



Part 4: God, the Government and Me

As a Christian I am called to:

1. Respect the government's God-given _____

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted..." Rom. 13:1-2a (See also: Dan. 2:21, 4:17, John 19:11)

2. Respect the government's God-given _____

• _____ • _____ • _____

"...and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. 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 he will commend you. For he is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer." Rom. 13:2b-4

3. Obey and honor _____ -- but never at the expense of obeying and honoring _____.

"Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also because of conscience. This is also why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing. Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor." v5-7

Biblical areas of civil obedience:

- _____ v5 • _____ v6-7
- _____ (1Tim. 2:1-3)
- _____ (1Pet. 2:11-17; Matt. 5:13-16)

Biblical examples of civil disobedience:

*"Peter and the other apostles replied: 'We must obey God rather than men!'" Acts 5:29
(See also: Exod. 1:15-20, Daniel: Chapters 1, 3 & 6, Acts 4:19-20)*

Daily Meditations

Here's a chance to "take it home": Spend a few minutes every day reading Scripture, praying, and answering thought provoking questions about this weekend's topic!

This week's memory verse:

"Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God." Rom. 13:1

Monday

Read Rom. 13:1-7. Which of the four points from last weekend's sermon stood out to you most? Why?

Which is most difficult for you live out?

How would you describe your attitude towards:

Local authorities:

State authorities:

National authorities:

How do your attitudes "line-up" with what you learned in Romans 13:1-7?
Where do you need to make changes in your thinking and words?

Thank God today for those who govern over you. Ask Him to help you to have a godly attitude and godly speech towards those in authority over you.

Tuesday

Read Prov. 21:1, Rom. 13:1 & Col. 1:16. List what these verses tell you about God's hand in government.

Recall what you learned about God's sovereignty earlier in our study of Romans. How does this relate to the verses you read today?

How does knowing that God has established the authorities give you comfort and hope?

Thank God today for His sovereign control. Thank Him for His love and care for you. Ask Him to help you trust Him more today.

Wednesday

Read Matthew 22:15-22. What does Jesus' response teach us about our relationship to the government?

How does this relate to:

Taxes
Traffic laws
Respect for police

In what areas is it difficult for you to practice this principle?

How did Jesus practice this principle even during his trial before his crucifixion?

Pray for the civil authorities over you today, from the local to the national level. Pray that they will govern ethically and diligently. Pray for their spiritual strength as well.

Thursday

The basic Scriptural principle of church and state seems to be clear: Civil authorities are to be obeyed unless they are in opposition to divine law. In that case, Christians are encouraged to practice respectful but firm civil disobedience. Read Daniel 3.

In what ways did the three Hebrew men obey the king?

In what way did they disobey?

How were they respectful even in their disobedience?

How is this an example for us?

When is civil disobedience justified for a Christian? (See Acts 4:18-20)

Thank God today for the blessing of a government where Christianity can be freely practiced. Pray for those in persecuted countries.

Friday

Read 1 Tim. 2:4-6. Who does Paul say we should pray for?

What reasons does he give for this?

Let's practice this Scripture today! Here's a list of "authorities"-- pray for them now...

Local: Santa Cruz: Mayor Christopher Krohn, Vice-Mayor Emily Reilly, Council members: Tim Fitzmaurice, Scott Kennedy, Ed Porter, Mark Primack, Keith Sugar
Capitola: Mayor Gayle Ortiz, Vice Mayor Tony Gualtieri, Council members: Bruce Arthur
Stephanie Harlan, Dennis Norton, City Treasurer Robert Begun

State: Governor Grey Davis, State Senator Bruce McPherson, Assemblyman Fred Keeley

National: President George Bush, Vice-President Dick Cheney, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State General Colin Powell, Senator Diane Feinstein, Senator Barbara Boxer

Saturday Review

Catch up on any devotions you may have missed; read Rom. 13:8-14 in preparation for church this weekend. *Please pray for the weekend services. Thank you! See you tonight or tomorrow, Lord willing.*