a secondary sense by our voting. To realize, even if we don’t respect certain governmental officials, we must still honor and respect the offices that God has ordained for the welfare of the citizens.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Every soul must submit himself to the governing authorities (Rom. 13:1-2)

1. According to **verse 1**, how many people should be subject to the governing authorities? In what sense must we be “*subject?*” Who ultimately appoints the governing authorities in any nation, God or man (**vs. 1**)? Did it surprise God when Nero or Hitler rose to power? Why or why not? What can we learn about the morality of a nation through the people who are governing it, especially in a republic like the United States?
2. According to **verse 2**, was the American Revolution standing on biblical ground? Is it possible for God to use a nation even if it is founded in disobedience to the Word of God? What are some ways that God has used the United States of America to bless the world?
3. Many Christians speak openly in derogatory ways against government officials today. Should a Christian be doing this (**vs. 2**)? According to **verse 2**, what will happen to people who do speak with contempt against the governing authorities? Will this “*judgment*” ultimately come from the government or from God Himself? The United States is a republic, meaning supreme power is vested in the whole voting community and is directed by “*The United States Constitution*” and “*The Bill of Rights*.” Why is this form of government much better than the dictatorship style of government that Paul had to live under?

4. What should Christians at odds with government officials do today (**vs. 2**)? Is violence an option for the Christian? Why or why not?

5. Should Christians become involved in politics since we are first and foremost citizens of heaven? (See **Phil. 3:20-21**) What are some of the benefits of Christians serving in the government? How involved should the local church be in government? Is it ever right for a Christian to resist a law made by government officials? If so, when? (See **Acts 4:18-20; 5:29**)

6. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution reads: *"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."* What does this amendment mean to you personally and to your right to exercise your religious faith in this country? Do you see this amendment being challenged today? If so, how?

Part II: Governing officials are to be God's ministers for good (Rom. 13:3-5)

1. How do most governments respond to the good behavior of its citizens (**vs. 3**)? When do people usually run into trouble with the government? What are some *"good"* things government can do for society today?

2. According to **verse 4**, what is God's purpose in granting government officials their power? Does the concept of governing officials serving as *"God's ministers"* seem strange to you today? If so, in what way? If governing officials are indeed *"God's ministers"* as the Bible declares, will God hold them to a higher level of accountability than the average citizen? What will this accountability mean for many of our governing officials today who are attacking the existence of God and Judeo/Christian values? (See **Rom. 12:19**)

3. In every nation God has given the governing authority the power of *"the sword."* What does this mean to the citizens of a country (**vs. 4**)? The sword can be used for defense, it can be used for offense, but it can also be used for punishment. Do you believe the government has the right to use the sword today to execute capital punishment? Why or why not? (See **Gen. 9:5-6; Exod. 20:13**) What is the actual meaning for the Hebrew word for *"kill"* (KJV) in **Exod. 20:13**? (See Commentaries)

4. According to **verse 4**, what should the government of any nation do to those who practice evil? Why? When, and only when, should *"martial law"* take effect in our country? Why? What would happen if *"anarchy"* reigned in any country? (See Dictionary) Have we ever come close to experiencing anarchy in our own country? If so, when?

5. In **verse 5** Paul lists two reasons why Christians must be subject to the governing authorities, what are they? Why is it a matter of *"good conscience"* to respect government officials? (See **vv. 1-2**) What are some common ways that many Christians may unwittingly violate the law of the land today? Have you ever been guilty of doing this? What kind of punishment should Christians receive when caught violating the law? To whom will Christians ultimately answer?
 - 1.
 - 2.

Part III: We are to render to governing officials whatever is due, be it taxes, customs, fear, or honor (Rom. 13:6-7)

1. According to **verse 6**, why does God require Christians to pay taxes? Will the government hold those accountable who don't? Will government officials be held accountable by God for the way they spend your tax dollars? (For example, to provide abortions and sex changes to minors?)

2. **Verse 7** lists four things that we are to render to government officials, what are they? What was Paul referring to when he said we are to render *"customs"* due? (See Dictionary) What, if any, difference is there between *"fear"* and *"honor?"*
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
 - 4.

3. What are the common denominators in **Titus 3:1-2** and **1 Pet. 2:13-17**? Do these denominators line up with the teachings of Jesus in **Matt. 17:24-27** and **Matt. 22:17-21**? If this is the biblical teaching, how should we live our lives today as 21st Century Christians?
4. At times, we may not respect certain individuals who are serving in the government because they don't govern according to our beliefs or the principles of God's Word, but we are still to honor and respect the office. What should Christians be doing for our government officials according to **1 Tim. 2:1-4**? When is the last time you personally prayed for the governing officials of your country?
5. What kind of effect do you think Christians could have on our nation and the world if we only lived our lives as "*model citizens*" and not as hypocrites? What changes do you need to make in your life to be a model citizen? Why not take a few moments right now and pray, not only for yourself, but also for your government officials?

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- Everyone is to be subject to the governing authorities.
- Every authority (or government official) has been ultimately appointed by God.
- Government officials are God's "*ministers*" to do good.
- If government officials do not properly fulfill their God given ministry, they will be held accountable by God.
- Governing officials are given the power of the sword to maintain order and justice in society.
- Christians are to pay taxes and give honor to government officials who are responsible for their good.
- Even if we do not respect certain government officials personally who are serving in office, we are still to honor and respect the office.