

Comments About Romans 13

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BIG SANDY, Texas—Recently, I began a series of brief articles to discuss chapters in the book of Romans. This week, we will talk about chapter 13.

May this project encourage you to review the valuable history found in the book of Romans.

Submitting to government

Many Bible students note that the first 11 chapters in the book of Romans deal more with spiritual concepts of God's righteousness and that chapter 12 begins a section of Christian-living principles.

The Christian-living principle at the beginning of chapter 13 deals with a disciple's relationship with government (both civil and religious).

Romans 13:1-4 contains important words to a disciple. But those words have often been used by authority figures (civil and religious leaders) in an effort to control disciples.

- Do these verses instruct disciples to place leaders in a hierarchy between them and Christ? Certainly not.
- Do these verses instruct disciples to follow directives of leaders no matter what they say? Certainly not.

Dealing with evil

In Romans 13, the apostle Paul mentioned that the purpose of leaders is to protect people from evil (verses 1-4).

Question: What is a disciple to do when the leaders are the people initiating and spreading evil?

Consider what Peter and the other apostles said to the council in the book of Acts.

Acts 4:19—"But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge.' "

Acts 5:29—"But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men.' "

Examples of following God

Notice two famous examples in the Old Testament where people did not follow the edicts of the leaders.

- Exodus 1:22—Moses' mother put her son in the river (Exodus 2:3), but she was obviously not fulfilling the edict of Pharaoh.
- Joshua 2:1-7—Rahab heard the edict from the king of Jericho (verse 3), but she told the lie to save lives.

Notice how she told the same lie in four different ways (Joshua 2:4-5).

- The men came, but I didn't know from where.
- When it was time to close the gate at dark, the men left.
- I don't know where the men were going.
- Pursue after them quickly; you can catch them.

Appreciate good leaders

Back to chapter 13.

- Leaders should be in a position to protect people from evil (verses 1-4).
- Following leaders should be based upon conscience and not fear (verse 5).
- Paul instructed disciples to pay taxes to government (verses 6-7).

Reminder about love

Paul proceeded to move from discussing the specific discussion about paying taxes to the general principle about showing love (verses 8-10).

- Paul mentioned the last five of the Ten Commandments and described them with the phrase "you shall love your neighbor as yourself" (verse 10).

Put on Christ

- It is time to put on Christ (verse 11).
- Cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light (verse 12).
- Avoid the sins of the flesh and put on the Lord Jesus Christ (verses 13-14).